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# OTOAI keen on digitisation

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) is all set to organise its fourth Annual Convention in Cape Town from August 11-14. **Mahendra Vakharia**, President, OTOAI, briefly talks about the theme and format of the convention.



Manas Dwivedi

After attracting significant growth in outbound tourism with its past conventions in Manila, Bali and Ras al-Khaimah, OTOAI is now geared up for its fourth convention in Cape Town, South Africa. The theme for the convention is 'Digitalisation – The Way Forward', says Vakharia, President, OTOAI.

"All the business sessions during the convention will

be focusing and explaining about digitalisation. The idea is to inform and educate the members, tour operators and SMEs on how they can leverage and enhance the business profitability with digitalisation," Vakharia said.

Speaking about choosing Cape Town as the venue for convention, he says, "We are very excited about organising the fourth edition in Cape Town. It is one of the most

“The idea is to inform and educate the members, tour operators and SMEs on how they can leverage and enhance the business profitability with digitalisation”

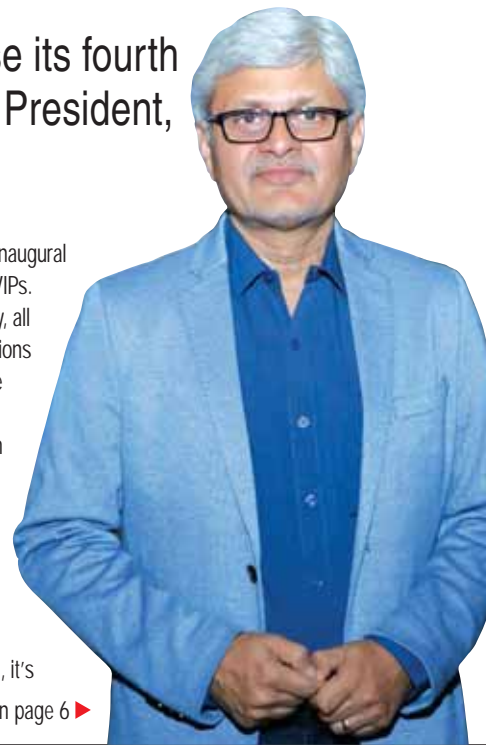
beautiful cities in the world. Also, this year is very special for South Africa because, 2018 marks the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and year-long celebrations are organised. The convention is shaping up very well and we

are expecting more than 200 delegates to attend the event.”

Explaining about the format of the convention, Vakharia says that the three-day event is going to be an exciting affair. "This year, the day of

arrival will be the inaugural function with the VIPs. On the second day, all the business sessions will take place. We will also have a small B2B session with our partners, which is equally very important. When you have about 200-odd travel operators coming from India, it's

Contd. on page 6 ▶



# South Africa bets big on convention



Bunny Bhoola  
Director  
African Link Travel



Alpa Jani  
Manager Trade Relations  
South African Tourism

During the OTOAI convention, South Africa Tourism is keen to provide agents with a first-hand experience on the destination.



TT Bureau

The Executive Committee of OTOAI led by its President **Mahendra Vakharia** signed an MoU with **Bunny Bhoola**, Director,

African Link Travel, for its South Africa convention. Since the convention is a B2B event, Bhoola believes that there is a need to forge great partnerships, increased networks and support of

niche experiences. "You'd get an opportunity to meet local suppliers, interact experience and learn about the culture of South Africa as much as we want to learn about the culture of India," she mentioned.

Sharing details about the facilities provided for the convention, Bhoola said, "There is a combination of different role players along with the government who are working

Contd. on page 8 ▶



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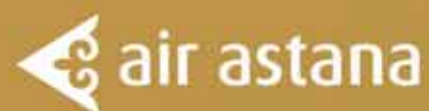
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# Industry upbeat on PowerHouse

PATA India Chapter's Tourism PowerHouse, scheduled from August 5-6, 2018 at The Park, New Delhi, will see stalwarts of the industry coming together to discuss trends and issues relevant to tourism.



TT Bureau

**Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Chairman, PATA India Chapter, announced the dates and the concept behind organising Tourism Powerhouse from August 5-6, 2018. "We hope to draw eminent speakers from all over the world to speak on contemporary issues like responsible tourism, sustainable tourism, marketing, digital marketing, etc. We are hopeful that apart from the industry, the state tourism boards, other organisations and stakeholders will also be participating," she said.



**Rashmi Verma**  
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism  
Government of India and Chairman  
PATA India Chapter



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

**Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Tourism, Government of India, shared, "As India grows rapidly as a tourism destination, it is essential for

us to brainstorm from time to time. Tourism PowerHouse is an excellent platform to bring the best minds across the industry to ideate and figure out where we need to go ahead."

The event is perceived as a platform to discuss perceptions, opportunities and challenges in the Indian travel realm. **Jatinder Taneja**, Honorary Secretary, PATA India Chapter, said that with so many changes happening in the Indian tourism industry, Tourism Powerhouse will be the ideal platform to see how India is perceived internationally and what we can learn from experts in the industry. "India is seeing a lot of changes in terms of infrastructure development, increased connectivity and before that e-visa as well. We want to hear international speakers and their perspective on India," he added.

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## Convention sets the stage

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) is set to hold its next convention in Cape Town, South Africa, with outbound travel operators from the country in full attendance. While the OTOAI members have a packed agenda, the theme is 'Digitalisation—The Way Forward', and the team would be focusing on empowering the fraternity by education and training. With digitalisation in every sphere gaining foothold, the topic is very pertinent and the association has also picked an ideal destination for the convention. Some B2B and interactive sessions will be held with international speakers gracing the event. Discussions will be held on digitalisation, travel technology and issues from the customer point of view on how to grow business. While South Africa is a coveted destination for adventure junkies, it is also much preferred for MiCE as well as family trips. Apart from discussing issues and problems plaguing the travel industry, we hope that the delegates get a new perspective of the destination and are able to sell it well in India.

## Betting big on Tourism Powerhouse

PATA India Chapter's latest initiative—the Tourism Powerhouse, scheduled to take place in the first week of August, will see the industry deliberate over India's tourism and its perception internationally. Hence, the team in charge at PATA India Chapter has invited stalwarts of international tourism to the country, to speak about the same and share their views and opinions, allowing stakeholders in the country to take stock of the situation and act accordingly. In fact, the timing of the event is just right, as it is being held just a few weeks before the India Tourism Mart to certainly create the right buzz about the country. With so many key developments in India tourism, excellent platforms are being laid ahead to discuss global trends, initiatives and the best practices, and plan the way forward.

TRAVTALK brings to you news and events that made headlines 25 years ago with relevance even today. From the archives, we present the August 1993 issue:

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

Then



Lajpat Rai  
MD, Lotus Trans Travels &  
Treasurer, IATO

Now



Lajpat Rai  
MD, Lotus Trans Travel & Lotus  
Nikko Hotels

In 1993, Lajpat Rai, MD, Lotus Trans Travels, was elected as the IATO treasurer. Today, he is an active member of IATO and has even ventured into the hospitality space by launching Lotus Nikko Hotels in 1995. A veteran in the travel business, he excels in dealing with markets like Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal and other South Asian countries.

### FRANKLY SAID...



"Back at office I'd be having a lovely cup of tea right now."

### Broadway Bags the India Habitat Centre Contract

- India Habitat Centre awarded the contract to build 60 guestrooms with five suites and five serviced apartments to Hotel Broadway. The contract also included a conference hall with state-of-the-art acoustics, five restaurants, private dining room to handle 1500 persons and a fully-equipped business centre, fitness centre and a swimming pool. Today, hospitality and cultural facilities at Habitat World, India Habitat Centre, is operated by Old World Hospitality, which has one hotel- Hotel Broadway and over 35 restaurants including Indian Accent, under its wing.



## 200+ delegates to mark presence

► Contd. from page 3

important for them to network with the local operators. The third day will involve a lot more of interaction with local sight-seeing and a gala dinner to conclude the convention," says Vakharia.

Along with the convention, there would be a three-day pre and post Fam trips each for the delegates which will cover

the beautiful regions of Garden Route in South Africa, which is very popular in the Indian market. The trip also includes a visit to Kruger National Park, Sun City and other places. The country has different combinations of places which Indian tourists want to experience during a stay in South Africa," adds Vakharia.

With a fruitful summer season, Vakharia believes that OTOAI

has experienced good growth in outbound tourism during last one year. "Traditionally, Europe has done very well. In spite of the visa, challenges in terms of delays in getting appointment or non-availability of slot for biometrics with certain Schengen countries, this season has been very positive. I believe it's in the track record of 15 per cent growth of what it was last year. Other destinations like Canada and the US

have also done very well," says Vakharia.

### Fam Tours

A three-day pre and post Fam trips each for the delegates will cover Garden Route in South Africa, visit to Kruger National Park, Sun City and other popular attractions



# Mega congregation at IHE 2018

India International Hospitality Expo (IHE) 2018 is set to be held from August 8-11 at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. **Rakesh Kumar**, Chairman, India Exposition Mart, shares detailed information about the show.

 TT Bureau

**Q***What is the concept behind IHE 18 and how is it beneficial to the Indian market?*

With over 400 exhibitors and 10,000 decision makers, IHE 18 is the country's largest and most comprehensive sourcing hub for the hospitality, retail, housekeeping and F&B industry. It has been built on the vision to become the biggest hospitality show in India. The effort is to give India a much-needed hospitality show that is on par with international standards and serves as a powerful networking forum where celebrated influencers from across the country come together to create unparalleled business opportunities. It is



Rakesh Kumar  
Chairman  
India Exposition Mart

being held at India Expo Centre & Mart that has hosted world-famous shows such as Auto Expo, and has state-of-the-art facilities such as exhibition halls spread over an area of 14,000 sqm, with a hosting capacity of 150,000-plus visitors a day. IHE 18 will be armed with a well-managed ecosystem where a team works round-the-clock to give both exhibitors and visitors an experience worth their time, money and of course, the distance travelled.

**Q***Could you throw light on the hospitality industry's growth trajectory in India?*

Reports from certified bodies and industry stalwarts on growth of the industry establish one universal truth - the kind of growth that the hospitality industry proposes is going to be beyond imagination. India is indeed a melting pot of un-

precedented growth in the hospitality sector. With numerous international hospitality chains turning towards the country for future investment and massive expansion projects, we can estimate the huge potential it holds for the Indian market in the coming years.

**Q***What kind of response are you expecting at the event?*

I feel IHE 18 will be a roaring success. We will be giving all exhibitors and visitors a grand hospitality show designed on international standards. We have also modelled an Advan-


**“**The effort is to give India a much-needed hospitality show that is on par with international standards and serves as a powerful networking forum**”**

tage IHE 18 module wherein one of the primary features is

a fully escorted 'from desk to show and then back to desk'

pick and drop facility for senior decision makers across the hotel industry.

**Q***Who are the participants?*

IHE 18 will have over 400 participating companies and 10,000 decision makers. 



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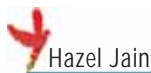
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## OTOAICONVENTION

# Cape Town beckons OTOAI

With a new destination – Stellenbosch – on offer for B2B sessions, this year's Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) Convention seems to have hit the popularity charts among attendees.



Hazel Jain

**P**repare to be 'digitalised'! The upcoming Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) convention that will take place in South Africa has already a chart hit. Set to be hosted in the idyllic port town of Cape Town from August 11-14, 2018, the convention will draw some eminent international speakers.

Sharing some updates about this is **Himanshu Patil**, Vice President and Chairman-Con-vention, OTOAI. He says, "We

another hotel to distribute the members though.

Patil reveals that since north is its strong belt, most of the registrations have come from there. "But even the numbers from Gujarat and Maharashtra have gone up this time. Sharing details about the flow of the convention, he says, "We are looking at two B2B sessions – one will take place in Cape Town and one will be in Stellenbosch. There will be about 30-40 sellers from South Africa who will get a chance to meet the Indian outbound



## Stellenbosch: A new destination

Stellenbosch is a university town in South Africa's Western Cape province. It's surrounded by the vineyards of the Cape Winelands and the mountainous nature reserves of Jonkershoek and Simonsberg. The town's oak-shaded streets are lined with cafes, boutiques and art galleries. Cape Dutch architecture gives a sense of South Africa's Dutch colonial history, as do the Village Museum's period houses and gardens.

have invited some international speakers who will be coming from South Africa and Canada. Some of them will also be flying from India. We do not have confirmations yet so we will announce names at a later date."

The convention preparations are in full swing but the registrations have now been closed and for good reason. "The number of agents we are expecting is more this time. We have crossed 175 registrations this year. The problem we are facing now is availability of rooms because, we are holding only 100 rooms at the Taj Cape Town at the moment and are not getting any further." The association is not looking at

agents under one roof at their table. We are expecting the Deputy Minister of Tourism of the Republic of South Africa to attend the inaugural functions and the business sessions. The delegates will also meet Hanneli Slabber there who was the India Country Manager for South Africa Tourism for many years."

He said that the table-top meetings during the convention has worked very well for the association as well as the host country. "We do this at every convention as it is an opportunity for the local agents in those destinations to meet the travel trade from India without moving from their city and at one go. We also have pre- and

post-familiarisation trips going to two different locations – from Sun City to Johannesburg to Garden Route and Kruger National Park. Almost 90 per cent of the delegates are taking post-Fams because August 15 is a holiday," he adds.

Members from New Delhi are paying around ₹ 77,900 for this and those from Mumbai are paying roughly about 67,900. The airline partners are Emirates and Ethiopian Airlines. "We have also received a lot of assistance from the South African consulate with the visas and almost 70-80 per cent of the registered members have already received their visas. We are still almost 20 days away from convention," Patil adds.

The team is still working on the details such as keynote addresses and business sessions that will revolve around the theme 'Digitalisation – The Way Forward'. African Link Travel is its partner agency in South Africa that will be taking care of the logistics. ↴

# Excited for business

► Contd. from page 3

to provide accommodation, transport, raw experiences, hidden secrets and hidden gems of our country. Overall, we look forward towards an exciting package for people to learn and generate business for us; in return, we

shall send business to you."

**Alpa Jani**, Manager—Trade Relations, South African Tourism, who was also present at the event, said, "The National Convention Bureau, which is in charge of all the conventions and conferences in

South Africa, has supported this convention and is looking at gaining a lot of support from the association. The event also gives us opportunity to have outbound tour operators in South Africa for a first-hand experience on the destination." ↴



# Technology to take centre stage

Expecting a good strength and show, **Gurdeep Singh Gujral**, Joint Secretary, OTOAI briefly explains the format of the OTOAI Convention along with details on pre and post Fam trips for the participants.



TT Bureau

As Co-chairman of the upcoming OTOAI convention to be held in Cape Town, Gujral will be responsible for connecting with the media and local partners in South Africa, make hotel and arrangements, and look after the airline bookings. The association closed its registrations at 175 and are not accommodating anyone further due to scarcity of rooms.



