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12-Feb	Monday	Mumbai	11:00 - 16:00	Trident Hotel, Nariman Point
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15-Feb	Thursday	Bangalore	10:00 - 14:00	Taj Vivanta, MG Road
16-Feb	Friday	Delhi	14:00 - 17:00	Le Meridien
19-Feb	Monday	Ahmedabad	10:00 - 15:00	Hyatt Regency

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SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

North India revels with Maya

The 4th North India Travel Awards was held at The Lalit New Delhi amidst the stalwarts of the tourism industry. Chief Guest **Vijay Goel**, Minister of State for Statistics & Programme Implementation and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India and Guest of Honour **Shivdular Singh Dhillon**, IAS, Special Secretary-cum-Director, Department of Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Archaeology, Museums & Archives, Punjab and CEO, Punjab Heritage & Tourism Promotion Board, presided over the ceremony. **Krishan Kumar Amla**, Chairman & MD, Broadway Enterprises was conferred the Gallery of Legends trophy while **Hanneli Slabber**, Regional GM, Asia, Australasia and Middle East, South African Tourism, was DDP Game Changer. **Sujit Banerjee**, Secretary General, WTTC, India Initiative, received the Legend in Public Service award and **Pankaj Srivastava**, Commercial Director & Board Member, Air India, bagged the DDP Trailblazer award. **Amit Sankhala**, MD, Encounters Asia, was awarded the DDP Face of the Future title.



(L-R) SanJeet, Sham Nijhawan, Runeep Sangha, Shivdular Singh Dhillon, Vijay Goel, Dr. Marisha Kaul, Sujit Banerjee, Sarab Jit Singh

Restructuring overseas presence?

The shutting down of seven foreign tourist offices by the Government of India has sent the travel trade in a tizzy. **TRAVTALK** asks industry experts about the impact of this decision on the tourism business within and outside the country.



Plagued with the vacancy of several posts and lack of senior officers, the Ministry of Tourism has decided to close down some of its foreign offices. The Ministry will now open a new office at Moscow, with the Russian Federation as the fourth largest source market for India in terms of foreign tourist arrivals. **TRAVTALK** brought together **Rajiv Mehra**, Vice President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO); **Vikram Madhok**, Hon. Treasurer, PATA, **Homa Mistry**, CEO, Trail Blazer Tours (India), **Bharat Bhushan Atree**, Managing Director, Capar Travel Company and **Sandeep Jain**, Hon. Joint Secretary, IATO, to discuss the benefits and pitfalls of this sudden move by the Ministry.



Rajiv Mehra



Vikram Madhok



Homa Mistry



Bharat Bhushan Atree



Sandeep Jain

For details on the second edition of the Think **TRAVTALK** series, see page 14





HARVEY's Pre- X'MAS BRUNCH – 2017!

Harvey World Destinations' CEO **Joe Rajan** alongwith Executive Director **Harsh Jain**, and Managing Partner **Aarti Manocha**, hosted the much-awaited annual Pre-Christmas Brunch at Verbena. Spotted at the elegant venue were prominent dignitaries from the world of Bollywood film Industry, Hospitality industry and Politics. It was an eventful brunch with the teams of Harvey and partner event company MtoM, ensuring that the guests had a memorable time and enjoyed the delectable delicacies of Christmas.



PATA India Chapter elections

PATA India Chapter held its 47th Annual General Meeting on December 19, 2017, at The Claridges, New Delhi. The event was presided over by **Rashmi Verma**, Chairperson, PATA India Chapter & Secretary - Tourism.

TT BUREAU

Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, will lead PATA India Chapter as its Chairperson for the term 2017-19. Verma appreciated the role PATA plays and recognised its business development initiatives. She felt that in the years ahead, PATA should work more closely with the Ministry to promote tourism and bring greater value to its members.

PATA also announced its Executive Committee and Office Bearers for the term 2017-19. **Sanjeet**, Director, DDP Publications, has been re-elected as the association's Vice Chairman along with **J.S. Taneja**, MD, Travel Spirit International, as Hon. Secretary, and **Vikram Madhok**, MD, Abercrombie & Kent, as Hon. Treasurer.



Runeep Sangha will continue as Executive Director, PATA India Chapter.

"We concluded, quite successfully, our 47th Annual General Meeting. I am very pleased to say that we elected an Executive Committee without the need to go into contest amongst members," Sangha said.

Madhok pointed out that PATA India Chapter has 14-15 agenda for the year which comprises seminars,

trade shows and industry updates. "We still have to finalise our plans. We were speaking about taking the Executive Committee meeting to another state, because we haven't had it in a while. Since PATA India Chapter is North specific, as most members are based in Delhi, it would be nice to engage with other parts of the country. So there was an active debate on whether to go to the North East, or South India to Kerala, Tamil Nadu or Goa. The objective is to engage the

tourism bodies and understand what the states have to offer," Madhok said.

Talking about new initiatives taken up by the association, Taneja said, "For the regional chapter meetings, we will be inviting PATA Chapters from neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, etc. We will be conducting a minimum of two roadshows in 2018 and the Government of India has been very supportive of that."

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Should old friends be forgotten?

Every business is built on relationships. This is true across industries despite the element of virtual interface invading the space. Human to human interaction can never go out of style, which forms the basis of a strong and flourishing business association. And so, the turn of yet another year is as good as any other time to look back and acknowledge the people who have helped us reach the place we are in and the person we have become today. Perhaps Robert Burns was similarly retrospecting when he wrote Auld Lang Syne in the 18th century. The travel and hospitality industries have jointly witnessed a volatile 2017 with challenges appearing in many shapes and forms. The only way we can overcome the pains of a discouraging year is by doing it together. People and close-knit communities can help us carry our load. It may not lessen the losses but it can definitely lighten the burden.

2018 for domestic

It is always assumed that the Tourism Ministry's focus has always been inbound. However, this time around, MOT is vocally supporting domestic tourism and realising its true might. By understanding the spending power of an Indian tourist, MOT has put forth many initiatives including HRIDAY and PRASAD schemes, which they have now merged. There has been an increased focus on adventure tourism as well, and the Ministry, in association with ATTOI has declared 2018 as the 'Year of Adventure Tourism'.

Apart from promoting the North East abroad, MOT is making an attempt to create enough noise for these states within the country. The various other circuits that the MOT is planning are also being developed keeping in mind the requirements of the domestic tourists as well. In fact, the advent of budget hotels in India is also catering to the tourists in India and is the major engine in driving the growth of domestic tourism in India. It is inevitable that with a focused approach on this sector, it will only grow further.

Adrenaline rush for MICE

The MICE market in India is marching ahead to catch up with the world by opening up the sector to new activities. More corporate groups are opting for high-power, adrenaline-pumping activities over boardroom boredom.

Please watch the instruction video very carefully as the choices you have made today are of high risk in nature and you consent that you have chosen them without any prejudice,' says the voice in the safety video. The incentive group listens carefully before venturing into its first 'Edge of Space' high-adrenalin MIG-29 flight at SOKOL air space in SOKOL airfield near the Russian city of Nizhny Novgorod.

MICE activities of the yesteryears have now evolved into a different beast altogether. They are no longer limited to coach guided tours or attractions; it has become ever more adventurous and exciting. I am reminded of the famous advertisements with the theme 'Dil Maange More' and the newer 'Aur Dikhaao, Aur Dikhaao'. Adrenaline is the answer to the ever-challenging question of 'What new can we do to engage our stakeholders' for the MICE planners?

Been there, not done that

The MICE movement in India has erupted in the last decade and a half and for those who boarded this train

early will know the perennial challenge lies in offering the attendees the destination and activities they have not done before. This evolution has encouraged MICE planners to reinvent the wheel and explore newer experiences like never before.

Moreover, with the advent of tech companies there has been an explosive growth of millennials at all levels who, as we all know, are well-informed. The globalisation of business has also ensured that a location which was a huge incentive earlier by itself is not enough. This is the era of travel being Facebook brag-worthy which is also the new unwritten brief for MICE planners. Globally, experience providers have realised this ever-growing demand and have created experiences like never before including the likes of ice driving like James Bond on perfect slabs of ice, shark-cage diving, bungee-jumping, tower walks, circuit car racing, Ducati bike tours and even working with stunts team.

I am reminded of an event we had curated for a media conglomerate that was

attended by over 1,200 pax where we took over the entire Aamby Valley Resort for our event and converted it into a complete experiential zone.

Risky business

Apart from existing infrastructure at Aamby, we added a few experiences including an entire site for bungee-jumping. We installed heavy machinery and commercial cranes to execute this which involved lengthy checks and balances for safety. The adrenaline quotient of young media employees is usually very high and undoubtedly, we had long queues of adventure junkies that took the leap of faith. In another event, a whole group of travellers tookover the sky to experience skydiving from 14,000 feet in Miami.

A few clients had the thrill of riding a battle tank and crushing a car with it. To complete the experience, they even had the tank drive over them as they were made to lie down in the centre. While most of these activities are usually finding their way into corporate itineraries, the multinationals are at the same time aware of the

risks associated with such activities and hence, avoid extreme adventures or encourage them only at an individual level.

Adrenaline MICE is still in its nascent stage but the demand for the same is bound to go up as the thrill seeking millennials start dictating the boardrooms as well as fill up cubicles. Traditional MICE is passé for the newbie traveller; adrenaline and experiential MICE is the new credo.

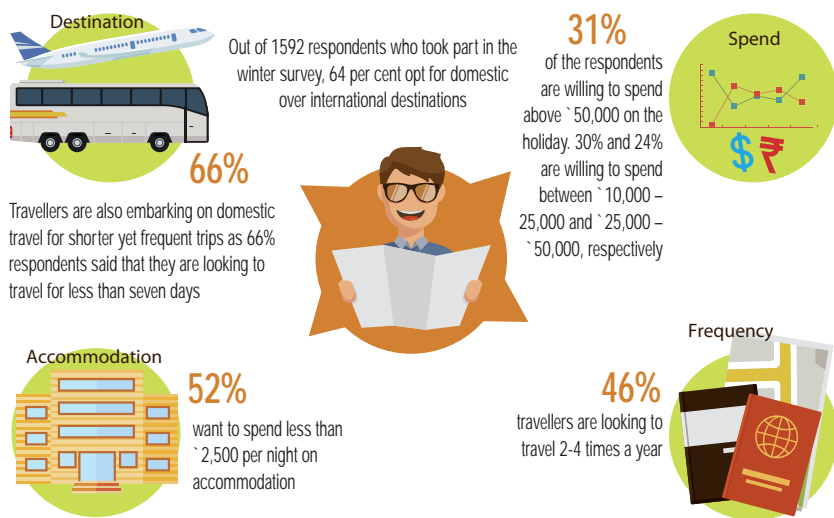
(The views expressed are solely of the author. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Birju Gariba
CEO and Executive Director,
Platinum World Group

Prioritising winter destinations

What does a traveller want? This question sure haunts many a travel agent. TRAVTALK brings you snippets from a recent survey to identify the needs of the great Indian traveller.



Top Destinations

Domestic

- Goa
- Manali Circuit- Manali, Kullu, Kasol, Rohtang etc
- Andaman & Lakshwadeep Islands
- Kashmir or other hill destinations

International

- Dubai
- Thailand/Singapore/Malaysia
- UK

Source: Yatra.com



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GPS ups the game with 8 cities in 2018

The 6th edition of GPS, beginning in Nagpur from January 15-17, will travel to eight cities in 2018. This year, GPS plans to launch its membership card and introduce two products—RainbowCTM and Trip38. The attendees will also be able to participate in around six EDWIN workshops to be hosted this year.



ANKITA SAXENA

After the Nagpur edition, Global Panorama Show (GPS) will be hosted in Hyderabad (February 8-10), Ahmedabad (July 5-7), Chandigarh (July 12-14), Lucknow (July 19-21), Kolkata (August 2-4), Kochi (August 9-11) and Pune (August 23-25). **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase, explains that the purpose of GPS is to educate and empower the agents in the tertiary markets. Anand says, "With our presence in six cities across India in 2017, and an attendance of over 7,000 visitors across all the events, we realised that there are areas which still need to be covered to encompass all Tier-II and Tier-III cities in India. Hence, we decided to add Lucknow and Hyderabad to our portfolio of events this year. With the addition of these two new cities, we envisage an overall increase in our market reach to over 8,000 travel agents and travel professionals in 2018 across all the

eight cities. The GPS App has become an essential part of every attendee. The lead scanning tool for the exhibitors is a USP of GPS and if used optimally, it can reap high returns for the exhibitors."

New cities

With GPS Lucknow, the travel trade of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Jharkhand will be targeted and an attendance of over 500 delegates is expected over three days. The GPS Hyderabad is being hosted in collaboration with the Federation of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FTAPCCI) and the travel professionals from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka will be focused upon. "We are expecting the tourism boards of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to showcase the region and thus invite stake holders from across the country and over 500 attendees are expected during the three-day event," says Anand.

"With the addition of Hyderabad and Lucknow to our portfolio of events this year, we envisage an overall increase in our market reach to over 8,000 travel agents and travel professionals in 2018 across all the eight cities."



Harmandeep Singh Anand

India Travel Award winner and
Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase

Format and Sessions

GPS has a fixed format where the event is conducted over a three-day period with Day 1 exclusively for product presentation and education. The number of exhibitors is restricted to about 110 at the Nagpur edition while 75-80 exhibitors participate at other cities. The exhibitors at GPS will range from tourism boards, airlines, DMCs, technology providers and ancillary services related to the travel trade. Anand points out, "GST continues to be a burning issue for the industry. Thus, we will be con-

ducting a session with Manish Gadia, a chartered accountant, to address the major issues regarding GST. Other sessions will be on time management, cross selling, up-selling and optimising revenues with the available resources that an agency may have at their disposal."

GPS Membership

GPS will launch the GPS membership card—'GPS 10X Membership' which will allow the cardholders to avail discounts on various products and services across India, informs Anand. "This is a vir-

tual card and thus there is no need to carry it physically. It will be stored on the cardholder's smart phones. We plan to offer the annual membership at a rate of ₹2000 + GST," adds Anand. Those enrolling for GPS membership will have a full year access to the GPS App at no additional cost. All new tie-ups, offers and benefits would be available to the registered members.

New product launch

According to Anand, the highlight at GPS 2018 edition will be the launch of a com-

plete travel management solution for the small and medium travel agencies. "The attendees will engage with two of our products—RainbowCTM and Trip38. Exhibitors in India and overseas will be able to promote their services and products to the Indian travel trade through the App as well as through the RainbowCTM platform. We expect this platform to be a game changer in the travel industry in the coming times. Trip38 would be a travel assistant tool for the agent's client database. These products would be agent-friendly and may become one of the largest market places for the travel industry and possibly the best source for travel trade related information," he explains.