**Gurdeep Singh Gujral**  
Joint Secretary  
OTOAI

Sharing details about the convention format, Gujral says, "We have divided the format into two groups- pre and post Fam trips. Our pre-Fam will be held from August 8-11 while the post Fam dates are August 14-17. We will be covering Johannesburg with Kruger, Sun City, Cape Town, and of course the Garden Route. We are covering all these major four-five attractions."

Briefing more about the theme and sessions during the convention, Gujral

“As per the theme of the convention, discussions will be held on the topics of digitalisation, travel technology and issues from the customer point of view on how to grow business”

shares, "Some important B2B and interactive brainstorming sessions will be held with some international speakers gracing the event. As per the theme of the convention, discussions will be held on the topics of digitalisation, travel technology and

issues from the customer point of view on how to grow business. The sessions will be both educational and fun-filled at the same time."

With high hopes from the convention, Gujral exclaims, "We are expecting that the

convention this year will be more colourful, more natural and more digitalised."

The association's conventions till date have been primarily held in Asia and the Middle East – Manila, Bali and Ras Al Khaimah respectively. ➔




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## Responsibilities as Co-chairman

➔ Gurdeep Singh Gujral, Joint Secretary, OTOAI, will be responsible for connecting with the media and local partners in South Africa, make hotel and arrangements, and look after the airline bookings

➔ The association closed its registrations at 175 and are not accommodating anyone further due to room scarcity



# Shop till you drop at Cape Town

Whether you are looking for something specific to shop or just window shopping, South Africa's boutiques, malls and street shops have it all. Take a look at some of the popular malls in Cape Town...



TT Bureau

The quality, cost and variety of goods on offer along with the safe environment provided by South Africa's shopping centres should not take visiting international holidaymakers and business people by surprise. Cape Town's malls are famous for their shopping and entertainment facilities. Thanks to a very favourable exchange rate, Euros or US Dollars go a long way in South African shopping centres. Along with general retail stores, like Woolworths (similar to Marks & Spencer in the United Kingdom), Truworths, Edgars, Pick 'n Pay and Checkers, which will provide with clothes, groceries and home-ware, visitors will discover that malls and shopping centres in Cape Town each have

their own character, created by the dozens of boutiques, specialty stores and restaurants that they host. Many of the centres are also located in beautifully designed buildings, showing off state of the art architecture. Whether they find themselves in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth or the safari hub of Nelspruit, there is always an excellent shopping centre around the corner. Most centres are also home to cinemas, restaurants and entertainment facilities too. All of the malls are located close to major highways with ample parking space. All major South African shopping centres have facilities for disabled shoppers.

## Victoria Wharf at the V&A Waterfront

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selling everything from fashion, homeware and curios, to jewellery, leather goods and audiovisual equipment, the V&A Waterfront is South Africa's most popular shopping destination. Consolidating this position is its diverse offering of local and international brands,

irrespective of taste or budget.

## The Cape Quarter at Green Point

The Cape Quarter is a unique retail experience in Cape Town with boutique shopping experience in the historic De Waterkant district. It also has

distinct restaurants, inspired gifts, inspired art, fashion and jewellery, rare antiques and collectables, and many more hidden gems. Its carefully curated tenant list includes over 100 unique stores and restaurants. It is open seven days a week.

## The Cavendish Square in Claremont

Cavendish Square is an award-winning shopping destination in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town, boasting more than 200 stores that offer exclusive local and international fashion, cinemas and a selection of premium restaurants and coffee shops.

## Tyger Valley Shopping Centre

This centre has high fashion as well as entertainment options. Located in the Northern Suburbs, this chic shopping centre is just a 15-minute drive from Cape Town CBD and moments from the beautiful winelands. It has over 250 stores with everything from flagship retailers, trendy eateries and décor to furniture, toys medical care and much more. 📌

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# Sri Balaji roadshow is on

Sri Balaji Representations is set to conduct a multi-city road show for Bali in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru from August 20-25, 2018.



TT Bureau

Representing destinations such as Bali, Thailand and Armenia, Sri Balaji Representations is all set for roadshows in five cities across the country. Facilitating international tour operators to establish in Indian market, the company will conduct roadshows for Bali in Delhi on August 20, Ahmedabad on August 21, Mumbai on August 22, Hyderabad on August 23 and Bengaluru on August 25.

Sharing the agenda of the roadshow, **Kishore KV**,

## Key Participants

DMC from Bali, CCI Tours and Travels and hotels such as Transera Group of Hotels and Adhi Jaya will be part of the roadshows



**Kishore KV**  
Managing Director  
Sri Balaji Representations

Managing Director, Sri Balaji Representations says, "This roadshow aims at building relationship and expanding our network. The key purpose is to form a link between our DMCs and travel agents in India." "We are expecting footfall of around 100-125 attendees in each city. We already had a successful first half of 2018 with SATTE Delhi and TTF Hyderabad," he adds.

Also the President of the South India Global Tour Operators Associations, Kishore believes that India is rapidly becoming one of the fastest growing outbound travel markets in the world. "India is now on its way to become a global tourism force. UNWTO data suggests that the number of outbound travellers will grow more than double to 53 million in the next three years in comparison to the current 22 million travellers. The volume of outbound travellers is increasing at 28 per cent a year," Kishore informs.

According to Kishore, DMCs and hotels from Bali will also participate at the roadshows. DMC from Bali, CCI Tours and Travels and hotels such as Transera Group of Hotels and Adhi Jaya will be part of the roadshows. Indian restaurants Mai Son and Sky Light Dinner Cruise will also be featured.

# Globe360 to sell Balkans

Expanding its current area of focus, the destination management company will soon come up with packages for the Balkans and the Baltic countries.



TT Bureau

Globe360 DMC is a UK-based B2B destination management company with branch offices in the UAE and India. It specialises in offering ground-handling services to tour operators and travel agents for their FIT, group and MiCE bookings. Its range of services includes hotel reservations, transfers, multilingual guides,



**Rajan Joshi**  
Sales & Marketing Head, Globe360 DMC

from the planning phase to the return flight home."

Speaking about how the growth has been over the last one year, he adds, "We received tremendous response from not only pan-India but also the Middle Eastern countries like Dubai and Oman, and other countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Nepal."

He also has some new announcements. "Very soon, we will come up with Balkans and the Baltic countries. As of now, we are dealing with Central, Western and Eastern, as well as Scandinavian countries. Clients now are demanding more of Eastern Europe due to cheaper accommodation, unexplored destinations and happening nightlife. India has a lot of potential for European destinations and it is growing manifold," Joshi explains.

“Clients now are demanding more of Eastern Europe due to cheaper accommodation and unexplored destinations”

car rentals, train tickets, city sightseeing tours, entrance tickets to tourist attractions, restaurant bookings, conferences, events, city cruise and fully bespoke ground services in various countries.

**Rajan Joshi**, Sales & Marketing Head, Globe360 DMC says, "Our USP is offering the best quality with competitive price. We know that a satisfied traveller is someone who enjoys every step of the journey, right



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# Radisson Blu's joy of giving

In an effort to give back to the community, Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi recently celebrated the 'Community Action Month' by adopting the theme of 'Food, Shelter and Future' to celebrate the joy of giving.



TT Bureau

One of the core values of Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi is serving the community and uplifting the needy. The hotel's team recently celebrated the joy of giving through their Community Action Month 2018 with the theme of 'Food, Shelter and Future'. The entire team came together with much gusto for a number of impactful activities over the course of entire month. As a part of the association with several NGOs, they provided necessary items like food, notebooks, stationery, clothes and other essentials to the underprivileged.

A blood donation camp was also organised, where employees volunteered to donate the gift of life and hope. The



**Pankaj Saxena**  
General Manager  
Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi


Annadanam donation revolved around the concept of food being the essence of all well-being. The team donated food grains like rice and pulses to the Madhurbhav old age home and participated in a food donation drive that fed poor people.

A collection drive was organised for notebooks and stationery kits for the children. They were distributed to Door Step School in the area and will be used by kids who cannot afford to school supplies. Drawing books and sketch pens were given to kids in the age group of three to five years whereas notebooks and stationery were distributed to kids in the age group of six to 14 years. About 75 buckets and mugs were donated to a blind school in Kothrud that will benefit 150 girls staying and studying at the school.

Commenting on the success and impact of the activities,

**Pankaj Saxena**, General Manager at Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi, said, "Our primary aim through these activities is to help the community and create a positive impact in the city. It was extremely gratifying for each one of us when we saw smiles of

contentment on the faces of the deprived citizens of the community."

Besides, all the employees came together to donate old clothes, footwear and books to the slum area at Kokane Chowk in Pune. 






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# Locally-curated luxury

**Siddharth Savkur**, General Manager, Alila Diwa Goa talks about the property's growth, business implementation and creative ways to delight guests.

TT Bureau

Located in the middle of a quaint Goan village, five-star deluxe resort Alila Diwa Goa is a one-stop destination to enjoy local life and culture in a lavish way. Savkur says that the resort is experiencing robust year-on-year growth that has been higher than the market average.

Talking about Alila's performance, Savkur explains, "Our occupancy grew 3 per cent while ARR increased by around 6 per cent over last year. In India, the metros have always been key feeder markets. However, we are also seeing a significant increase in guests from Tier-II and Tier-III cities. The UK and Russia are our main international source markets."

With 70 per cent domestic and 30 per cent international guest



**Siddharth Savkur**  
General Manager  
Alila Diwa Goa

occupancy every year, Alila is focused on giving guests a locally curated experience. "We are conscious of the fact that the luxury traveller's needs are evolving and we want to stay in touch with what they seek," says Savkur.

Describing details about the resort's special initiative, 'Alila Experience', Savkur shares, "The Alila Experience aims

at giving guests an authentic flavour. We work closely with the local community in putting these experiences together. For instance, our most popular experiences include visits to the local fish market and meet the podher (Goan baker). We strive to create money-can't-buy experiences for guests."

Expressing his ideas in promoting the property, Savkur says, "We have introduced a new package - Infinite Goa, which offers unlimited F&B inclusions to guests. Our residential wellness programmes are also doing well."

## FIT Experience

On Free Independent Travelling (FIT) experience, the hotel has renovated the exclusive Diwa Club, its hotel-within-a-hotel

# Tie the knot in Pushkar

Ananta Resorts and Spa, Pushkar, is eyeing the destination weddings segment to establish Pushkar as a favourable hotspot for tourism.

TT Bureau

In 2017, Ananta Resorts and Spa, Pushkar, clocked nearly 67-70 per cent occupancy and this year, the property is planning to up this percentage to 77, informs the property's General Manager—**Rajesh Ballabh**. The property has also recorded a year-on-year increase of Rs 300-400 in the ARRs. "A lot more properties are opening up in Pushkar which has made the market competitive and there is rate parity. We are not concentrat-



**Rajesh Ballabh**  
General Manager  
Ananta Resorts and Spa

weddings are a key focus for the property. Ballabh points out

“The itineraries have been shortened and thus Pushkar has become more of a stop-over for a few hours. Some markets that are doing well are Spain, France and the UK”

ing on the ARRs but on ways to increase occupancy at the hotel." This year destination

that as many as 20 weddings are in the pipeline out of which 8-10 weddings are confirmed.

The domestic travel market forms the base of guests at the property. "Pushkar is a weekend getaway destination and thus we usually receive our guests largely from the northern belt of India. The inbound market has declined. The itineraries have been shortened and thus Pushkar has become more of a stop-over for a few hours. However, some markets that are doing well are Spain, France and the UK," says Ballabh.

The property promotes itself largely through word of mouth and advertisements in traditional media platforms. Ballabh adds, "Almost 40-50 per cent guests at the property are repeat clients and have stayed with us at least five-seven times. These clients give feedback to others which increases traction to our hotel."

# Eyeing 3 & 4-star hotels

The Clarks Group of Hotels has shifted its focus from five-star category hotels to the four-star and three-star category to cater to the domestic market.

TT Bureau

The Clarks Group of Hotels operate five-star business and leisure properties in Jaipur, Lucknow, Agra and Khajuraho. The hotel chain has undertaken refurbishment of all its properties keeping in mind the demands of new-age guests. "We are coming out with a new face and thus have renovated the properties. We are not targeting the five-star category but focussing on the four-star and three-star category segment and have thus introduced a separate



**KK Manglik**  
Vice President  
Hotel Clarks Avadh, Lucknow

Manglik informs that 1589 Hotels draws its legacy from the Clarks Group of Hotels,

takes pride in making luxury affordable for all with the assurance of efficient service and quality. "We have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Uttar Pradesh government to set up new properties in the state since there is lot of potential to cater to the mid-segment market here," he adds.

The hotel group has tied up with marketing agencies to boost its digital footprint in the market to promote the brand through digital mediums. Noting the hospitality trends in the industry, Manglik points out, "We have observed that most of the international chains are now expanding footprint in the mid-segment or budget category. Though the inbound segment has declined to a certain extent, the domestic market is gradually increasing, and this is the segment where huge opportunities lay for various hospitality players."

“We have recently signed an MoU with the UP government to set up new properties in the state since there is lot of potential to cater to the mid-segment market here”

brand—1589 Hotels, says **KK Manglik**, Vice President, Hotel Clarks Avadh, Lucknow.

encompassing 50 signed alliances and 36 operational hotels in 24 cities. The brand

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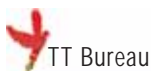
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# India high-value market for NZ

Tourism New Zealand has started exploring newer markets in the country as visitor arrivals from India double within four years. **Steven Dixon**, Regional Manager (South & South East Asia), Tourism New Zealand, reveals more.



**Q**What makes India a priority market for you?  
India remains a key market for New Zealand for multiple reasons. Not only are more Indians visiting New Zealand than before, they are also incredibly valuable to our industry as they stay in New Zealand for 13 days on an average and enjoy approximately 20 tourism experiences during that



Steven Dixon  
Regional Manager (South & South East Asia), Tourism New Zealand

time. Indian travellers are also amongst the most adventurous of our international visitors and include experiences like skydiving, jet-boating and scenic flights in their itinerary.

**Q**Can you share the latest figures from India?  
The total visitor arrivals from India to New Zealand have doubled from 33,000 to 66,000 in the past four years, with more Indians visiting the country than ever before. In recognition of this incredible growth and increased interest in the Indian market from New

Zealand tourism operators, we expanded our annual Kiwi Link India, this year. The new format will see the organisation and partners hosting key buyers from around India in Mumbai, followed by front-line training in Bengaluru and New Delhi.

“The total visitor arrivals from India to New Zealand have doubled from 33,000 to 66,000 in the past four years”

**Q**How was this year's Kiwi Link India?  
Kiwi Link India 2018 was

the biggest ever so far with events conducted in Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi.