EDWIN'18

In 2018, GPS is planning to conduct at least six Educational Destination Workshop International (EDWIN) to allow GPS attendees avail the opportunity to earn points and discounts. Bali is scheduled from March 5-10, where over 200 attendees are expected. 📍

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Ushering 2018 with hope in sight

Following setbacks caused by GST and demonetisation, the tourism and hospitality industry is moving forward with a positive attitude to reverse the negative impact of these roadblocks. The aim is clear, to ensure India tourism thrives. TRAVTALK speaks with industry leaders to gauge the mood for the New Year.



TT BUREAU

“As the President of OTOAI, I want to create a platform for the Tier-II and Tier-III regions of the country to be well represented and be exposed to outbound. Also increasing membership is on the agenda for 2018. On the business front, 2018 will be about consolidating the destinations which we are already promoting and expand the business with inter-related verticals within the company to complement the existing business. We would perhaps also consider expansion in other locations outside Ahmedabad.”



Mahendra Vakharia
India Travel Award winner
and President, OTOAI

“As the Vice President of TAAI, I'd be focusing on our industry events. We hope to make some big announcements soon. We recently had one office-bearers' meeting. Looking forward, the business is going to definitely grow. TAAI members have been spending a lot of our time and energy in selling products, which are airline and hotel related. We need to look beyond and outside. My focus is going to be on a certain part of India for domestic tourism as well as international tourism for my clients.”



Sanjay Narula
Vice President
TAAI

“As 2017 draws to a close, we anticipate a fruitful season in 2018 with an increase in the number of tourists. We also are eagerly awaiting the launch of our software in 2018. The New Year will see us spread our wings further in the genres of the travel trade and ventures that have been brewing in the past year. Every year, we periodically add niche and traveller friendly products, and also expand product portfolios of our existing markets. New markets are being introduced to us through new and existing agents, thus providing us a platform to reach many more countries and travel destinations.”



Bharat Bhushan Atree
India Travel Award winner
and Managing Director,
Caper Travel Company



Ratna Chadha
CEO
TIRUN Travel Marketing

“Government is diligently working on improving the ports and infrastructure and is serious to make cruise tourism a success in India. Major ports are set to cut berthing charges for cruise ships and there will be e-landing and e-visa facilities for the tourists. This year, the country witnessed 60,000 cruise tourists through 55 ships and there is a potential to increase it to 30 lakh cruise tourists in the coming years. As we all know that the cruise business is cyclical, we hope for promising years ahead.”



Pankaj Nagpal
India Travel Award winner
and MD, Travstarz
Global Group

“New Year 2018 is going to be special for us as we look forward to some interesting developments for the company. We are expecting to grow more than cent per cent this year as well as we expand our offerings and also our sales teams and presence across the Indian sub-continent. We are looking forward to launch our upgraded online system which has been in the works for over two years and will bring about some unique features to make us the best online product both in terms of offerings and technology.”



Neelu Singh
CEO & Director
Ezeego1

“We, at Ezeego1, are looking at expanding our presence in the retail space significantly. We will be identifying markets and establishing our product in those regions by providing the best content and technology. We will also be evolving in the franchise concept across India. Home-based agents are another focus in India which is growing quite substantially, and we definitely want to be a part of it.”

“While we explore the potential of new technologies surfacing, we are keen to embed Block Chain-based solutions for travel trade, including the CRM capabilities to fulfil the cycle and a universal solution which can cater to the offline travel agency business as well. We are considering a free-to-use core module for travel agencies to be able to run their operations smoothly. One of the important and critical areas we are focusing on is to enter into selected international markets to expand our reach and presence.”



Vivek Sanghi
Founder
ecare Technology

“We had a satisfactory 2017 and with our newly-renovated hotel, we aim to successfully reposition ourselves as a super luxurious offering. Three years before the renovation started, we were No 1 in RevPAR (Revenue per available room) in entire Delhi-NCR region and we hope to achieve this position by early April. Owing to the impeccable services and ambience we offer our guests, Radisson Blu MBD is now perceived as the 'true value for money hotel' in Ludhiana. And, this is having a great impact on our ARR (Average Room Rate) as well; in 2017 our hotel revenue performance had an upward graph.”



Sonica Malhotra
JMD
MBD Group

“In 2018, we expect the trend of customer preference for brands over distributors to solidify further as their experiences and exposure increase. The lines between home-sharing and professional hospitality services will also blur further. In fact, hotels are likely to seek some form of alliances with home-sharing platforms, much like OYO has already initiated with OYO Home - India's first home-management service. New trends are emerging as decision-making power shifts to the millennial generation.”



Ritesh Agarwal
Founder & CEO, OYO



Debasish Bhowmik
Sr. Vice President
Hotel Clarks Shiraz

“In the New Year, we have expectations from the Government to have many more tourism friendly policies, which will help to build better infrastructure and tourism friendly environment for growth and also sustenance, which is very important. A better global economic scenario will encourage people to travel more, thereby helping everyone to fulfil their targets and act as an incentives for further development and growth.”



Manheer Singh Sethi
Co-founder, Travkart.com,
India Travel Award winner

“The New Year will be one of the most dynamic years, with the travel sector growth expected to touch the double digit mark. Other than Andaman, Goa, Kerala, Kashmir, Ladakh, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Maldives and Malaysia, destinations such as Hanuwantia in Madhya Pradesh, and internationally, Bhutan, Tashkent, Russia, Iceland, Balkan Region (Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Czech Republic) are gaining popularity. The economic changes have been more than beneficial barring some issues in the initial run.”



Rishantha Mendis
Director, Helanka Vacations

“At Helanka Vacations, we have invested heavily in new infrastructure this year by moving into our own five-storey premises in Colombo. By utilising our full group strength, we expect to see extensive growth in this year and create new partnerships to support us with our targets.”



Kirsten Spence
Senior Manager- Emerging
Markets, VisitScotland

“2018 is a very exciting year for us as we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* being shot in Scotland. The Bollywood movie was released in October but we will be celebrating the movie throughout the year through various activities. We have come up with a trip planner to allow travellers to visit the filming locations throughout Scotland. We will also be working on consumer activities in collaboration with Dharma Productions and continue to offer highest level of content and experiences to sell to our travel trade partners in India.”



Mahesh Shirodkar
India Travel Award winner,
MD, Tamarind Global

“Tamarind Global has drawn up a 'Vision 2020' which defines our strategy for the next four years. The four verticals of Tamarind Global—Tours, Events, Weddings and Corporate Services, have big plans for the coming year. The four verticals have clearly defined goals, in line with our vision, which is 'to be the most desired brand, building sustainable enterprise value, by creating unforgettable experiences'. The plans include opening of three new international offices as well as expansion of our verticals in more locations in India. Weddings and high-end MICE business will be key drivers of growth for the coming year.”



Pradeep Saboo
Partner, Guideline Travels LLP

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Exploring tourism growth segments

Some segments of Indian outbound tourism are showing maximum gain. To identify these segments—from small groups, large groups, leisure travellers, incentive travel or other categories—TRAVTALK speaks with industry players.



INDER RAJ AHLUWALIA

“With middle class families spending more on foreign travel, India is a potential market for Malaysia. On our part, we have multiple attractions for all segments. While virtually all segments - honeymooners, single people, DINKS, students, families, ladies' clubs, and senior citizens, etc. are growing, the number of leisure-trip seekers is constantly increasing. More Indians are visiting to admire nature, enjoy theme parks, and exploit the bargain shopping opportunities offered.”