Each year, we get feedback from our operators and often it is asking us to explore different regions in India. This is why we added one more city – Bengaluru. There was also participation by almost 200 delegates from 118

Indian companies – an increase of 16 per cent in registrations compared to last year. Of this, 22 per cent were first timers. In addition, delegates from a record 40 New Zealand companies travelled to India for the event. ↗



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**NZ's New video campaign**  
Tourism New Zealand's brand evolution has taken shape in a new video content that went global in July 2018. The videos are aired in the Australia, USA, UK, Germany, Japan, China, Indonesia, India and Brazil markets. The four new videos feature kiwis from each region welcoming, guiding and sharing their home with international visitors

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# Rajasthan travel mart concludes

The 1<sup>st</sup> Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM), organised by Federation of Hospitality & Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) and Rajasthan Tourism, concluded in Jaipur with 200 exhibitors and 200 hosted buyers.



Nisha Verma from Jaipur

The Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart recently concluded in Jaipur after a grand inaugural ceremony and two days of B2B meetings. The gala inaugural was held at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur, amidst the presence of **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Tourism, Government of India as the chief guest alongside **Kuldeep Ranka**, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Forest & Environment, Art & Culture, Govt of Rajasthan; and **Lalit Panwar**, Former Secretary Tourism and Vice Chancellor, Rajasthan, ILD Skills University (RISU). **Bhim Singh**, President, FHTR and **Gyan Prakash**, Secretary General, FHTR, welcomed delegates at the event.

Addressing the gathering, Billa said, "The mart is a very important step forward because the international end of the business has its way of organising itself. I think where we need to connect the dots is for the domestic market. Marts like these have the saluted effect of bringing



Suman Billa



Kuldeep Ranka



Lalit Panwar



Bhim Singh



Gyan Prakash

buyers and sellers towards the domestic market. It is imperative that the initiative should come from the states because domestic marts

domestic tourism. "Rajasthan offers a panoply of palaces, forts, heritage, wildlife and lakes. In the recent past, Rajasthan has taken up

our presence in social media have also encouraged us to believe that RDTM will help us in promoting tourism in this part of the country with buyers and sellers having fruitful business through B2B meetings."

To encourage the new initiative, Panwar claimed that a mart dedicated to domestic tourism was the need of the hour and other states should also emulate the same. "Rajasthan has taken a lead and other states should also follow suit. It's a great platform for promotion of domestic tourism," he claimed.

Singh said that it's a great initiative to boost domestic tourism in Rajasthan. "The quality of domestic tourism coming to Rajasthan was not of the standard that could afford good quality hotels. Hence, we started promoting Rajasthan in the country in various states and elite customers looked at Rajasthan as an option for them, resulting in increase of domestic tourism to the state. Earlier the ratio of foreign arrivals to domestic arrivals was 70:30, but today it's 30:70," he claimed.

A total of 4,982 meetings were fixed in advance and many more happened at the event, revealed Prakash. "We joined hands with government of Rajasthan for this event to focus on domestic tourism. Apart from hotels in Rajasthan and tour operators from around the country, we also have event and wedding planners to look at the state as a wedding destination. We hope that this initiative could be a turnaround for domestic tourism in the state," he said.

Prakash added that the main trade bodies supporting the event are Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA), Hotels and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO). "We have also taken support from national bodies like IATO, ADTOI and others. We reached out to the state level trade associations for supporting us and new markets which we have not been able to be reach, apart from the existing ones from where business has been coming consistently," he concluded.

## State Initiatives

- ➔ In the recent past, Rajasthan has taken up development of different circuits like spiritual circuit, ecotourism circuit as well as the tribal circuit
- ➔ All these initiatives have paved way for exploring the state in new ways

## Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart recently concluded in Jaipur after a grand inaugural ceremony and two days of B2B meetings

should happen at the state level and we would be happy to support them."

Lauding the team behind the event, Ranka, said that this is the first-ever initiative in the country focused on

development of different circuits like spiritual circuit, ecotourism circuit as well as the tribal circuit. All these initiatives have paved way for exploring the state in many new ways. The aggressive marketing campaign, and

# Discovering tourism trends

Emphasising on new ideas and opportunities this year, **Simon Press**, Senior Executive Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions for WTM London talks about brokering healthy relationship between buyers and sellers.



TT Bureau

Shaping the future of the travel industry, World Travel Market (WTM), London offers the most effective business to business networking opportunities for the international community of travel professionals every year. In a conversation with **TRAVTALK**, **Simon Press**, Senior Executive Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions for WTM London talks about his plans and expectations from this year's edition scheduled to take place from November 5-7 at ExCeL London.

Sharing more information about the exhibition this year, Press

says that this year's edition ushers in freshness with new ideas and opportunities. "Our main stance this year is all about new ideas and it's really assuring that we push those new opportunities of awareness of what is new within the industry. We want to use various platforms around WTM London to emphasise and help people find what is new."

"It's also about new learnings as well. It could be new destinations, new flights opening up, new price points, new products, new hotels or new excursions. Certainly, it is something we are looking forward to at WTM London this year," he added.



Simon Press  
Senior Executive Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions for WTM London

Speaking about giving new opportunities to people at the regional level, Press explains, "Events like WTM London play a key role in brokering relationship on a regional basis.

The process brings buyers and sellers together and also educates the industry. It also helps tour operators and agents at the local level in understanding new opportunities

“WTM London 2018 will be about new learnings. It could be new destinations, new flights opening up, new price points, new products, new hotels or new excursions”

around the world with an idea in terms of what new they can sell to the customer."

Talking about the Indian outbound market, Press says that Reed Travel Exhibitions keeps

looking for new opportunities in India. "We are certainly open to opportunities, but it has to be the right one with right fit to our brand, where we can add value to individu-

als and also to the brand we interact with."

WTM London is a unique podium for the global travel trade to meet, network, negotiate and conduct business

under one roof. The event offers an opportunity to discover and get inspired by industry leaders discussing trends, issues and innovations in the travel industry. The global travel event generates more than £3.1 billion of business contracts between attendees.

Over three days, the travel industry comes together as almost 5,000 exhibiting destinations, technology and private sector companies to find and network with 51,000 travel professionals, key industry buyers, journalists, digital influencers, students and tourism ministers. ➔



# For tennis aficionados

The rise of the Indian sports fan has never been all-encompassing. Visit Victoria aims to attract impressive footfalls from India through the Australian Open 2019.



TT Bureau

India and Australia share a strong connect with cricket. But this could change over the years to include not just this national sport of India but also others like tennis and Grand Prix. Celia Ho, Regional Manager—South and South East Asia, Visit Victoria, says, “We see India as a strong growth market for sports tourism with huge potential. We have noticed that the Indian traveller has evolved and is looking for niche experiences. They have also started planning their long-haul holidays around iconic events and so the Australian Open or cricket tournaments do see increased amounts of Indian footfalls.”

While Victoria, known as the Events Capital of Australia, will welcome Indians to the India-Australia Boxing Day Test in December this year and the ICC World Twenty20 in 2020, it is also hopeful to get some numbers from India for events apart from cricket. Through the year, it plays host to some iconic sporting events from the Spring Racing Carnival, Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix to the Australian Open played at Melbourne Park in January.

“To ensure traction across all markets, we will be preparing packages and promotional activities around several key matches of the Australian Open. The packages will target all range of travellers – be it budget or luxury. India and Victoria both have a strong connection in terms of sports and there is a great potential of sports tourism originating out of India,” Ho adds.

India records the strongest growth in terms of visitors to Victoria with 1,44,200 Indian visitors a year ending December 2017, a growth of 22.6 per cent. “We have also noticed a prominent increase in Indian visitor expenditure with US\$ 392 million, a growth of 22.3 per cent. Indian visitor nights in Victoria have also recorded a growth of 14 per cent. VFR being our strongest segment, comprises almost 50 per cent of our Indian travellers currently. We are happy to announce that India is our fourth largest

inbound market for Victoria in visitor numbers,” she adds.

Promoting the Australian Open in India is Melbourne-based Safir Tours, the only inbound tour operator appointed to sell packages with match tickets in



Celia Ho  
Regional Manager—South and South East Asia, Visit Victoria

“ VFR comprises almost 50 per cent of our Indian travellers currently. India is our fourth largest inbound market for Victoria in visitor numbers ”

the Indian market. Nayaz Noor, CEO, Safir Tours, says, “Visitors can combine an ODI match between India and Australia at the MCG on January 18 with a tennis match on January 19, 2019 at Rod Laver Arena. It will be a rare opportunity for the sports lover!”

It sells packages of two nights with match tickets for two sessions. “For this, we are only targeting the B2B market in India. However, we are reaching out to tennis academies and associations in India to generate interest. They will have to book through their travel agents. India is an important market for this since we do have star players like Ramkumar Ramanathan, Yuki Bhambri and several players who could be out here playing. Their fans need to come out here to support them. We are pushing this pretty much pan India through key agencies,” Noor adds.

Speaking about the numbers he expects to achieve for the

Australian Open 2019 from the India market, he says, “It’s difficult to say as we know the numbers from India last year were dismal. If we are able to get even 150-200 from India to witness these matches, we would consider it a great start.”



Nayaz Noor  
CEO  
Safir Tours

“ India is an important market as we have star players like Ramkumar Ramanathan, Yuki Bhambri and others who could be out here playing ”

Safir Tours will participate in ITM show in August and tennis is one of the main focuses of its product mix that it is promoting this year. “Should Visit Victoria plan anything in the near future, we will try to be a part of it. At this moment, we have reached out to them to see how we can collaborate in promoting this in the Indian market. We wait for more information. In case an agent is interested in selling this to their client, they will have to sell our two-night package, plus match tickets and combine it with their air tickets, visa, insurance and any other post or pre-stays in Australia and sell it to their clients,” he adds.

## Did you Know?

### Culture Culture

Melbourne will also play host to an Indian cultural event – the first-ever cricket community and cultural festival that will take place outside the MCG during the Test Match

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# Buyers & sellers rejoice at RDTM

Both buyers and sellers engaged in back-to-back meetings and networking sessions at the first edition of Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM). While many say that the focus on domestic tourism was much needed, others believe that domestic business is going to surpass the growth of inbound in India.



Nisha Verma from Jaipur



**Randhir Vikram Singh**  
Joint Managing Director,  
Mandawa Group of Hotels  
& Senior Vice President,  
FHTR

“Domestic tourism is of prime importance today, as with the international economy slowing, inbound business rates are going down. It is, therefore important to look into our own yard as we are brimming with plenty of tourism scope. We wanted to professionalise the domestic market. We have been very rigid about having the appointments and have also taken a security deposit from every agent which will be returned once they complete 95 per cent of their meetings.”



**Sunil Gupta**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
WelcomHeritage Hotels &  
Vice President FHTR

“The idea of RDTM was conceived about three years back. There were many marts in India and a lot of stress is being laid on international marts. Hence, we decided to look at the domestic mart. Rajasthan is seen as an off-season time during the summers, but summers is the time when most of Indians are travelling. Hence, we wanted this mart to give it a fillip. The government supported us and funded this project. Hence, there is a very minimal charge being taken from people who are participating at the mart. Agents have come from all over the country, and we are hopeful that participants would get good mileage out of this.”



**Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar**  
Executive Director, Historic  
Resort Hotels, Udaipur

“There was a huge vacuum as far as domestic travel was concerned and now we are glad to be able to have a forum based out of Rajasthan. We are now able to have one-on-one meetings, which are more intense and quality-oriented with all the people based out of Rajasthan. There's a lot that the country has gone through in the last couple of years. This event has come at the right time to take that boost forward and especially at a junction when the season is just about to begin. It will take some time to settle down, but I think that a journey of a thousand miles always begins with the first step. I am glad that the first step is being taken in this direction.”

“RDTM would be a flagship mart for Rajasthan domestically. It is going to give a real boost to the domestic travellers coming in and domestic business coming into the hotel. In the coming years, this would be much bigger than other inbound marts as well. The inbound tourism is getting thinner while domestic tourism is increasingly on the rise. We are focusing majorly on MICE and weddings as we observe a rising trend among domestic travellers in this direction. This mart can act as the perfect catalyst and platform to enhance these factors.”



**Asif Hafeez Khan**  
General Manager—Regional Sales, Clarks Group of Hotels

“As a maiden mart, RDTM has been organised very well. The list of sellers is very interesting; there are also some upcoming new properties and hotels. This is the best way that exhibitors can showcase their products under one roof. I am dealing in the luxury and niche market, and I would perhaps be very happy to see some new products and experiences which I would be looking at promoting. I think experiences is something that the traveller requires now for the domestic market. Having been familiarised with Rajasthan as a tourist state, I am looking at some new products and takeaways when I leave the state.”



**Maitreyee Patel**  
Director  
Pathfinders Holidays

“If you look at the fairs in the last five years, inbound business is probably growing at about 10 per cent and the domestic market is growing at over 20 per cent. Hence, I think it's only logical that states and industry have more focus on domestic market than on the inbound. What impressed me here is the quality of the booths. I am equally surprised to see the number of properties which Rajasthan has got on the first floor. I never realised that in the last two-three years, many new properties have emerged and it's good to see that all of them are here today focusing on domestic tourism in the state. There has been a reasonably good mix of buyers from across the country.”



**Himmat Anand**  
Founder, Tree of Life  
Resorts & Hotels & Tree  
Leaf Hospitality



**Vikas Sharma**  
Assistant Vice President—Sales, Travel Trade, The Oberoi Group

“It's a terrain that everybody would like to walk and have a pie of. The organisers of RDTM have a good database of the unstructured partners as well. We are delighted to meet them. It's very early to say how much suspect leads would be converted into prospect business, but nevertheless, I look forward to it. In fact, a lot of effort has been made to get buyers from hinterland markets and Tier II and III cities. We do not have reach into those markets, and thus it's a good initiative for us to connect with them, especially the neighbouring states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.”



**Shruti Pandey**  
Founder  
Synergi Hospitality  
Marketing

“An event like this was much required and it has finally taken shape. It is perceived as the beginning of something big. We looked at the buyers very specifically and concentrated on those who are doing domestic with a lot of outdoor activities and experiences. Indians are now looking for experiences and adventures. Hence, we wanted something similar on these lines and we are getting the kind of people. A lot of them are already associated with some of the properties. Hence, I am confident that the relationship would only get better.”



**Manmeet Singh**  
Chairman, IATO Punjab and  
Chairman, ADTOI North India – Haryana, Chandigarh, Punjab

“This is a great initiative by Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR), and it is the first time that such an event is happening. The Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart is an excellent platform for promotion of domestic tourism. The exhibition is of good magnitude and we indeed had some very good interactive meetings. It's a win-win situation for not only the sellers but also buyers. For me, it is a good proposition as a businessman and as the Chairman of associations as well. I would definitely like to have such kind of events in my region as well.”

“RDTM is an excellent opportunity for domestic tour operators because this is a private and government joint effort happening for the first time in our country. Domestic tour operators finally get recognition. I met more than 80+ suppliers in Rajasthan. It is a good platform to create and network. At Veena World, we do more than 250 groups in Rajasthan in a year for domestic tours and we are happy to have started with MICE as well as inbound. So this will be very useful to all of us. RDTM is a great platform to meet all our stakeholders under one platform.”



**Sudhir Patil**  
President, Maharashtra Tour  
Organisers' Association and  
Founder & Director, Veena  
World Mumbai

“The inaugural edition of RDTM has been very fruitful. This is a great opportunity for us to network with the travel partners, hoteliers, wedding planners and hotels in Rajasthan. Domestic business is a 365-day business. Even in summers and off-season, which is considered low season for Rajasthan, the numbers have increased. Weddings is one big segment in Rajasthan and I believe all states would organise these kinds of marts to promote domestic tourism and other related activities. I have been able to reconnect with all the partners and small havelis, which were beyond my access.”



**Rajat Sawhney**  
Director- Rave Tours &  
Travels and Vice President,  
Association of Domestic Tour  
Operators of India (ADTOI)

“I congratulate the organisers for holding this mart. Inbound is there of course, but if you see the numbers, domestic tourism is growing manifold than inbound. Hence, I would request other states also to come forward and hold this domestic mart. For the first time, the event has been organised very well, barring a few loopholes. There are some issues with the appointment system and number of appointments. The exhibitors are little less, buyers are little more and slots they allotted to each buyer is 40. Hence, people have empty slots in their appointments sheets. I believe the team will work on it and the second edition would be bigger than what it is.”



**Chetan Gupta**  
General Secretary  
ADTOI



# Ensure you're insured

An Indian student in Slovenia gets help in time when she got ill as she opted to top-up her university medical cover with TrawellTag Cover-More insurance. Taking a correct insurance decision is very important.



Needing medical care whilst abroad can be frightening, but certain well informed decisions can come handy while in need! One such decision was taken by **Ritika Kandhari's** parents, who opted to top-up her university medical cover with TrawellTag Cover-More assistance and insurance.

### What happened?

Ritika, a young dynamic girl, who went to Slovenia for higher studies, unfortunately, came down with fever and headaches within few days of joining the university. No amount of medication improved her condition and she was advised to get admitted to the University Medical Centre in Ljubljana, Slovenia where she was diagnosed with meningitis.

### How did we help?

All it took was a call from Ritika's mother, who was back home in India, to a toll-free number for the travel assistance experts to take control of the entire situation in Slovenia instantly. Ritika's health condition was monitored continuously with regular communication between the doctor in-charge, her family and assistance expert.

### Help in time!



Ritika Kandhari  
Student

"TrawellTag Cover-More's assistance service was a beacon of support when I fell sick during my study abroad. Their expert services provided comfort to my worried parents and ensured I recovered without any hassles."

- Ritika Kandhari

With a hassle-free hospitalisation process, cashless treatment and utmost care for around 10 days, Kandhari was discharged and resumed her college after a while. Her undying spirit and a holistic

assistance and insurance plan stood by her through her journey to recovery. TrawellTag Cover-More doesn't want to just meet expectations – it wants to repeatedly exceed them!

# Riya trains Kolkata staff



With the aim of further empowering its people with training and education, Riya Travel & Tours recently enabled a product orientation programme conducted by members of Emirates as well as Bajaj Allianz for its staff members at its Kolkata office so that they understand and sell them better.

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## New prez @Skål Bombay

The Skål Club of Bombay announced new committee members led by **Kuldeep Bhartee**, General Manager (Area Manager—West), ITC Hotels, as its President.

TT Bureau

Skål International, Bombay Club recently held its 62nd Annual General Meeting at the West End Hotel in Mumbai – a tradition that has still continued for decades – where **Kuldeep Bhartee**, General Manager (Area Manager – West) ITC Hotels, and General Manager, ITC Maratha, was elected unopposed as the President of the Bombay club. The meeting was well



**Kuldeep Bhartee**  
General Manager  
(Area Manager—West), ITC Hotels

“Mumbai has witnessed a tremendous growth in tourist arrivals in 2017. This strong momentum is expected to continue”

attended by more than 80 members. The President elect, Bhartee, gave a presentation on his vision for the club and goals of this elite club and the roadmap which lay ahead.

Bhartee in his speech said, “Mumbai has witnessed a tremendous growth in international and domestic tourist arrivals in the year 2017. This strong momentum

is expected to continue in the coming years. Being an elite club, the management committee of the club will rise to the occasion and will work closer with all stakeholders to ensure it benefits every member.”

The new Skål Club of Bombay committee members are **Kuldeep Bhartee** as President, **Sunil Chopra** as Vice President, **Vaibhav Kedia** as Vice President, **Sunil Acharya** as Hon Secretary, **Kunal Sampat** as Hon Jt Secretary, and **Arvind Tandon** as Hon Treasurer. The Committee Members are **Suresh Gulrajani**, **Rosita Haribal**, **Jyot Jhaveri**, **Vinayakk Laud** and **Sujata Mariwala**. The Co-opted Members are **Rakesh Marrott** and **Jason O’Conner**. ↴

## Change is constant

Change brings a new aspect in a business and that is what exactly IATO as an association is working for its members and the travel fraternity.

Simranjeet Singh Arora

**Rajesh Mudgil**, newly-elected Honorary Secretary, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has expressed his concern to bring about some positive changes for the association’s work frame through amendments in the constitution. “Firstly, amendments in the constitution is a must, because our constitution was reincorporated in 1996 by then president **Maharaja Wahi**. There have been no changes in the constitution thereafter.



**Rajesh Mudgil**  
newly-elected Honorary Secretary  
IATO

and day-to-day assessment of the association is what I am

“We have reduced the price for our luncheon meetings; the convention fee has also been brought down by almost 35 per cent”

Secondly, I believe IATO should be more transparent to its members. Also, engaging members in decision making

aiming for, along with inclusion of maximum members for a flexible atmosphere,” he said.

Elaborating on the amendments, he said, “I would like to introduce one representative as Vice President from each of the four regions. IATO would like to consider the opinion of their members and then make amendments in the constitution.”

The newly-elected Honorary Secretary wants the association to be on top of the list of apex bodies of tourism sector in the country and help the fraternity connected with the association in terms of business growth.

“Business and monetary benefits are in progress. We have reduced the price for our luncheon meetings; the convention fee has also been brought down by almost 35 per cent. Through these, I would like to bring forth some suited changes on the table,” added Mudgil. ↴

## ADTOI hosts agents

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), in association with Punjab Tourism, recently organised a Fam for members to Amritsar.

TT Bureau

ADTOI organised a three-day Fam to Amritsar for approximately 50 delegates, including members of the association. Delegates visited some of the city’s historically significant spots such as the war memo-

saying, “Punjab Tourism had drawn up an interesting itinerary that included places of significance which delegates were visiting for the very first time. Members were also praising the arrangements made by the tourism board, from transportation and stay

had much more to offer.

Also present during the Fam was **SS Dhillon**, Director – Tourism, Government of Punjab, who met the delegates and discussed strategies that could help promote Punjab among tourists. In the opinion



rial, Partition Museum, Wagah Border, Ram Tirath, Golden Temple and *Sadda Pind* - a heritage resort.

**PP Khanna**, President, ADTOI, was pleased to see how exhilarated the members were,

to showcasing destinations in and around Amritsar. With this Fam, Punjab Tourism hopes to promote Amritsar as a destination where travellers could spend more than just a night.” Post the tour, members were convinced that the city

of **Manmeet Singh**, Chairman, ADTOI - North India, the trip was a remarkable success where Punjab Tourism got a chance to showcase new tourist products of Amritsar that had not been seen earlier by the travel fraternity. ↴

## TAFI starts credit facility

The Western Chapter of Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has taken its joint bank guarantee scheme with IATA and replicated it for hotels.

Hazel Jain

The Western India Chapter of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has become the first association chapter to initiate a joint bank guarantee scheme for hotels for its members. It has started the pilot project with IHCL (India Hotels Company Limited). **Abbas Moiz**, Chairman, TAFI (Western India), said, “TAFI has signed an agreement for credit facility for small and mid-sized agents on the lines of a joint bank guarantee arrangement. Mid-sized agents will be able to get credit from IHCL for their domestic hotels for booking of up to eight rooms. This is a pilot that IHCL is running with the Western Indian Chapter of TAFI. It could be a new stream of income or business for agents. It is like getting recognition directly from the hotel rather than going through



**Abbas Moiz**  
Chairman, TAFI (Western India)

a third party aggregators or online portals. You are now getting a chance to create an identity for yourself and building a relationship with them with a good arrangement and at a good price.”

There are three slabs of two lakhs, five lakhs and 10 lakhs of which 50 per cent is to be deposited with TAFI. The association will use it to create a



**Rajat Bagaria**  
Joint Secretary, TAFI

bank guarantee for IHCL.

**Rajat Bagaria**, Joint Secretary, TAFI, has been working on this pilot since day one. He says, “TAFI has actually mastered the joint bank guarantee scheme with the airlines. Taking a cue from that, we thought this was the next way forward. Having done this with IHCL, we may look at other hotel chains as well – Indian or international. ↴



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# 'Tis all about the seasons...

The summer vacation has recently concluded and the monsoon is on a rise. India Travel Award winners review the growth and targets in the summer and monsoon season.

 Manas Dwivedi

★ **Most Scenic Resort —**  
**Wayanad Silverwoods Resort (South 2018)**



“Summers have always been one of the best seasons for us and this year also, it was no different. It really helped us in starting the new financial year with a bang, feels **Dr Jaya Benny**, Director, Silverwoods Resorts. She further explains, “Wayanad is famous for its monsoon and lush greenery. This is a great time for rain-watchers like Arab tourists as well as for Ayurveda treatments. Usually, Indian tourists are averse to such heavy rains. So naturally, our target customers are from Gulf regions, and we expect a good turn-around of Arab tourists.” ”

★ **Best Family Resort —**  
**Esthell- The Village Resort (South 2018)**



“The season was reasonably well. Amid hot summers, the expected guest bookings were less and hence, we couldn't achieve our targets. The hotel industry is constantly growing and giving us tough competition,” says **D Devadas**, Vice President, Esthell Hotels & Resorts. On expansion, he says, “We are expanding our room inventory while adding more activities in the resort. We are also introducing different packages for families. Our strategy is to attract more youngsters to use our vast outdoor and sports activities.” ”

★ **Best Business Travel Agency —**  
**Osaka Air Travels (South 2018)**



“On the ongoing travel trend, **P B Boss**, Managing Director, Osaka Air Travels feels, “Kerala mostly witnesses a decrease in inbound tourism during the summer season because of high temperatures. Hence, there was a decrease of 3.2 per cent in tourism traffic from outside India, especially Europe. Outbreak of Nipah virus was the only hurdle but quick action by the Kerala government prevented major issues. There is still some uncertainty about the monsoon season as Kerala is currently overwhelmed with unexpected heavy rainfall. I hope that as soon as it dries out, tourism activities will improve.” ”

★ **Best Luxury Tour Operator- Outbound —**  
**Mercury Travels (West 2017)**



“Focusing on her company's performance, **Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar**, Head-Outbound Holidays, Mercury Travels says, “Personally, the season has not been bad for us. We have seen growth in our offbeat track experiences and in the revenues of each file, as the focus was more on quality. During the summer season, we have more families and kids travelling while in the monsoons, we have families travelling whose kids are in the international schools. We also have couples travelling during the monsoons. Small groups and MiCE also show movement during the monsoons.” ”

★ **Best Green Resort —**  
**Mango Mist Resort (South 2018)**



“Summer season was good for us. We have comfortably achieved our targets as we already crossed our budgeted numbers in the last three months. As such, there is no specific plan for the monsoon season,” says **Mani Varma**, General Manager, Mango Mist Resort. On the monsoon season, he says, “Right now, large numbers of our guests are from the IT and electronic cities. Group bookings are doing well for us with some IT companies taking services from our resort. We don't have many travellers coming to our resort in the monsoon season.” ”

★ **Best Boutique Resort —**  
**The Leaf Munnar (South 2018)**



“**Jolly James**, General Manager, The Leaf Munnar, says that his resort experienced a fruitful summer season. “In comparison to last year, we have had a great season. This year, the monsoon is on a higher side in Munnar due to which we didn't had much occupancy in the last two months. Looking at the upcoming Neelakurinji blossoming season, which only happens once in every 12 years, we are looking forward to a great season ahead. We are also expanding and the new area will be ready by next season.” ”

★ **Best Travel Insurance Provider —**  
**Trawelltag Cover-More (South 2018)**



“Sharing the details about his plan, **Ravi Ancheril**, AVP, Kerala Karnataka Retail Sales tells, “The summer season was really good. We experienced a reasonable amount of growth. After crunching numbers, we almost had 20-25 per cent growth in comparison to last year. For the monsoon season, we have planned out a different strategy altogether. For that, we have kept a modest target of achieving 15-20 per cent growth over last year. We are in the final process of working it out and expecting a very good season ahead.” ”

★ **Best Luxury Hotel —**  
**Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru (South 2018)**



“Reviewing the hotel's business in key seasons, **Rajan Malhotra**, Director—Sales & Marketing, Shangri-La Bengaluru says, Bengaluru enjoys a flat season throughout the year but some key MiCE events are a good opportunity to spike RevPar throughout the city. We are continuing to ramp up the ADR and occupancy.” On the upcoming monsoon season, he explains, “In the next quarter, we will be predominantly dependent on corporate movement and we plan to capitalise this opportunity to market our services on various platforms including digital and print media.” ”