Sulaiman Suip
Director
Tourism Malaysia

“France has witnessed an unprecedented growth of Indian tourists in the last few years. This growth is across segments, especially the group series, and FITs choosing France as a solo destination. The corporate incentive segment has also surged. France is also becoming a very aspirational choice for destination weddings. This upward trend can be attributed to our concerted efforts to position France as a premier destination by showcasing it to our Indian travel trade partners, and our efforts to better equip the French travel industry to adapt to the specificities of the Indian clientele.”



Sheetal Munshaw
Director
Atout France

“Several Indian outbound segments are yielding more gain. While MICE and family – travel are the largest segments, small groups of luxury travel are giving the highest gains per passenger. In Israel, we've seen growth in the last year from two sectors, mainly luxury and High-End travel, and selective MICE groups with high spends. Weddings and honeymooners are also spending more. The number of Indian honeymooners visiting Israel has grown impressively.”



Hassan Madah
Director
Israel Ministry of Tourism



Hanneli Slabber
India Travel Award winner
Regional GM-Asia, Australasia and Middle East, South African Tourism

“South Africa's overall attraction makes it popular for all segments, but over the last couple of years, young couples and families are two of the key India market segments visiting the country. Young couples get to bond over the numerous adventure activities, wildlife safaris, bush walks and diverse culinary experiences. Families find themselves drawn to South Africa owing to the wide variety of adventure-led activities for every family member to indulge in – kids, parents and even grandparents. The country is very inclusive when it comes to children, and seniors are encouraged and assisted in participating in everything from bungee to shark-cage dives and wildlife walks.”



Isra Stapanaseth
Director, Tourism
Authority of Thailand
New Delhi Office

“While almost all segments of travellers from India are increasing, some segments have shown extraordinary growth. The maximum growth and gain segments are weddings, honeymooners, leisure holiday-seekers, and incentive travel. The incentive travel sector is booming. Thailand has become a preferred destination for these segments because of its wealth of attractions that are available at reasonable rates, backed up by sustained marketing in the Indian market.”



Beena Menon
Representative – India
Tourism Ireland

“FITs and MICE as the two maximum growth segments to Ireland. In FITs, self-drives are increasing, with visitors wanting to set their own route, and choose their own itinerary. Ireland offers remarkable choice; thanks to two world-class touring routes, namely, Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coastal. Screen tourism also continues to grow, with the filming of the Game of Thrones series in Northern Ireland, and the Star Wars films on the Wild Atlantic

Way. MICE is also growing phenomenally. The British Irish Visa Scheme, improved air access to Ireland, its proximity to the UK, and availability of Indian food are all boosting this sector.”

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Sonia Prakash
Destination Vice President,
Holland

“Large group tours with brands like Cox & Kings, Thomas Cook India, SOTC India and other standalone tour operators, are showing maximum growth and gains in Indian traffic to Holland. This is mainly owing to increased MICE movement to the country. Holland is one of the high-selling destinations in Europe and has different attractions for all kinds of tourists—from the beautiful canal city of Amsterdam, Madurodam (miniature Holland) and not to miss, Keukenhof garden is an all time favourite of Indian tourists. Now, with Jet Airways and KLM starting new flights between Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai, and Amsterdam there will be more Indians travelling to the country.”

“MICE and group tourism are the maximum growth sectors to Germany. Germany's extensive and world-class convention facilities make it an ideal MICE destination, and these are sought-after by Indian companies. Group tourism is also showing great gains, thanks to its location in the heart of Europe! Almost all groups to Europe include Germany in their itinerary due to its all-round tourist infrastructure and attractions.”



Romit Theophilus
Director India, German
National Tourist Office



Arjun Kant Chadha
Manager, Philippines Tourist
Office, India Travel Award winner

“The Philippines Department of Tourism has been actively promoting the archipelago not only as a normal holiday destination but also for luxury visitors, MICE, weddings and small groups. While most segments are increasing, the maximum gain segment from India has been small groups and honeymooners.”

“We have been actively promoting the castle city not only as a holiday destination but also for other segments which include luxury, MICE and small group travel. While overall traffic from India has grown, the maximum gain segments are groups – both small and large – which visit the city during their European tours.”



Eckard Kremer
Asia Head
Munich Tourist Office

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New certification tool for agents

Travelport's new PCI DSS Certification Wizard Tool would change how agents deal with customer credit information and work through a simple streamlined process, says **Sandeep Dwivedi**, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient.



Travelport has launched the new PCI DSS Certification Wizard Tool to streamline processes for agents. "The PCI DSS Certification has been launched to help all customers achieve PCI DSS certification before March 31, 2018 through a simple, low cost and stream-

lined process. This certification is necessary for IATA certified travel agencies to combat criminal activity that is critical when dealing with customer credit card information. From March 2018, any IATA agent who accepts card transactions against its own merchant agreement or issues Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP)

card transactions is required to provide proof of PCI DSS compliance to IATA," says **Sandeep Dwivedi**, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient.

The new certification is going to help the agencies in the long run. "The latest version of Payment Card Industry Data

Security Standards (PCI DSS) is a more secure encryption protocol, Transport Layer Security (TLS) 1.2 or higher, designed to encounter fraud and hacking costing the global travel industry bears annually. Currently the frauds have reached an estimated value of one billion dollars y-o-y and growing," reveals Dwivedi.

Speaking on the aim behind launching this certification, he says, "Travelport and ITQ as key members of the travel fraternity have the responsibility to ensure compliance with the new PCI DSS standard and IATA resolution. We are serious about data security and therefore, to help facilitate travel businesses' continued compli-

ance with the new PCI DSS protocol, we released new versions of Galileo SSL and Travelport Smartpoint (for Travelport Apollo and Galileo users) this November."

Travelport has also tied up with SecurityMetrics, on which Dwivedi says, "After a lengthy selection process, Travelport chose to partner with SecurityMetrics. With this partnership, we have made a very complex process of certification, a simple, low cost and streamlined process. The PCI DSS Certification program provides customers with an online



Sandeep Dwivedi
COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient,
India Travel Award winner

We have released new versions of Galileo SSL and Travelport Smartpoint to help facilitate travel businesses' continued compliance with the new PCI DSS protocol

Wizard Tool to guide agents through the self-assessment questionnaire process. The multi-language tool enables Travelport's agency customers worldwide to achieve PCI DSS compliance, a requirement by the card industry for every business that touches card payments," he stresses.

When asked about why this certification would be advantageous for Travelport, Dwivedi reveals, "Combining consumer protection with customer-driven solutions is essential as it creates frictionless payment processes. We're delighted to offer this PCI DSS certification program in partnership with SecurityMetrics. It is our commitment to ensure our customers' businesses operate within a compliant environment so they are able to adhere to industry regulations and become a trusted partner to their customers."

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Closing of overseas offices:



TRAUTALK brought together five travel trade experts to discuss about how the closure of India tourism offices at seven overseas locations would affect the industry.

BONE OF CONTENTION	HIGHLIGHTS	CHALLENGES
How will this impact the inbound industry?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Plan is to encourage more participation in exhibitions and roadshows with government and private partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Out of the seven offices, three were located in cities which generated the maximum number of tourists
Has the trade been kept in the dark about this move or were they aware of it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Despite the Minister's assurance in the functioning of the offices abroad, the decision came as a major blow and trade associations have written to the Ministry to review and rationalise the same	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Looking at NITI Ayog's three-year programme, this decision is only a part of the process
Should the offices now move to embassies/Air India offices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The presence of embassies in most of the countries gives a wider reach and serves as a point of contact for the local market in helping consumers and trade with the right data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Air India already has its job to do and embassies are more like forts where not everyone can enter for security reasons. There is a need for a separate entity for this job which may be done through PR agencies
Where will the money saved now be invested?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ One-to-one roadshows hold value along with inviting the foreign tour operators to India and allow them to experience the destination themselves. There is also the need to tap new markets and convince them to include India in the itineraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The money would rather be used in training the guns for top source markets like the Americas, UK, France, etc. that generate maximum inbound tourists rather than venture onto newer markets such as Russia
How useful were these offices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ They were very helpful in identifying the right tour operators with whom the trade could interact and promote India as a tourist destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The current offices are not up to the mark. To better showcase Incredible India, there is a huge requirement of professionals to run the offices along with the Ministry

Opinion



Rashmi Verma
Secretary,
Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

“We are not closing down our offices, we are only restructuring our overseas presence in terms of creating some major hubs in the international market. Now, we will perhaps have 7-8 hubs where we will have our presence through these foreign offices. In rest of the countries, we will be having India Tourism Marketing Representatives (ITMR), and they will be carrying out work under direction of these hubs, which we will be creating in our key markets. Also, these hubs will be engaging PR agencies, who will be working in some of these key markets and emerging markets. Thus,

the whole structure is being revamped. We are not just looking at closing of offices, as we might relocate some offices as well. However, the numbers might come down in terms of hubs. Regarding the low manpower at the existing offices, I would like to say that we did not fill the existing offices because we were in the process of restructuring our overseas offices. However, now, all the manpower we have around the world will be relocated to the hubs, and thus the number of people in each hub will be much more than what it is currently.”

Great job or a great loss?



Rajiv Mehra
Vice President, Indian Association of
Tour Operators (IATO)

“These offices should not be shut down completely but strengthened with more staff and experienced officers. Active steps should be taken to participate in exhibitions and undertake activities to promote India rather than wait for the clients to come to them. We were not informed of the news officially but only through sources that a decision was in process to shut the foreign offices in April and as IATO we addressed the same to the then Tourism Minister. In October we met the new Minister and were assured that steps are being taken to ensure that these offices would not be closed down. However, we were shocked when the decision was announced in December despite having written to the Ministry to review the

same. These foreign tourist offices were not meant to generate enquires. They were very helpful in identifying the right tour operators with whom the trade could interact. Their main role however was to create awareness about India and project it as a viable destination to promote. They are not responsible for individual marketing. I believe money has to be invested in promoting India through social media and other media platforms. We also need to fund the foreign offices to gear up and deal with crisis. If leveraged properly, the foreign offices are capable of crisis management. Now that the offices are being closed down, there is a need for more roadshows in the untapped potential markets for inbound tourism.”



Bharat Bhushan Atree
India Travel Award winner,
MD, Caper Travel Company

“Closing down the offices is a rash decision which has not been thought over well. I believe that if the offices were not doing justice to their roles, issues should have been resolved rather than just shutting them down. In fact, out of the seven offices, three were located in cities from where we received the maximum number of tourists. When we meet tour operators at newer destinations, they need an additional push to promote India. The foreign offices would create a sense of assurance among the local trade regarding the political and socio-economic stability in India and also validate the idea of promoting India as a tourist destination. They may not have generated leads but played a major role in

the gamut of things to create goodwill for India. Social media is important but offline media promotions are equally important. Also, the foreign offices host festivals where the local community is invited to celebrate. If the rationale behind shutting the foreign offices is to cut expenses, then shifting these offices with the embassies or Air India offices sounds like a solution. The idea is to have a separate entity to do the promotional and marketing work professionally. There are only two markets from where we get the charter business—the UK and Russia where the latter is far ahead.”

“There has been a shift in the market from the traditional to the emerging. Given the present scenario where the foreign offices are being shut down, there is a need to spend the money on positive publicity for India. Though social media and digital marketing are important tools of today's age, traditional media platforms like print, electronic and hoardings are equally important for promotion. Also, one-to-one roadshows hold value along with inviting the foreign tour operators to India and allow them to experience the destination themselves. There is also a need to tap new markets and potential tour who have a wide market reach to the Southeast Asia and the Middle East and convince them to include India in the itineraries. I believe that shifting the foreign offices within embassies is a good idea because the presence of embassies in most of the countries gives us a wider reach. Also, embassies are a point of contact for the local market and can help with the right data regarding the consumers and trade as well. However, professionals within the embassy have to handle the job while the embassies can monitor the activities well.”



Sandeep Jain
Hon. Joint Secretary
IATO

“The change is welcome and the shutting of these offices is by far the best decision. Management by the right people at these offices has proved beneficial in the past. So if the decision has been taken to shut them down, I am sure the authorities have thought of an alternative to spend the money in some other direction. I do not feel that the numbers should come down in any way with this decision. The destinations as products are already competing amongst themselves but it is the people who run the show and decide the results. We have to look at the bigger picture where the plan is to participate more in exhibitions and roadshows with government and private partnership. With these proposed plans, a higher number of inbound tourists are expected to be generated. Thus, we are headed in the right direction. The traditional marketing method has to be revamped. If we need to capture the attention of a larger audience in today's age with lesser investment, social media is the way forward. Also, we have to invest funds to target the young generation. Digital marketing is an important tool to counter negative sentiments about India and then we can walk the streets for sales. The government of the day is bringing in change in various aspects of travel and I feel that we should appreciate the same. The change may be different than expected in terms of marketing strategies, etc. but I feel that the future will be better.”



Homa Mistry
India Travel Award winner,
CEO, Trail Blazer Tours (India)



“I believe NITI Ayog has taken a learned decision to shut a few offices. I agree that we need some form of representation abroad for India but the current offices are not up to the mark. We are staffing these officials who are probably not the best resources. If we really want to move forward in showcasing Incredible India, we need professionals to run the offices along with the Ministry and get the best people to man these offices. What the NITI Ayog has in mind for these offices is a closely guarded secret. However, the position has been made clear that the government is eager to scale up the numbers for inbound tourism and create platforms to promote Incredible India. Logic defies me as to why a foreign office is being opened in Russia. It could be linked to a G2G position. Also, a strong economy of the nation allows its citizens higher disposable incomes and hence the propensity to travel. The USA economy is solid currently which is also an important market but with the same logic, Russian economy is not the strongest and people do not have large sums of money to spend on long haul holidays. I would put the money in training the guns for the top source markets like the Americas, the UK, France, etc. that generate maximum inbound tourists rather than venture onto newer markets such as Russia.”



Vikram Madhok
India Travel Award winner and
Honorary Treasurer, PATA

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Innovative & unique products on offer

Iris Reps has plans to bring in exciting products that have a unique proposition on offer.



TT BUREAU

Armed with a strategy to bring about changes in the dynamics of the market, however small, Iris Reps is hopeful of bringing in newer and exciting products into the market. **Alefiya Singh**, Director, Iris Reps, says, "We hope to expand our portfolio in the new year with unique clients to create excitement in the market. We should be able to get more unique destinations, boutique hotels, apartments, and theme parks as India as a market has now opened up to new experiences."

In 2017 alone, Iris Reps added three new products to its client list - Coco Collection, VISTA DMC for Spain and Portugal, and MGM Macau. "We have a lot of activities earmarked for our travel partners for 2018. Our strategy is to aggressively promote MGM Macau and MGM Cotai in the new year," Singh adds.