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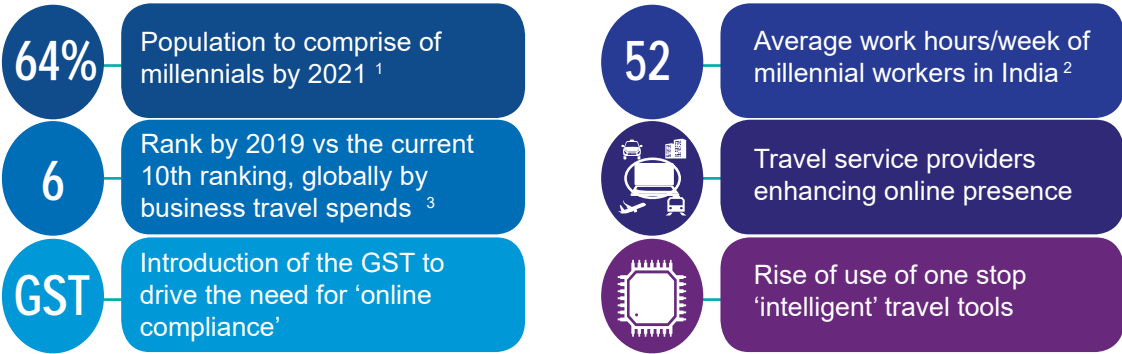
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| Philippines Tourism & Singapore Airlines Roadshow       | Kolkata       | 1      |
| Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow                              | Visakhapatnam | 1      |
| Dubai Tourism Leisure Roadshow                          | Ahmedabad     | 2      |
| GPS   | Kolkata       | 2-4    |
| Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow                              | Coimbatore    | 3      |
| Dubai Tourism Leisure Roadshow                          | Mumbai        | 3      |
| IITM  | Chennai       | 3-5    |
| Tourism Powerhouse by PATA India                        | Delhi         | 5-6    |
| Tourism Fiji Roadshow                                   | Mumbai        | 6-7    |
| Chic Retail, Bicester Village Sales Mission, B2B        | Delhi-NCR     | 6-7    |
| Tourism Fiji Roadshow                                   | Delhi         | 8      |
| Chic Retail, Bicester Village Sales Mission, B2B        | Ahmedabad     | 8      |
| Qatar Tourism Authority India Workshop                  | Delhi         | 8      |
| India International Hospitality Expo                    | Noida         | 8-11   |
| Tourism Fiji Roadshow                                   | Kolkata       | 9      |
| Israel Tourism Roadshow                                 | Pune          | 9      |
| Chic Retail, Bicester Village Sales Mission, B2B        | Mumbai        | 9-10   |
| GPS   | Kochi         | 9-11   |
| Tourism Fiji Roadshow                                   | Bengaluru     | 10     |
| ADTOI Elections   | Delhi         | 11     |
| OTOAI Convention  | Cape Town     | 11-14  |
| Tourism Fiji Half Day Roadshow                          | Hyderabad     | 13     |
| Tourism Fiji Half Day Roadshow                          | Pune          | 14     |
| Skål International India National Congress              | Kolkata       | 17-19  |
| Aeroflot-Russian Airlines 60th Anniversary Celebrations | Delhi         | 17     |
| Philippines Tourism & Singapore Airlines Roadshow       | Ahmedabad     | 20     |
| Tourism Australia ITM 2018                              | Jaipur        | 20-22  |
| Buddhist Tourism Conclave                               | Delhi         | 22-26  |
| GPS   | Pune          | 23-25  |
| Dubai Business Events Roadshow                          | Mumbai        | 27     |
| Israel Tourism Roadshow                                 | Ahmedabad     | 27     |
| Netherlands Tourism Roadshow                            | Delhi- NCR    | 28     |
| Luxury Hotels Showcase                                  | Mumbai        | 28- 29 |
| Israel Tourism Roadshow                                 | Kolkata       | 29     |
| Dubai Business Events Roadshow                          | Delhi- NCR    | 29     |
| Netherlands Tourism Roadshow                            | Bengaluru     | 29     |
| ICPB Conventions India Conclave                         | Kolkata       | 29-31  |
| Israel Tourism Roadshow                                 | New Delhi     | 30     |
| Dubai Business Events Roadshow                          | Bengaluru     | 30     |
| Netherlands Tourism Roadshow                            | Mumbai        | 30     |
| Luxury Hotels Showcase                                  | Delhi-NCR     | 30-31  |

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

Business travel gains pace

Enlisting the factors driving digi-smart business travel in India, FCM Travel Solutions and KPMG’s recent whitepaper titled ‘The Digi-Smart Indian Business Traveller’ forecasts that the growing share of millennials in the Indian workforce work for longer hours than their global peers.

Factors driving digi-smart business travel in India



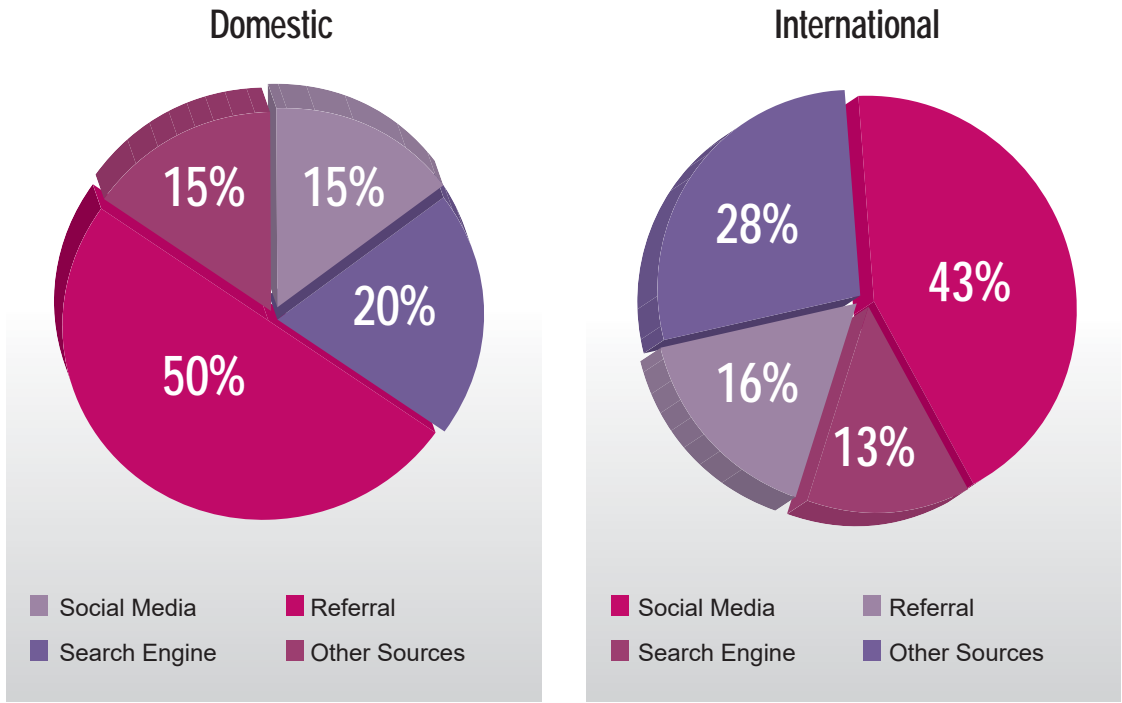
Travel service providers (airlines, hotels, taxi operators, etc) are enhancing their available capacity for online users, which is becoming an important travel booking channel. The introduction of the GST is also driving businesses to use the online route to meet the regulatory and compliance requirements. The emergence of user friendly technology solutions such as Artificial Intelligence and SBT is also making Indian travel managers use the digital platform as the mainstay in managing their travel and claims.

Source: The Digi-Smart Indian Business Traveller

Social media drives business

According to a Travel Wedding Show survey on how to generate business for weddings, 43% of the business is generated through social media; so the more one is on social media, the more enquiries will they get for international weddings.

Sources to generate – Destination Wedding Business



13 per cent by referrals and rest is by other sources. In India, 50 per cent of the business gets generated through referrals; 20 per cent from social media; 15 per cent through search engine and 15 per cent from other sources.

“Destination wedding for the next five years will be the biggest thing. Weddings are big business, and everyone wants a piece of the pie. If as wedding planners we have to survive, we need to go out, to different cities and destinations and procure more business. Indian and international destination weddings will remain, the next business thing,” says Rajeev Jain, Founder and Director, Rashi Entertainment.

Source: Travel Wedding Show



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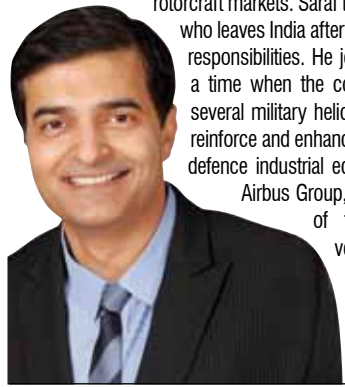
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## Airbus Group India

### Delhi

Airbus has appointed **Ashish Saraf** as Head of the helicopter division of Airbus India to lead its initiatives across the civil, defence and parapublic rotorcraft markets. Saraf takes over from Xavier Hay who leaves India after six years to take over new responsibilities. He joins Airbus Helicopters at a time when the company is competing on several military helicopter projects that would reinforce and enhance the local aerospace and defence industrial ecosystem. Prior to joining Airbus Group, Saraf was the India head of the Tata Sikorsky joint venture since 2010.



## Travel Clinic

### Noida

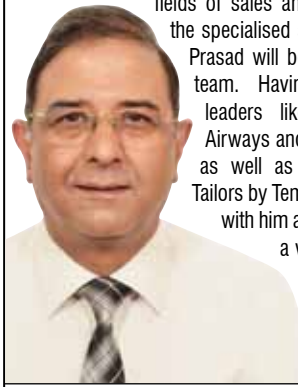
**Vicky Soin** has been appointed as Country Business Head—MiCE of Travel Clinic. With over two decades of experience in the travel industry, he has managed leadership roles in reputed national and international organisations like International Travel House, Abercrombie & Kent India, SOTC, Sita World Travel India. As a brand and MiCE strategist, Soin has a unique ability to customer understanding, client relationship and cost savings measures. His career has been a journey of many milestones and recognitions. Soin has also been writing articles for some of the leading travel magazines.



## Visa Lounge

### Delhi

**Vijay Prasad** has recently joined Visa Lounge as the Regional Head (North). With an experience of over 30 years in the fields of sales and business development in the specialised space of travel and tourism, Prasad will be an incredible asset to the team. Having worked with industry leaders like Singapore Airlines, Jet Airways and VFS Global – Kuoni Group, as well as smaller setups like Travel Tailors by Templeton Group, Prasad brings with him an understanding of nuances, a versatility of skills and an in-depth understanding of the industry across sectors and sizes.



## JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

### Bengaluru

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru has announced the appointment of **Reuben Kataria** as its new General Manager. A seasoned professional with impeccable track record, Kataria brings with him vast knowledge and experience in the hotel industry. In his new role, he will oversee complete operations and management of the hotel along with the senior leadership team. With over 23 years of experience, Kataria has been associated with Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, India and The Oberoi Group, where he held leadership roles. He began his journey with Hyatt Hotels in 1995 in the Food & Beverage department.



## Mayfair Hotels

### Bhubaneswar

Mayfair Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Bjorn DeNiese** as Vice President—Business Development. In his new role, he will be responsible for spearheading the group's future plans as it aims to deploy a new sub-brand into the market. Bjorn, who played a significant role in the group's growth story post 2007, headed the sales, marketing and revenue for the group with key contributions in the setup of central reservations, restructuring of the sales network and various other technological developments.



### Kolkata

Joining the company as its Regional Head (East) is **Samir Bhaumik**. Bhaumik brings with him an experience of over 20 years of experience in the field of travel and tourism. Having spent the last decade and a half of his career at the highly reputed Amadeus India, Bhaumik has an impeccable aptitude for business development, coupled with accurate projections and flawless execution. His core strengths lie in in-depth analysis, detailed strategies and communication and liaisons with clients and partners.



## Exotic Heritage Group

### Delhi

**Raghavendra Rao** has been designated as Vice President—Operations of Exotic Journeys. With 33 years of his association with the company, Rao joined as an executive and climbed the ladder of seniority to currently handle entire operations of the company. Prior to this, he had worked with Trade Wings for seven years, handled cash and all bank-related activities along with the legal cases. With limited knowledge of the travel industry, Rao now has considerable knowledge about this trade which he acquired on the job.



**Pradipta Mohapatra** has been appointed as the Assistant Vice President of Mayfair Hotels & Resorts to head the Sales & Marketing division of the group. He will be responsible for the entire Sales & Marketing operation of the group including financial budgets, sales office operation pan India, marketing, brand building, central reservation and revenue management. Mohapatra began his career with Oberoi Group and is associated with Mayfair since 2008 in various positions.



### Bengaluru

**Kavita Hemanth** is the newly appointed Regional head (South) for Visa Lounge. Her track record boasts of securing key clients and increasing product distribution to grow market share, as the head of business development at her previous positions at reputed companies such as Ezeego1, Quantas Airways and Travel Boutique. With a keen eye on the market, exploring and analysing market trends and opportunities, Hemanth brings with her an analytical mind and a penchant for strategy, negotiations and converting leads into sales.



The following regular column provides you a brief update on world events and how they impact the tourism sector.



Nikhil Jeet

WorldTalk

### Belize

The Belize Barrier Reef, the largest barrier reef system in the Northern Hemisphere and the second largest in the world, has been removed from the United Nations list of endangered world heritage sites.

### Washington, USA

Nestled among the Cascade mountain range sits Mount Rainier, a postcard-perfect natural wonder and a volcano that causes concern. This may be the most dangerous US volcano and a future eruption could cause a natural disaster.

### Klagenfurt, Austria

The 21st annual World Bodypainting Festival welcomed artists from over 50 countries where artists used bodies of all shapes and sizes as canvasses for their brilliant, eccentric creations.

### Abu Dhabi, UAE

The biggest ever indoor theme park, Warner Bros World in Abu Dhabi, opens its doors. This stunning \$1 billion facility is a 1.65 million square foot attraction on Yas Island. The new park is separated into six areas including Bedrock from the Flintstones and Batman's Gotham City.



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# Starrs lights up the Indian sky

Oman Air's new Chief Commercial Officer, **Paul Starrs**, was in India recently to meet the airline's top agency partners and discuss new routes and strategies for the India market. In an interview with **TRAVTALK**, he talks about his perception of the market and how he plans to tap its potential.



Hazel Jain

Oman Air recently organised exclusive networking evenings in New Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai to introduce its new Chief Commercial Officer, **Paul Starrs**, to its top agent partners. Owners of key companies like Akbar Travels, Creative Tours & Travels, Riya Travel & Tours, Veena World and Trust Travels & Tours attended to welcome Starrs. Even associations like TAAI and TAFI made an appearance.

## Oman – A weekend getaway

Starrs has re-joined the airline about four months ago after a gap of five years. After studying the current tourism landscape of India, he has suggested a new idea to promote the airline in India. "Why can't Oman become a weekend destination for India? We already fly to 11 cities here," he asked the audience.

"Oman Air is growing and we ask the trade here to continue to support us. We also need to grow the number of visitors to

Oman from India. So the question I have been asking while in India is – why can't Oman be a popular long weekend destination from India, or even as a stopover for a couple of days for people travelling to Europe to see and explore the destination? It is only a couple of hours away and maybe not as well-known as some of the other places in the Gulf area. So we are keen to have it as a weekend destination from India," Starrs adds.

## India as a market

He views India as a market with huge potential. "We are definitely interested in flying to

age more tourist movement to Oman.

"During my visit to India, I had encouraging talks with the travel trade about Oman as a destination. We are seeing strong growth from India to our European network as well. So now it is about encouraging some of those customers to stop over in Oman. We are taking this up with various travel agents here in India and the associations," Starrs says.