Speaking about the strategy she plans to adopt, Singh



Alefiya Singh
Director, Iris Reps

says, "It is better to approach the traditional markets for new products and seek to explore newer, tiered cities for the regular products. Kochi is one of the newer markets we are looking at for our principals."

Iris Reps recently conducted a Fam trip for its client Swiss Garden International Hotels in Malaysia in association with Sri Lankan Airlines and Akquasun Holidays. The trip showcased its MICE possibilities and how Swiss Garden is ready to handle incentive and wedding groups from India.

Philippines brands taxis

The Department of Tourism, Philippines, branded taxis and buses in Mumbai and Delhi in order to increase the visibility of the archipelago. Her Excellency **Ma. Teresita C. Daza**, Ambassador, Republic of Philippines to India, inaugurated the promotional campaign along with **SanJeet**, India Representative, Philippines Tourism, with 50 taxis in Mumbai and two HOHO buses in New Delhi.



Tripping keeps them on their toes

Trip Tap Toe recently hosted a B2B networking event for its travel trade partners in Chandigarh. The company brought together key industry stakeholders from the region to meet and greet under one roof and plan the way forward for the upcoming year.



The New Year promises to look up

► Contd. from page 8

“We look at 2018 with great expectations and excitement. With cruises gaining popularity, we believe that passengers now understand that cruising is the next best way to see the world. We are amazed to see bookings for 2018 already. Guests have locked in their deposit and selected offers for their 2018 travel. Also, the myth that only elderly guests travel on cruises is now broken and Gen-X has been booking premium cruise liners for their travel.”



Ian Banerjee
Director
Global Anchor Cruises

“We shall soon announce new routes into Europe and Africa that is most likely to start by summer. These new routes will complement our services connecting to more destinations from India. The coming year shall also witness our new 787 Dreamliners on long-haul routes and Boeing 737 Max aircraft on short-haul destinations. We also look forward to big-ticket weddings in Oman. In 2017, there were eight big weddings in Oman from India and in 2018 we expect this segment to increase. We will channelise our energies to continue our focus on corporates, premium, MICE and Europe traffic.”



Sunil V A
Regional Vice President-ISC
(Indian Sub-Continent),
Oman Air

“We have carried around 60,000 passengers in 2017 till October and that represents a growth of 34 per cent. Majority of these passengers are from Russia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The number of Indian passengers remain relatively small at just about 10 per cent of the total. We are hoping to increase that number. We hope to get the Astana flights to daily. Thereafter, we will certainly be looking at Mumbai, which would most likely happen in 2019. This could be connected to Astana, as we have a new airport there— Astana Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport.”



Peter Foster
President & CEO
Air Astana



Mark Sutch
Regional General Manager
– South Asia, Middle East
and Africa, Cathay Pacific
Airways

“We hope that the operating environment in 2018 will improve to reflect better yields and higher load factors. However, we do expect that the passenger business will continue to be affected by overcapacity and strong competition from other airlines. We are addressing the industry challenges through our corporate transformation and by expanding our route network, increasing frequencies on our most popular routes and buying more fuel-efficient aircraft. We expect to see the benefits of our transformation in 2018, as it will help us to increase productivity and reduce costs while improving the quality of our services to customers.”



Amar Abrol
MD & CEO, AirAsia India,
India Travel Award winner

“2018 is going to be an exciting year for Indian aviation. Improved infrastructure and digitisation will be key drivers for us. With Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN taking off to a good start in 2017, passengers can look forward to flying to unserved and underserved routes and sectors at affordable fares. Continued and increased support from the Central & State Govt. and the tourism ministry in certain areas will help in creating reform. Standardisation in terms of including ATF under GST, uniformity in airport charges, revival of ghost airports, automation of processes at existing airports, will be key factors for airlines to serve travellers efficiently and help everyone fly!”



Komal Seth
Director
Outbound Connections

“In 2018, we will continue our Fam trips for the influencers of travel like travel bloggers and B2B media, which has proven to be very successful in increasing awareness and generating interest for our products. While in 2017 we worked on sustainable growth of the clients we represent, in 2018, we will also look at expanding our representation portfolio. SriLankan Airlines will focus on its Business Class fares and services to the India market and the new Melbourne route connecting India via Sri Lanka. Sharjah Tourism will come in a big way through round the year marketing campaigns for B2B and consumer markets.”



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“Good Food is Good Mood”



India Travel Awards returns to

India Travel Awards travelled to North India for its fourth edition to honour and recognise the talent and excellence of the travel and tourism industry. The black-tie regional event was held at The LaLit, New Delhi on December 21, 2017, in the presence of the who's who of the industry. The starry awards night was made memorable with entertaining performances, cocktails and dinner.



North India for its fourth edition



Experience South Africa with a twist

To ensure that 100,000-plus Indian travellers who visit South Africa annually experience something new and different, the South Africa Tourism Board has been promoting places beyond the cities of Cape Town and Durban and activities that are novel and exciting. Here are 10 reasons why they will want to return to the country.



HAZEL JAIN

Indian travellers, a lot of whom are repeat travellers to South Africa, want more experiences. An Indian traveller demands an average of six activities per day in



South Africa. They want to spend less time and money on transfers and prefer staying out of metros to experience a different kind of shopping that involves local indigenous artists. Coastal towns like Plettenberg Bay, Knysna, George, Mossel Bay, Oudtshoorn and Port Elizabeth on Garden Route and East London a little further on, are picturesque areas where travellers can pack in a lot of action into shorter time spans.

WESTERN CAPE

Plettenberg Bay in Western Cape is becoming popular amongst adventure junkies due to its proximity to the Bloukrans Bridge. Just outside of Plettenberg Bay is the largest single dome free-

flight multi-species bird aviary in the world, called Birds of Eden. Wildlife lovers will also find themselves drawn to Monkeyland, a primate sanctuary nestled in the forests of the Garden Route, just next to Birds of Eden.

Situated in the heart of Garden Route, Knysna plays host to numerous adventure activities. **Knysna** Lagoon, a must-see in the town, opens between two sandstone cliffs known as the Heads. Children



love playing in the shallow waters, as adults sit in their deck chairs and marvel at the Knysna Heads. The town also has to its name an Oyster Festival amongst other annual events, where approximately 200,000 oysters are consumed over a 10-day period.

Halfway between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth on Garden Route, **George** – Garden Route's largest city – is a tourist mecca with offerings that cater to all age groups. Travellers can dance the night away on the Insomniac Party Bus, a 40-seater single decker bus complete with bar, DJ booth and bathroom facilities for group tours. Families can choose to spend a day of bonding at the

RedBerry Strawberry Farm plucking fresh strawberries.

Inland from the Cape's famous Garden Route, trav-



ellers will find **Oudtshoorn** – popularly known as the ostrich capital of the world. The town is home to several interesting attractions like Cango Caves with its truly grand stalactite and stalagmite formations and Cango

Wildlife Ranch offering a hair-raising crocodile-cage dive. It is also one of the few places in the world to enjoy a meerkat safari.

EASTERN CAPE

A contemporary setting and a laidback charm gives **East London** a distinctive identity. Well-travelled Indians would appreciate this picturesque city, still untouched by tourist commercialisation as the perfect solution for leisurely vaca-



Port Elizabeth houses South Africa's third largest national reserve where travellers can watch hundreds of African elephants roam around freely, making it a great safari experience. The Addo National Park also has a thriving marine life and rich flora, offering the only Big 7 safari options in the world. This safari is a combination of marine safari searching for sharks and whales and the famous Big 5 safari. Port Elizabeth also includes Nelson Mandela Bay where one can find Route 67 – a collection of 67 art pieces celebrating the years Nelson Mandela devoted to public life. ↴

Travkart appointed PSA for Madame Tussauds Delhi

Travkart, a unit of Holidays by Sahibji that specialises in fixed departure and themed holidays becomes the preferred sales



agent (PSA) for Madame Tussauds Delhi. The attraction opened to public on December 1, 2017, visitors may buy tickets on Travkart website and mobile app.

Manheer Singh Sethi, Co-founder, Travkart said, "We are extremely delighted to be the first online travel platform to have been selected as a PSA by such a globally renowned brand like Madame Tussauds for the launch of its first ever attraction in the country. Our platform offer customers a wide selection of activities and must-see places they can book."

10 years of connecting Delhi-Guangzhou

As China Southern Airlines celebrates ten years of its New Delhi to Guangzhou flight, TRAVTALK maps their journey so far and takes a look deeper in to its future course.



NIKHIL ANAND

It was back in October 2007 when China Southern Airlines began their tryst with the Indian market. From a humble beginning, comprising only three flights a week, the airline has come a long way to now operate double dailies between New Delhi and Guangzhou. With no direct connectivity into Guangzhou before China Southern commenced operations, Indian travellers had to go all the way to Hong Kong and then take alternative means of commute or travel to other intermediary points like Bangkok, etc.

To celebrate their 10th anniversary milestone with the Indian trade, China Southern Airlines hosted a glitzy evening in the national capital, raising a toast to the long-standing relationship with the Indian industry. Addressing the gathering, **Gloria Wang**, General Manager, China Southern Airlines, exclaimed, "Over this 10-year journey we not only witnessed innovations,

diversity and quality improvements but what we drew most from the Indian market was cooperation and strength out of this relationship. I feel that this journey has been equally beneficial to both the countries. India continues to be a very valuable market for us and we look forward to continue providing our air services and develop stronger bonds with the Indian travel community."

The airline, Wang added, is doing really well in this market owing to its popularity amongst travellers looking to visit China and beyond and is currently seeing an average passenger load factor of over 80 per cent. Due to its sheer size, the Indian market has increasingly become one of the key emerging markets globally and China Southern Airlines was quick to realise the potential of the country. The airline is looking forward to expanding its operations in India, with new routes and frequencies in the coming years. While in the last 10 years the airline has cemented its presence in the



Gloria Wang
General Manager
China Southern Airlines

India continues to be a very valuable market for us and we look forward to continue providing our air services and develop stronger bonds with the Indian travel community

Indian market, it has also made attempts to leapfrog on the global scale with the augment of new destinations like Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Vancouver, San Francisco,

New York, Christchurch, Adelaide, Toronto and Mexico.

The celebratory evening also marked the unveiling of the airline's new flight to Cairns from December 4, 2017. Cairns will be the sixth destination for China Southern airlines' operations into Australia and give the Indian traveller another convenient option to fly to the land down under via Guangzhou with three weekly flight options. Speaking about the airline's commitment to the Indian market, she also added, "Our extensive global networking allows us the ability to transport Indian travellers not only to China but also to the world. With the largest fleet in the People's Republic of China, we have connections ranging from North America to Australia to New Zealand, etc." She further added that by 2020, the airline will have over 1000 aircraft in its fleet and their flying map will cover many more international destinations.

The cocktail event also saw agency awards hand-

ed out to numerous travel agents to recognize their efforts in aiding the growth of the airline. Expressing gratitude to the travel agents for their continued business and support, Wang stressed the pivotal role played by the agents to promote China Southern Airlines as the main carrier between India and China and also beyond. For the next decade as well, the airline will look to further its partnership with the Indian travel trade to fuel success for both parties cohesively.

Achieving Milestone

China Southern Airlines hosted a glitzy evening in Delhi, raising a toast to the long-standing relationship with the Indian industry

The celebratory evening also marked the unveiling of the airline's new flight to Cairns, the airline's sixth destination in Australia with three weekly flight options from India

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2018

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2018

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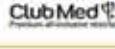
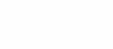
KOCHI
AUG 09-11
2018

PUNE
AUG 23-25
2018

HYDERABAD
TBA



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Scotland woos Indian travel trade

VisitScotland recently conducted its three-city roadshow in New Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai in partnership with Etihad Airways. The tourism board will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of Bollywood blockbuster *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* being shot in the country through various trade and consumer activations throughout the year in 2018.



Gourmets along the river

AmaWaterways takes its cruisers on hosted culinary tours where foodies and wine connoisseurs can delve into the local flavours amidst serene landscapes.



TT BUREAU

AmaWaterways has partnered with James Beard Award-winning cookbook author and Master Chef Joanne Weir for its special sailing, 'Taste of Bordeaux – Culinary Cruise Hosted by Joanne Weir'. The seven-night cruise will embark on July 26, 2018, travelling through the Bordeaux region along the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers.

Fans of Weir will have the opportunity to engage with the celebrated chef both on board and during shore excursions exploring local culinary and viticulture highlights. "Food and wine have become such critical parts of the way travellers expect to experience a country or city that it is important that we continue to propose a diversity of culinary experiences on our ships and during our excursions," says Rudi Schreiner, President and Co-owner, AmaWaterways.

To enhance the AmaWaterways experience the cruise line has sales offices in Mumbai and New Delhi as well for its guests and patrons. AmaWaterways offers unforgettable river cruises with 19 ships that sail Europe's Danube, Rhine, Moselle, Main, Rhone, Seine, Garonne, Dordogne, Dutch and Belgian Waterways and Douro Rivers, South East Asia's Mekong and Africa's Chobe River.

The company is renowned for its award-winning dining including 'The Chef's Table' specialty restaurant as well as complimentary fine wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner. The 2018 Culinary Cruise will take guests through the Bordeaux region of France, one of the world's undisputed wine capitals, and will be punctuated by a comprehensive choice of complimentary shore excursions highlighting French culture, food, and wine, including visits to vineyards and a wine festival exclusive to AmaWaterways' guests. Led by knowledgeable local guides, guests will make their way through the renowned vineyards of Saint-Émilion, Pauillac, Pomerol and Libourne, discovering timeless traditions from the winemakers themselves. They will also visit iconic chateaux for wine tastings, including a tasting at the 14th century Château de Montaigne, once the



former residence of French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. Optional pre-cruise

stays in Paris or a post-cruise tour of the Loire Valley are also available.

Decoding shopping tourism

This year under the FITUR Shopping Section, the trade show will focus on some of the key issues for the development of shopping tourism.



TT BUREAU

The annual travel trade fair FITUR, organised by IFE-MA will be held from January 17-21 at Feria de Madrid. As the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has highlighted, shopping tourism is now one of the main motivations for millions of people when it comes to choosing a destination for their holiday. The session on

shopping tourism will revolve around a series of round tables that will discuss topics such as, 'Shopping Tourism at the Destination: Global Brands and Local Design'; 'Shopping Tourism in distinctive Madrid shops' and 'Shopping Tourism and Digitisation.'

FITUR Know-How and Export will also conduct the second edition of SEGITTUR



Lab 2018 with six practical workshops that will provide solutions for digital tourism. The workshops will be limited to 20 attendees and will require prior registration. Last year the event saw participation of 9,893 exhibitor companies from 165 countries/regions; 135,838 trade participants and 109,134 visitors from the general public.