## New points in the network

After the recent additions to its network (see box), Oman Air is looking to add some points

If he had a magic wand and could use it to add one more Indian city, which one would it be? "Ahmedabad," he is quick to answer.

The airline recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary over 25 days and as a gesture to the trade, it gave away 25 tickets to agencies for destinations that they sell.

“The importance of the India market for Oman Air is reflected in the fact that 11 of the total of 53 points are in India. Some of them have one flight a day while some have three a day”

more places in India. Its importance is reflected in the fact that 11 of the total of 53 points are in India; so it represents an important part of our network and I believe the continued economic development of India will open up many more cities. We also see a growth of local carriers coming into the India market," he says optimistically.

Oman Air flies daily from all 11 points in India. Some of them have one flight a day while some have three flights a day. The airline also works closely with the Oman tourism board wherever it operates to encour-

in Africa next year. Starrs reveals, "We may also look at a few other places in Europe too. We also want to add to the 11 cities in India. Unfortunately, we do not have the rights to – we are currently at the limit of our bilaterals so we are looking forward to discussions with the relevant government departments. We can then hopefully get access to more points in India."



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## New Routes

Oman Air has recently started two new routes – to Istanbul on June 1 and to Casablanca on July 1. It is also slated to start Moscow operations from October 28 as well as Maldives later this year. While Istanbul and Moscow will be served by Oman Air's Boeing 737-800, Casablanca will be served by 787-8.

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# TBO emerges stronger

TBO Group seems to have come out stronger as Standard Chartered Private Equity (SCPE) acquires Naspers' stake in TBO Group. The company is also considering a few companies for acquisition.



Kanchan Nath

TBO Group have come out stronger as Standard Chartered Private Equity (SCPE) acquires Naspers' stake in TBO Group. SCPE now owns 49 per cent of the stake vis-a-vis Naspers that earlier owned 51 per cent with both co-founders currently owning 51 per cent stake.

## Partners First

➔ TBO Academy is something TBO Group recently built and started. It has also launched the Roamer App

➔ The company will also bring cruises online by the end of the year. It tries to provide its partners with quick deals and the finest cutting-edge technology in the B2B space

Ankush Nijhawan, Co-founder, TBO Group, says, "SCPE now believes in our business model that we have built over the last 12 years; I think the game has just begun. The market is in our favour, we are in the fastest growing travel economy in India as well as other emerging countries where we are present. Most are emerging economies and growing rapidly in the travel business."

Nijhawan adds, "More than profits, it's the dream that we chase. We may go in for some serious acquisitions as we are currently looking at a few companies. What TBO did in the past six years, we will try to accomplish in the next three years."

On SCPE's plans for TBO, Nijhawan said, "SCPE is very bullish on our busi-

ness plans, they believe in us and they are going to be the growth drivers for us in the global market as well as India. They will

“We may go in for some serious acquisitions as we are currently looking at a few companies. What TBO did in the past six years, we will try to accomplish in the next three years”

back us in whatever we think is great for the company."

He further said that Naspers got a very healthy return on their investment for the last six years. "It has been a great partnership and we are very proud of creating wealth for Naspers, Nijhawan added."

In his message to travel agents, Nijhawan said, "TBO Academy is something we just built and started, and we have also recently launched

the Roamer App. We will also bring cruises online by the end of the year. We value our partners and try to provide them with quick service, deals and the finest cutting-edge technology in the B2B space."

On the company's growth, he concluded, "Growth drivers will be

in different geographies, we are by far the leaders in India and strong players in the Middle East and Africa, and emerging in Southern Africa, Latin America, Asia Pacific, China and Australia. To protect and facilitate the offline travel partners world, TBO plays a very important role and we will continue to serve our travel agents and partners. The main challenge today is to fight the mobile technology and we

now have a seamless App to counter that." ➔



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# GST: Mixed bag for hotels

While in the long-term, there are clear benefits of GST, there is also an urgent need to rationalise the multiple GST tax rates across the hospitality segment, believes **Dharam Reshamwalla**, Senior Area Director of Finance—South Asia, Marriott International.

The hotel industry was earlier structured with a multiple taxation system comprising the luxury tax, entertainment tax, service tax, etc, but now all the taxes have been harmonised into one tax summed as GST. The introduction of GST, which was hailed as one the biggest and most far-reaching tax change since independence, was welcomed by all as it was intended to reduce and remove anomalies, ensure better compliance, widen the tax base and reduce administrative procedures, thereby reducing business transaction

cost and help in the ease of doing business in India. Within a year of introduction, GST has turned out to be a mixed bag for the hotel industry. The tax reform has eased the understanding of taxes across domestic and foreign nationals. This has led to more influx of international customers, better industry growth and improved revenues for the government as well as the industry. Improved transparency has been achieved in doing business as both clients and suppliers are required to be registered

for GST. The industry finds it easier to claim and avail input tax credit as compared to VAT regime where all the inputs were not eligible for the credit, for instance, cleaning supplies, guest supplies, etc, thereby resulting in cost savings and consequently increasing profitability. While in the long-term, there are clear benefits of GST, there remain some challenges which needs to be investigated for remediation. Chargeability based on the 'declared tariff' rooms rates and procedures related to input

return credit is still unclear. Software systems are still being modified for charging as well as collating data for GST returns. There is also a need to rationalise the multiple GST tax rates across the hospitality segment. Stand-alone restaurants have a GST of 5 per cent while five-star hotels are to levy taxes at 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent. Amongst countries in Asia Pacific and Middle East, GST rates prevalent in India is the highest which makes it a less favoured destination, especially for MICE and leisure business.

The liquor sale in hotels and restaurants are still subject to VAT and are not under the ambit of GST. Similarly, electricity, diesel and gas, to cite a few examples, are currently excluded from GST. The intra-state passing of the input credit of GST is not allowed for the hospitality industry, an unfavourable condition for the corporates. Though GST is a step in the right direction and the government needs to be applauded for it, there is still some work to be done to fulfill the intent for which it was implemented.

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



**Dharam Reshamwalla**  
Senior Area Director of Finance—South Asia, Marriott International

# Agents at Oman Air soirée

Oman Air recently organised exclusive networking evenings in New Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai to introduce its new Chief Commercial Officer, **Paul Starrs**, to its top agent partners. Starrs re-joined the airline three months ago after a gap of five years.





## TravelBullz on expansion spree

After Thailand and Hong Kong, TravelBullz is venturing into new markets. **Kanwar Deep Singh**, Founder & President, briefs about the company's growth.



Manas Dwivedi

TravelBullz is poised to expand its reach and presence in new destinations by the end of this year. The company is also developing its own in-house technology to take care of their growing technological needs. Talking about his plans, **Kanwar Deep Singh**, Founder & President, TravelBullz says, "By the end of this year, we would be opening two new destinations in Singapore and India. We have been leading outbound travel in India for our destinations, so I think it's about time we get the India inbound and domestic business right."

Expressing joy over a fruitful first half of 2018 in terms of

business implementation, Singh says, "We are well on our way to outgrow our budgeted numbers. Our star performers this year have been our API/XML business, which has grown over 300 per cent followed by our MiCE & groups business,

"This product gives all our partners a unique opportunity to upgrade their existing guests onto Escorted Tour for

**"We have a diversified source market spread over the Indian subcontinent, Middle East and China. The Asian market is propelling our growth to the next level. We'd surpass US \$25 million worth of top line"**

which grew by over 100 per cent in the first six months of the year."

"We now have a fairly diversified source market spread over Indian subcontinent, Middle East and China. The Asian market is propelling our growth to the next level. We would surpass US \$25 million worth of top line," he adds.

TravelBullz has recently launched a new product called "Escorted SIC Land Combo Packages", which aims at delivering quality services to FIT guests in a fully guided package tour right from the pick up at airport.

a hassle-free holiday with a guided service throughout the journey," says Singh.

Launched in April 2017, the company's 'Booker's Incentive Scheme' is also receiving overwhelming response. "We have close to 1000 bookers registered for the scheme. It is widely popular among our travel partners and we are expecting better results this year," explained Singh.

Talking about the growth of

tourism industry in India, Singh feels that the industry will continue to boom. "If we compare the number of people travelling in India with its population, the number will suggest that it haven't even scratched tip of an iceberg. There is a lot of scope for development," says Singh.

TravelBullz will be celebrating its eighth anniversary in August 2018 and the company has planned a 4 night/5-day trip to Phuket and Bangkok for all its offices.

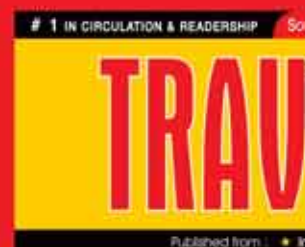
### Expansions and Achievements

- ✦ Expanding its portfolio, TravelBullz will open Singapore as its new destination by the end of this year
- ✦ The company will celebrate its eighth anniversary in Phuket and Bangkok this month
- ✦ Launched in April 2017, the company's 'Booker's Incentive Scheme' is also receiving overwhelming response. It has close to 1000 bookers registered for the scheme, which is widely popular among its travel partners. TravelBullz is expecting better results this year

Briefing his promotional plans for the next season, Singh says, "We have been working very closely with our hotels and attraction partners whilst continuing to bring great product offerings to our customer through our digital, print and social media campaigns. This coming season, a lot of our partners have confirmed their participation in our marketing plans. Some of the key partners include Venetian, Parisian and others (Sands group of hotels, Disneyland, Ocean

Park, Banyan Tree, Lebua, Phuket Fanta Sea) and a host of other partners." ✦

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Cholan Tours became the first tour  
company to offer this special  
service in collaboration with the tourism  
department of Andhra Pradesh. It is one of  
the most visited Hindu temples from all over  
India and also by NRIs settled across the world.

K Pandian, Managing Director, Cholan Tours Group  
informs, "Recent news reports mentioned that on certain  
days, pilgrims waited for darshan for 20 hours and even

people who paid ` 300 for VIP darshan waited for six hours.  
Given the fact that mostly family members and elderly people  
come for Tirupati, these uncertain waiting hours are always  
a big concern for who wish to do this pilgrimage. Here, we in  
association with Andhra Pradesh Tourism come with a service  
of guaranteed special darshan (in maximum two hours' time)  
in the morning slot. Those who book with us, will be taken in a  
group escorted by a guide who will ensure a smooth passage  
for the tourists-cum-pilgrims."

He further informs that soon South Tourism will have its own  
office in Tirupati to ensure better coordination for the clients.

Pacific  
Travels:  
50 & more...

Pacific Travels has launched  
a new B2C location in Delhi.  
Nasir Zaidi, Managing  
Partner, Pacific Travels talks  
about his journey in the industry.



TT Bureau

Pacific Travels recently  
celebrated its golden jubilee  
anniversary on successful  
completion of its 50 years  
of operations in the travel  
industry. Talking about nurtur-  
ing the company's brand and  
creating a legacy, Nasir Zaidi,  
Managing Partner, Pacific  
Travels says, "Completing 50  
years is a legacy which we  
are carrying forward. I am the  
second generation in business  
and soon to be third. What  
we started with was a very  
conventional travel agency  
back in 1968 in Kanpur. Then  
we moved to Delhi and now  
we have expanded well."

Speaking about his com-  
pany's growth over the years,  
Zaidi announced the launch of  
company's new B2C location  
in Delhi. "We are growing well;  
we have branched out with  
different products. Today, what  
you see is a very important  
opening on a very important  
occasion," Zaidi tells.

Earlier this year, Pacific Travels  
was appointed as the India  
Representative for Discov-  
ery Puglia. The company is  
responsible to increase aware-  
ness about the destination in  
India and promote it to grow  
Indian visitor numbers to the  
Puglia, Italy. Zaidi informs that  
the company will be targeting  
mature travellers from India  
along with the destination  
wedding segment.

Pacific Travels is also the India  
Representative & distributors  
of ACP Rail, Canada offering  
prime rail networks like Eurail,  
BritRail, Swiss Rail, Canada's  
Via Rail, Rail Australia, Japan  
Rail and many other prime rail



Nasir Zaidi  
Managing Partner  
Pacific Travels

networks of Europe. Besides  
serving more than 5,00,000  
travellers annually the com-  
pany is also the exclusive Visa  
Facilitator for Iran and Algeria.

Pacific Travels specialises in  
tours offering holiday pack-  
ages on international destina-  
tions or domestic points in  
India with complete bouquet  
of services like hotels, trans-  
port and other travel solutions  
for B2B and B2C clients.

Target Segment

Pacific Travels will be  
targeting mature travellers  
from India along with the  
destination wedding segment



# Akquasun markets Maldives

Akquasun Maldives recently hosted a networking evening along with Sun Siyam Resorts for its partners in Mumbai. The luxury hotel group currently has three properties in the Maldives and is coming up with one more property soon.





# Miki Travel sets foot in India

Miki Travel, a UK-based DMC, has ventured into India and is set to offer technology that would fasten the booking process, while ensuring that clients get the best hotels from its existing hotel allocations.

 Nisha Verma

Perceiving India as a potential market, Miki Travel has now entered India with its first office in New Delhi. Olivier Moeschler, CEO—Asia Division, Miki Travel, said that the DMC has been in business for over 50 years. “Miki Travel is a large company, but most of our business in Asia is from Japan. Since I have an experience in the Indian market, I wanted to open an office here. With an established Indian market, we



Olivier Moeschler  
CEO—Asia Division  
Miki Travel

needed to have a strong team here. I was also very lucky to have Arvind Attari as the Head of India and Middle East, Asia Division. With him on board, we are well prepared to enter the Indian market with our support and expertise here.”

The strategy for Miki in India is to possess expertise in all segments. However, its key segment as they say, is technology. “We cover everything and can compete with everyone in every segment. But the key part is technology. Speed is very important because most of the

group business from India to Europe is offline. When we look at the growth from India, it’s

not only at the hands of a few big ones but also many small and medium companies. To

reach out to such companies, we need technology. The biggest differentiator for us is

the speed, which we can get through technology. Miki will be much faster to respond to

market trends and customer requirements,” said Moeschler.

Another advantage, according to him, is, “Miki is the only company which has an online group booking engine. Miki Travel has the technology to provide online group bookings for our customers. In addition, we can give a hotel allocation online. If we don’t have allocation, we have a booking engine where we can go directly to suppliers all over India.”

Since India is a relationship driven market, Moeschler believes that while promoting the brand is important across India, it’s the quality of service that makes them stand apart from others. “Arvind is heading the operations in India and we have many expert managers as well. They share a good relationship

“We have the technology to provide online group bookings along with giving a hotel online for our customers”

with the travel trade. We only work in the B2B market and right now we want to just introduce the brand and promote it. However, while awareness about the brand is important, it is equally necessary to perform. We have a know-how of the market to be able to not repeat the mistakes that others have made,” he claimed.

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## Pink panthers of Pink Friday

In an effort to celebrate womanhood and appreciate the efforts of women employees, TRAVTALK has started the PINK Friday initiative. We encourage people to wear something pink to work every Friday. Kudos to the team from Travel Optionz for turning up in pink on a Friday. We encourage more people from the industry to take this up and celebrate the efforts, dedication and unparalleled commitment of the women in the workforce.



# Air China honours top agents

Air China held its agency awards ceremony at Taj Palace, New Delhi, where it felicitated its trade partners for exceptional performance, followed by dinner and cocktails. **Xia Baohui**, General Manager—Delhi, Air China and **Wang Shuai**, General Representative—India, Shandong Airlines, addressed the audience and updated everyone about their summer/autumn products.





# IndiGo adds Gorakhpur

Indigo has started operations in its 57<sup>th</sup> destination, Gorakhpur and has recorded on-time performance (OTP) of 84.1 per cent out of Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai.



TT Bureau

Topping the charts, Indigo has recorded 84.1 per cent OTP in the month of June, according to the air traffic data released by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which collates the performance for major carriers. The airline also maintained the lowest passenger complaint ratios of 0.3 per 10,000 passengers, revealed the report.

William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo said, "The fact that our on-time performance has improved from 80.0 per cent in May to 84.1 per cent in June, 2018 is due to the service orientation of our teams and our customers' unrelenting support. We are also delighted to maintain one of the lowest passenger complaint ratios in the month of June. We thank our customers who flew with IndiGo in June 2018 and voted us as the 'Best Low-Cost Airline in Central Asia &



William Boulter  
Chief Commercial Officer  
IndiGo

India' at the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2018 for the ninth consecutive year. Reflecting on 12 years of our remarkable journey, one thing that remains constant has been our simple promise of being on-time, offering low fares and providing a courteous and hassle-free service."



IndiGo also started operations from Gorakhpur and announced it as its 57<sup>th</sup> destination, further strengthening its connectivity from the state of Uttar Pradesh. The price for Delhi-Gorakhpur daily non-stop flight is ₹ 3199, and the

“Providing increased connectivity from UP is in line with our growth strategy in the Indian market. These new services will benefit our customers based in nearby regional destinations”

service for the same is set to start from September 1, 2018. Gorakhpur will be the third city IndiGo will be

connecting from, after Lucknow and Varanasi.

Boulter said, "We are pleased to announce Gorakhpur as our 57<sup>th</sup> destination effective this September 2018. Providing increased connectivity from Uttar Pradesh is in line with our growth strategy in the Indian market, and Gorakhpur is a key market for us. These new services will benefit our customers based both in the numerous cities of India and nearby regional destinations, as Gorakhpur is also a key entry point into parts of Nepal."

He further added, "IndiGo will continue to expand its network to meet the requirements of both business and leisure travellers wherever they demand it. It is our constant endeavour to provide more flexibility of choice for our customers as IndiGo continues to offer them on time, courteous and hassle-free service and always an affordable flying experience."

5 more reasons

INDIA TRAVEL AWARDS WEST 2018

11<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at Hotel Express Inn, Nashik

is good for your business



1

## Recognition

Show off your achievements as an innovator and performer

The India Travel Awards celebrates hard work and success and offers great PR opportunities as already mentioned. It is fantastic to be recognised so it is important to make sure that people know what your business has achieved. With recognition comes respect.



2

## Stamp of Approval

Carry the logo for industry excellence

The Awards are given away in each category and there are also highly commended award categories which honour individual players. All winners from the night will receive a logo and stamp that they can use in their email signatures, their websites or in their marketing and PR material.



3

## Benchmarking

Proof that you are a market leader

See your organisation from a different perspective and compare yourself to your competitors. The India Travel Awards entry process will make you think about how you stand out: whether it's through innovation, diversity, growth, customer service, investment in people and strategic thinking. It will help you think about ways you could be doing things better and identify areas for improvement. This could be just as valuable as the prize itself.



4

## Return on Investment

Attract new business as an award finalist

Winning an award can open doors to getting new contracts, finding new supply channels and breaking into new target markets.



5

## Winning

The bragging rights are sensational

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# Skålleagues meet over lunch

Skål International Delhi-125 recently organised its luncheon meeting at The Park, New Delhi to discuss details about the upcoming events. New members were also felicitated with certificates and membership kits. **Rajeev Talwar**, CEO, DLF, was the special invitee and guest speaker of the event.



## Ireland welcomes the Duke and Duchess of Sussex

Their Royal Highnesses experienced the tastes and culture of Ireland during their visit to the green isle recently. The royal couple visited the Trinity College Dublin and also rang the Peace Bell, designed to mark the 10th anniversary of the Belfast Agreement. They also visited Croke Park, a state-of-the-art stadium, which is home to the Gaelic Athletic Association and got a taste of Ireland's cuisine at Delahunt restaurant.

## Gujarat welcomes agents

Synergi Hospitality recently organised a familiarisation trip to Gujarat for agents from Delhi. The agents saw the major attractions of the state on the 5 nights/6 days tour and relished unique experiences.



# Are OTAs the future?

With a vision to revolutionise the online travel market, **Radhika Pareek**, Managing Director, Sky Planners, is looking to expand the horizon of the company by providing easy and convenient travel solutions.

 TT Bureau

Pioneers in online air ticketing, hotel booking and holiday packaging, Sky Planners is aiming to envisage the online travel market with a future-oriented growth plan. **Radhika Pareek**, Managing Director, Sky Planners, says that her company is growing at a steady pace in terms of revenue and operations. "We registered around 20 per cent growth in terms of business volumes. We are targeting a 40 per cent boost in revenue for the coming year," she says.



**Radhika Pareek**  
Managing Director  
Sky Planners

Talking about her plans of expansion, Pareek shares that online travel market is rapidly booming with growing numbers and they want to utilise this opportunity to reach out to more locations. "Being an online operator, we want to penetrate our business to the maximum reach. Currently, we are looking to expand in Tier-II and Tier-III cities." she says.

Partnering with over 70 travel operators across the country, Sky Planners is looking to position itself differently from the traditional travel agencies. Providing online billing, instant confirmations and ease of doing business for small-scale tour operators, Sky Planners is looking to change the face of online travel booking experience for B2B clients.

On business implementation, Pareek explains that her company facilitates a travel agent business programme for tour operators. "In this programme, we provide a large travel inventory, competi-

tive deals and a centralised company payment wallet to our partners so that we can maintain a healthy relationship with them," Pareek added. Pareek counts on internet revolution and increased use

“In our travel agent business programme, we provide a large travel inventory, competitive deals and a centralised company payment wallet to our partners to maintain a healthy relationship with them”

of smartphones nowadays. She says, "I think OTAs are the next big thing. Considering the number of bookings we are getting online, OTAs are certainly the future of booking and ticketing in the tourism industry."

For its dedicated services in the outbound sector, Sky Planners has been awarded as the 'Best Outbound Tour Operator' at the Assocham Tourism and Hospitality Awards 2018.



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Lily Beach Resort and Spa is a five-star all-inclusive resort in the Ari Atoll in the Maldives. The property opened in 2009 and features 125 rooms with easy, exclusive access to the pristine Maldivian waters.



# Gatecrashing Paradise Maldives



Nikhil Jeet from Maldives

## USP

The resort was the first to introduce an all-inclusive platinum plan (for all guests) in the Maldives. This plan offers premium food, alcoholic beverages like Tattinger champagne, excursions, sports and leisure activities. The resort offers hassle-free five-star luxury. Surrounded by an exotic house coral reef, which is teeming with over 10 million aquatic species, the resort offers guided snorkelling tours of the house reef for the novices and is in close proximity to amazing dive sites for the brave-hearted. Excursions like snorkelling with Mantas, turtles and whale sharks are not to be missed. The resort also offers sunset cruises, dolphin watching cruises and fishing expeditions.



## Indian travellers

Lily Maa, the resort's main restaurant offers a variety of Indian food options, including dishes specially designed, for the Indian traveller. Tamarind, an a la carte restaurant presents a rich palate of flavours from India and the Orient. The three bars around the property also feature over 80 different kinds of wines and are popular with Indian visitors. The resort also offers special anniversary and honeymoon benefits which can be tailored for Indian visitors. The property sees most visitors from the South and West India due to its geographical proximity. The resort will be focusing on increasing its presence in North India in the near future.



## Trade promotions

The resort is focused on increasing its presence in the Indian market and is keen to work with travel agents from across the country. We will be conducting Indian roadshows and participating in events like GPS and the Luxury Travel Show. Indian agents also benefit from discounts on contracted prices and other promotions like kids staying for free.

## Indian MiCE

Although the property has only hosted a limited number of Indian MICE groups, it offers a unique MiCE experience. Events can be held in tents next to the pristine water with easy access to the beach. Areas in any of the resort's seven bars and restaurants can be reserved specially for the MiCE groups. The resort's all-inclusive plan also means that this will be an easy-to-organise MiCE destination.

## Future plans

The resort is currently planning to upgrade its 69 Beach Villas with state-of-the-art refurbishment. One or two larger villas with four rooms are also planned. The resort is also planning to hold a French food festival in association with Tattinger and is looking forward to welcoming a new celebrity pastry chef. 🍷



## Boasting of 125 Villas

- ★ 4 Sunset Water Suite
- ★ 36 Deluxe Water Villas
- ★ 16 Lagoon Villas
- ★ 69 Beach Villas





# Experiences over holidays

The Indian outbound traveller is not just looking for a holiday, but for an experience by taking shorter and frequent breaks through the year. **Lubaina Sheerazi**, COO, Blue Square Consultants, shares her views.



TT Bureau

**Q**Has the surge in appeal for foreign holidays among Indians changed the way other countries are looking at India as a source market?

Absolutely, this desire has been recognised by countries across the globe. From customising holiday packages to holding promotional events, simplified visa application processes to roping in Bollywood celebrities, international tourism boards are leaving no stone unturned to attract Indians.

We are also seeing a host of tourism boards of lesser-known countries setting up office in India or making a

presence at important trade shows and exhibitions. This shows that India is a booming market with the potential to draw millions of outbound tourists. The recent addition to our portfolio is also an indication of this change; Palladium Hotel Group's finest hotels in Spain, as well as Australia And Beyond Holidays, have now chosen us to represent them in India.

**Q**Have you seen an evolution in the kind of products Indians are opting for?

Indians are not just looking for a holiday but for an experience. They prefer taking shorter and more frequent breaks through the year – sometimes even up to three to four times a year.

When it comes to preference for stay, Indians opt for accommodation that provides the best amenities, service and accessibility to things to do in and around the property. However, there is a segment of travellers that is looking at offbeat experiences and plan itineraries to include activities like hiking trails, castle-hopping, cultural festivities, glamorous camping, culinary tours, cruising, voluntary tourism and more.

**Q**Have the markets for such attractions in India changed?

The shift in consumption has transformed the marketing strategy for tourism boards to include a focus on endorsing experiences that are not

run-of-the-mill. Moreover, the outbound market is growing progressively and a large part of it is also driven from Tier II and Tier III cities. Cities like Ahmedabad, Nashik, Nagpur,

Lucknow, Surat, Amritsar and Kochi offer huge scope in the travel ecosystem with consumers from these cities opting for a mix of offbeat destinations. We have witnessed a surge in bookings for destinations like Oman, Seychelles and Iceland from these markets.

**Q**Have you seen a shift in traveller profile?

Emergence of low-cost carriers, increase in flight frequency and higher disposable incomes have encouraged travel more than ever before. Online accessibility and hassle-free bookings also act as a catalyst, influencing first-time travellers to explore

international shores. Women-only groups and solo travellers are on the rise. Furthermore, Indians are seeking niche experiences and set out on biking trips, nature-driven camps and adventure expeditions to remote places. Keeping in mind the constantly evolving trends, the travel industry in India are looking to curate personalised travel alternatives for specific interests and varied demographics.

## Niche Experience

Self-drives, extensive road trips and experiential accommodation are catching on in India. Music tourism and responsible tourism are also on the rise



# IATO updates on convention

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), at its recent luncheon meet at the Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi, updated the members on its upcoming convention and participation at the India Tourism Mart. The team also felicitated **Ajeet Bajaj**, MD, Snow Leopard Adventures, and his daughter Diya for achieving the feat of climbing Mt Everest.







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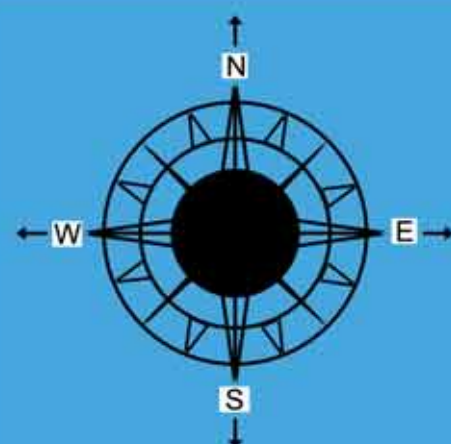
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# Travel

## WEDDING SHOW

JAIPUR | JULY 7-8, 2018

Show  
REPORT

INSIGHT ON WEDDING BUSINESS







# Jaipur says 'I do' to wedding show

The 5<sup>th</sup> Travel Wedding Show, held recently at Jaipur Marriott Hotel, witnessed over 2000 B2B meetings across two days between exhibitors and buyers.



KANCHAN NATH

Pegged at \$40 to \$50 billion, the Indian wedding industry is the second largest market in the world after the US, revealed **Rajeev Jain**, Founder and CEO, Rashi Entertainment, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Travel Wedding Show, held recently at Jaipur Marriott Hotel.

The event witnessed over 2000 B2B meetings between exhibitors and buyers spread across two days. Speaking on trends in the wedding industry, Jain said, "The global wedding industry is pegged at \$300 billion. As far as international destination weddings are concerned, the most wanted destination initially was Thailand but now people are venturing to Turkey, UAE, Cyprus, Mauritius, Macau, Malta, Sri Lanka, Bali, London, among other new destinations. Destination weddings are paving a new path for the modern Indian couple aspiring to marry in a bigger and better way to make a mark on all their friends and relatives."

What do wedding planners look for while deciding on a hotel within the

country? Jain says that these include the pricing factor, number of rooms in a hotel, the brand that wedding planners are working with and the quality of food. For international destination weddings, planners take into consideration the food, visa formalities, airlines connectivity and the language barrier.

Quoting a survey on how to generate business for weddings, he says, "In India, 50 per cent of the business gets generated through referrals; 20 per cent from social media; 15 per cent through search engine and 15 per cent from other sources. For international markets, social media is 43 per cent, 25 per cent is by search engines. 13 per cent by referrals and rest is by other sources."

A panel discussion was held on 'Destination Weddings: An overview, India v/s International.' Moderated by Jain, the session's panelists included **H Deniz Ersoz**, Culture & Tourism Counsellor, Turkish Embassy, New Delhi; **Hemant Mediratta**, Senior Vice President – Sales, Oberoi Hotels

& Resorts; **Saurabh Bhargava**, AVP-Sales, North India, Indian Hotels Company; **Shampa Dhali**, Director, Global Sales – India, Marriott International and **Abinash Manghani**, Area Manager and Head Travel, ITC Hotels. A knowledge journal titled 'An insight on Weddings in India & abroad' was also released on the occasion.

On Turkey as an upcoming wedding destination, Ersoz says, "Turkey knows how to service and meet the demands of Indian people. The quality of service should be the key point. Even though Antalya, Istanbul, Cappadocia and Bodrum are the popular wedding destinations, we have many more waiting to be discovered."

Elaborating on popular Oberoi destinations for weddings, Mediratta said, "At Oberoi, we like to do weddings by doing buy-outs so that the experience can be managed well and the entire wedding party stays at the hotel. Recently, we had three weddings at Wildflower Hall, Shimla."

Bhargava on their top most hotels for weddings, said, "Out of the 130 hotels that we run, from a wedding perspective, Rajasthan remains one of the most popular destinations for weddings. Jaipur and Jodhpur are the two big ones for us."

Elaborating on three things that wedding planners should keep in mind to maintain a good working relationship with hotels, he explained, "The key is transparency and communication. Secondly, we must be involved in the planning stage to ensure what we are pitching to the client."

Dhali talking about trends in the wedding segment, further adds, "Some of our hotels witnessed growth by 28 to 32 per cent. In an aim to position ourselves, we have also taken a step back to see what kind of guidelines and flexibility we want to offer to our customers."

**Sarika Bambhani Rawal**, Vice President, DDP Exhibitions, said, "The quality of buyers was appreciated by the exhibitors and vice versa. We look forward to bringing another new travel show in the education vertical known as Travel Education Show."

**Punam Singh**, Associate, Travel Show, further says, "With a slight change in format this year, we conducted the inaugural ceremony and the knowledge session before we started the business meetings. Cutting edge statistics and information pertinent to the wedding vertical were shared." 🌸



*In India, 50 per cent of the business gets generated through referrals, 20 per cent from social media, 15 per cent through search engine and 15 per cent from other sources* ”



# Talking *Business*

Travel Wedding Show offered a platform to exhibitors and buyers to interact in pre-scheduled B2B table-top meetings. This format allowed them to discuss potential business in a time-bound manner.

## Exhibitors



**HEMANT MEDIRATTA**  
Senior Vice President-Sales  
Oberoi Hotels & Resorts

The Travel Wedding Show has a great format that encompasses B2B pre-fixed appointments.

The quality of the buyers has improved over the last few years. The wedding business, overall, has seen a constant surge. The same goes for the Oberoi hotels. Majority of our hotels are between 50 and 100 rooms and we prefer to give it as a buy-out for weddings.



**ABINASH MANGHANI**  
Area Manager and Head Travel  
ITC Hotels

The show enabled suitable knowledge on the sector. It was organised efficiently. There were

speakers from the industry, who highlighted potential trends on destination weddings, planners, international destinations were also showcased optimally. Post show, I feel the trend shall move forward, not only in inbound but also in outbound segment.



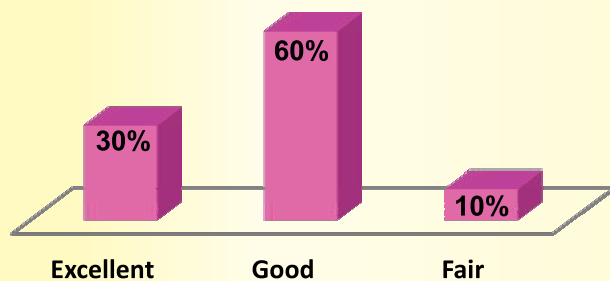
**SAURABH BHARGAVA**  
AVP-Sales, North India  
Indian Hotels Company

We showcased the various offerings of Taj hotels. It's a great medium for us to

disseminate business with suitable buyers. There were leads and some did fructify. This year, we are looking for some new buyers. We are seeing an upswing in the business. Destination weddings as a segment is on the rise among people.

### Exhibitor's feedback from the show

Quality of Business Queries



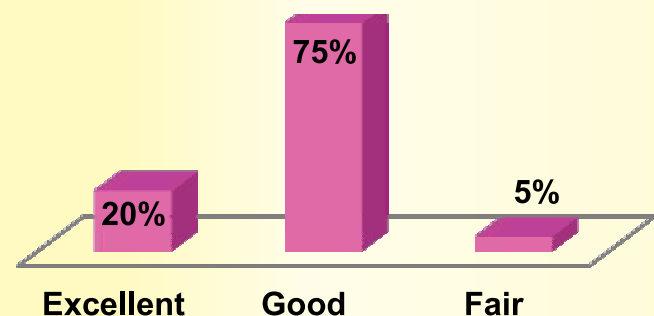
Objective of attending the event



Would you participate in the next edition?



Quality of Buyers



**SHAMPA DHALI**  
Director  
Global Sales-India  
Marriott International

This was the first time that I participated in the show. I am glad that Marriott hosted the event,

particularly for three reasons: the quality of people, the reputation of the Travel Show and the growing importance of the segment. I was impressed with the quality of people who lend participation and showcased their offerings for destination weddings.



**TEKLA MAIRA**  
Director, Luxury Sales-India  
AccorHotels

The show unearthed potential destinations. It was a suited platform to gather a lead into the wedding segment.

Participants reaped opportunities from quality buyers who mean business. The Saturday-Sunday format truly ensures uninterrupted business leading to fruitful closing of deals.



**SHUBHANGI NANDAGOPALAN**  
Corporate GM- Sales and Marketing, GRT  
Hotels and Resorts, Radisson Blu Resort  
Temple Bay Mamallapuram

This year, I found the meetings had been improvised, while there was participation from

quality buyers. There were delegates who hadn't explored the southern part of India. A show like this enables to bridge the gap between regions for the industry. Overall, it was a well-planned show with back-to-back fruitful meetings.



# Travel

## GLIMPSES of the SHOW





## Exhibitors



**ARJUN KANT CHADHA**  
Manager – Sales  
Philippines Tourism

Philippines has what it takes to bring magic to your dream wedding. There are several themes that you can choose from when it comes to weddings. The show was very productive, because you get to meet so many top-notch wedding planners in one event. I have had many potential closings.



**CHRISTINE MUKHARJI**  
Director-India  
Austrian National Tourist Office

The time slot of ten minutes was suited for interactions among potential buyers. The panel discussion was informative, the numbers projected was beneficial for us to help understand the market better. More Indians are preferring to mark their special day in Austria.



**SHANNON CREADO**  
Area Director-Sales and Marketing,  
Anantara-Kalutara Resort  
Sri Lanka

For me, the panel discussion was the focal point of the show. The session had highlighted key factors including Indian cuisine, logistics, which include airline connectivity, language and value for money. Sri Lanka as a potential destination fits the bill in every section.



**ANKUR DHAWAN**  
Account Director-North and East India  
The Meydan Hotel and Bab Al Shams  
Desert Resort & Spa

At the Travel Wedding Show, we gained an opportune to interact with potential wedding planners who got to know about the scope of destination weddings in Dubai. I find a good value to attend the table-top setups. We hope to get more queries and convert it into a profitable business.



**SASITHORN POOLSAWATDI**  
Assistant Director of Sales  
Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort  
Pattaya

The show was an eye-opener as we got to meet many people, suitable buyers and explain our profile efficiently. Over the years, we have seen the show improve. I have got some good business leads from here. Catapultt and Rudra have given us some good business.



**NATALIA GORBATIUK**  
Groups, Conferences & Events Sales  
Executive, DoubleTree by Hilton Resort  
& Spa Marjan Island

The format of the show was interesting, everything was organised optimally. In a short span, we got to interact with many potential clients. There was useful information disseminated to the participants. I got to know a lot of pros and cons of the segment.

## Buyers (Wedding Planners)



**RAJEEV JAIN**  
Founder and CEO  
Raashi Entertainment

The panel discussion had veterans of the industry, that included heads of Taj Sales, Marriott, ITC, Oberoi and the Turkey tourism board. Through the show, we gained contacts and offered business to hotels. We become accessible to hotels through such shows. The show has become better, and the quality of the participants too has been better.



**ANKUR GOR**  
Founder and Owner  
The Tulip Touch

The Travel Wedding Show has grown flawlessly. This time the exhibitors had a better profile. We made some good connections as this is the optimal platform for meeting people and generate business. The pre-fixed meetings ensured interactions were managed to the point. Turkey, Northern Cyprus, Sri Lanka, are popular international wedding destinations.

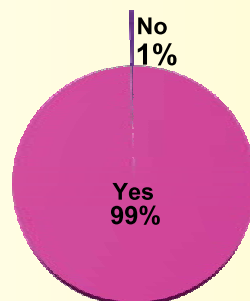


**HEMAL SOLANKI BHAGWAT**  
Director  
Weddings By Mercury

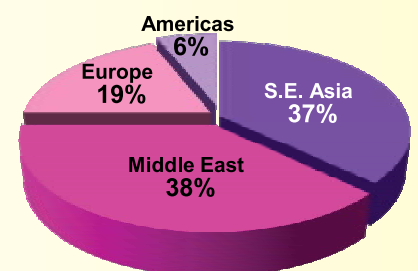
I attended the Travel Wedding Show two years ago and feel the participation has improved this year. The information disseminated from the participants were fruitful. Our relationships with sellers have improved, thanks to shows like these. We are getting better deals which helps us close business better.

### Buyer's feedback from the show

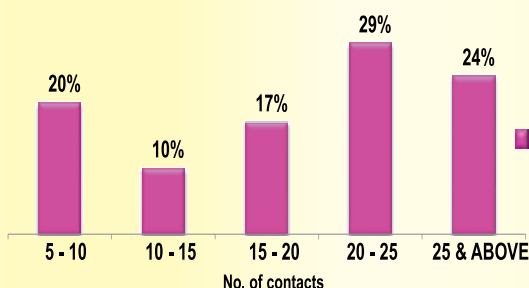
Did all your pre-scheduled meetings take place?



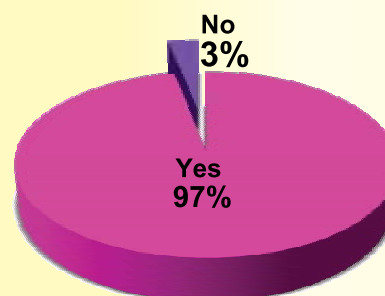
Destinations that witnessed maximum business negotiations



New business contacts established



Are you confident of growing your market after these B2B meetings?





## Buyers (Wedding Planners)



**RAHUL BHATI**  
Operations Head  
Studio Neelabh

Europe and the Middle East are attracting the Indian diaspora. The show witnessed interactions among industry peers. The choice of suppliers, vendors, hotels, potential clients, made the show a resounding success.



**ROHIT SAINI**  
Founder  
Rudra Events & Wedding Planners

The Travel Wedding Show administered one of the best B2B sessions. The show was a platform for us to upgrade our knowledge to provide clients a service par excellence. People are preferring experiential weddings, nowadays.



**RUCHIKA ARORA BANSAL**  
Director  
Plush Events & Weddings

The one-to-one discussions were engaging and informative. We looked forward to garner optimal business. Through the event we gained exposure on the trends and industry needs and our expectations were suitably met.



**GAYATRI RANE**  
Head-Destination Wedding & MICE Events  
Momentum Experiences & Events

I feel the event has been a suitable platform for enabling fruitful discussions. In terms of trends, people now are open to exploring unique experiences and we hope to offer it with our services.



**KINJAL THAKER**  
COO  
Events N More

Mostly, we do business out of India. But I see a potential here. This year, we researched on Taj hotels and some hotels in Kochi, Kerala. We have also sought out some outbound properties and look forward to crack deals.



**NITIKA NAGPAL**  
Chief Curator: Weddings  
Weddings by Event Crafter

Numerous hoteliers and buyers interacted in one-on-one business meetings. Once aware of the different options available on luxury hotels, we can give a comprehensive choice to our clients. People prefer destination weddings.

### Objective of attending the event achieved

Achieved  
100%

### Would you participate in the next edition?

YES  
100%

### Quality of Exhibitors

Good  
22%

Excellent  
78%

## Buyers (Wedding Specialists)



**MANISH FITKARIWALA**  
CEO  
Catapultt Service

The Travel Wedding Show provides a single platform for potential hoteliers, other DMC's, to interact with suitable business prospects. The network evening was the highlight as we got to interact with the participants socially.



**KUNJAL MODY**  
Manager-Product  
Tamarind Global

There were a plethora of potential vendors, suppliers and hoteliers, who were there to showcase their offerings as per industry requirements. The show by next year, should garner more participants for India market.



**ASHMITA GOEL**  
Director - Sales and Marketing  
Oriental Travels

It was one of the most well-organised events that I have attended so far, especially in the Indian domain. The quality of the exhibitors was better than most shows. There was a lot of business potential acquired.



**RIZWAN SHERIF**  
Managing Director  
Sherif Travels & Tours

This was a suitable platform where we got to interact with potential exhibitors and gain an insight on their offerings, how it has been improvised and new offers on the platter. This year there were new exhibitors.



**MANISH KRIPLANI**  
CEO  
Baywatch Travels

I was elated to witness the turn-out this time. While I interacted with few exhibitors, we actually spoke about the potential business that was there, through closed pre-fixed appointments. We gained good deals.



**SAHIL DEWAN**  
Wedding Specialist  
DestinationWeds.in

Weddings are a big market, people are keen on small destination weddings involving close-knit family and friends. The Travel Wedding Show was a great platform to meet suppliers, hoteliers and other vendors.



**PANKAJ HINGORANI**  
Vice President  
Destinos India Gurus

We were targeting overseas weddings. The event enabled us to interact with DMC's, hoteliers as well as tourism boards. We have got a lot of leads and hope to close some good deals in the year.



**NEELAM KAPOOR**  
CEO/Director  
Namms Tours & Travels

At the show, participants engaged in B2B interactions and were able to exchange information. Immense knowledge from industry peers was gathered through the panel discussions, along with ways to better the business.



**AAYUSHI YALLAPURKAR**  
Chief Experience Officer  
Honeymoon Havens

The show projected crisp meetings, which were informative. The show provided an insight to market the wedding products. The networking party enabled interaction, networking along with some jig.







# Travel

## SHOWS

### Business TRAVEL SHOW

December 1 - 2, 2018  
Hyderabad Marriott Hotel & Convention Centre

### Education TRAVEL SHOW

November 17 - 18, 2018

### Allied TRAVEL SHOW

February 23 - 24, 2019

### Luxury TRAVEL SHOW

April 6 - 7, 2019

### Wedding TRAVEL SHOW

July 2019



Pacific Leisure Group

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