Mark your Calendar for

Travel Shows 2018

Travel LUXURY SHOW

April 7-8, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Travel WEDDING SHOW

July 7-8, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR

Travel BUSINESS SHOW

December 1-2, 2018 (Sat - Sun)
Delhi NCR



To Exhibit, please contact:

Punam Singh: punam@travelshow.world, +91 98111 58785
Sarika Bhamhani Rawal: sarika@ddppl.com, +91 98101 91852
Sonia Guru: sonia.guru@ddppl.com, +91 8800396009



Agents soar with Hahn Air

Hahn Air recently hosted an award ceremony at Radisson Blu Hotel, Chennai City Centre, to celebrate and recognise the continued support of its travel partners. Over 100 travel agents from Tamil Nadu were invited, where the airline awarded certificates of appreciation to its top 10 agencies.



Philippines boost for India

The Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Singapore International Airlines (SIA) to undertake joint marketing initiatives to promote the Philippines to the Indian market through social media, familiarisation tours, roadshows, among others.



Atout France honours travel partners

In a glittering gala night in Mumbai, Atout France continued the tradition of recognising three travel agencies for an exemplary showcase of France through published itineraries and two tour operators for exceptional achievements in the visa domain. The event was graced by the presence of His Highness Shriji Arvind Singhji Mewar of Udaipur and was attended by decision makers from trade.



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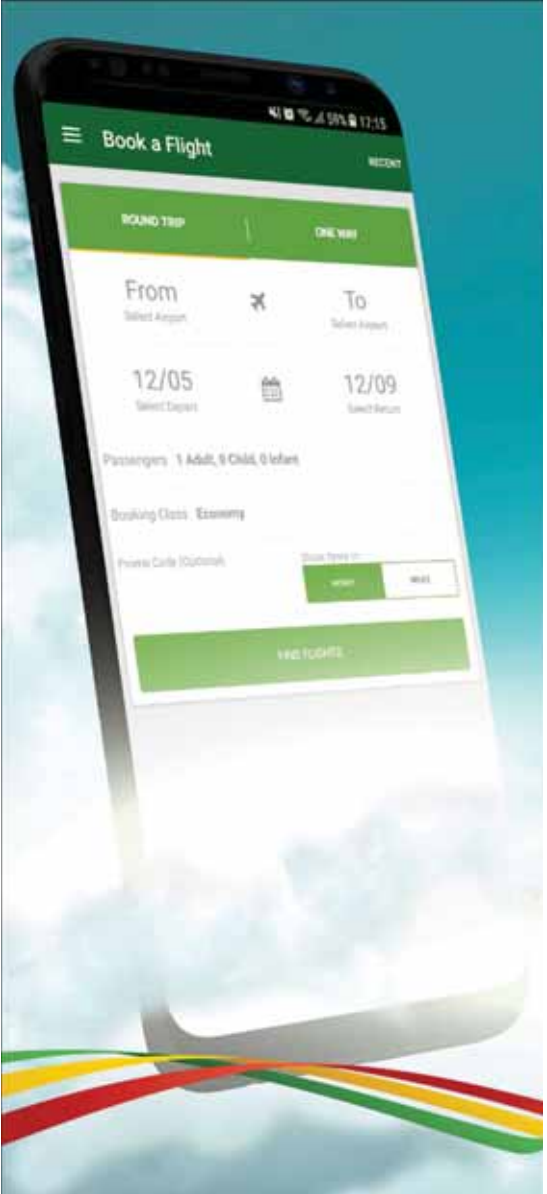
STS is a marketing company founded by Swiss Federal Railways and Switzerland Tourism. Its mission is to promote Switzerland's comprehensive public transport network.

Key tasks will involve sales and marketing of Swiss Travel System range of travel tickets, passes, scenic rail journeys and promotion of cross-border travel from the neighbouring countries of Switzerland.

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JANUARY

National

6	New Delhi	Global Hospitality Conclave
8	Bengaluru	U&I Roadshow
9	Ahmedabad	U&I Roadshow
11	Kolkata	U&I Roadshow
11-13	Kochi	India International Travel Mart (IITM)
11-13	Mumbai	IITT
12	New Delhi	U&I Roadshow
15	Pune	U&I Roadshow
15-17	Nagpur	GPS
16	Mumbai	U&I Roadshow
17	Mumbai	JNTO B2B Trade Seminar
18-20	Mumbai	OTM
18-19	Kolkata	Destination East
19-21	Ranchi	Jharkhand Travel Mart
27-29	Nagpur	India International Travel Exhibition (IITE)
29	Mumbai	Dusit International Roadshow
29	Chennai	Philippines Business Mission
30	Bengaluru	Dusit International Roadshow
30	Chennai	Tourism Events Queensland
30	New Delhi	JNTO B2B Trade Seminar
30-Feb 1	Mumbai	CAPA India Aviation Summit
31	Bengaluru	Tourism Events Queensland
31-Feb 2	Delhi	SATTE
International		
17-21	Madrid, Spain	FITUR <Fitur>
19-22	Helsinki, Finland	MATKA, Nordic Travel Fair
22-26	Chiang Mai, Thailand	ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF)
25-28	Istanbul, Turkey	EMITT

FEBRUARY

National

2	Hyderabad	Tourism Events Queensland
3-5	Chennai	India Travel Mart (ITM)
5-6	Mumbai	ANTO B2B Workshop
7	Bengaluru	ANTO B2B Workshop
8-9	New Delhi	ANTO B2B Workshop
8-11	Hyderabad	GPS
9-11	Ahmedabad	India Travel Mart (ITM)
9-12	Mysore	Mysore Travel Mart
12-13	Mumbai	South African Tourism Roadshow
14	Kolkata	South African Tourism Roadshow
15	Bengaluru	South African Tourism Roadshow
16	Delhi	South African Tourism Roadshow
16-18	Chennai	TTF
19	Ahmedabad	South African Tourism Roadshow
20	Pune	Tourism Events Queensland
21	Mumbai	ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow
22	Ahmedabad	Tourism Events Queensland
23	Kolkata	ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow
23-25	Kolkata	India International Travel Mart (IITM)
23-25	Bengaluru	TTF
26	Delhi	ENIT Italy B2B Roadshow
28-Mar-02	Bengaluru	Karnataka Travel Mart

February Contd...

International

5-7	Abu Dhabi, UAE	IBTM Arabia
11-13	Milan, Italy	BIT
20-21	Melbourne, Australia	AIME 2018
21-22	Olympia, London	Business Travel Show (BTS)
21-22	Olympia, London	TTE
21-23	Istanbul, Turkey	ACE of M.I.C.E.
21-23	Abu Dhabi, UAE	PATA Adventure Travel & Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart

MARCH

National

16-18	Goa	India Travel Mart (ITM)
International		
7-11	Berlin, Germany	ITB
13-15	Moscow, Russia	MITT
18-20	Brisbane, Australia	Routes Asia
20-22	Kiev, Ukraine	UITT
20-22	Shanghai, China	IT&CM and CTW China
21-23	Mexico	GBTA Conference 2018

APRIL

National

4-5	Mumbai	HICSA
7-8	Delhi	TTF
7-8	Jaipur	Travel Luxury Show
19-20	Gurugram	Phocuswright India
22-24	Jaipur	Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB)
International		
5-7	Baku, Azerbaijan	AITF
5-7	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Dhaka Travel Mart
12-14	Novosibirsk, Russia	SITT
15-17	Cape Town, South Africa	ILTM Africa
15-19	Adelaide, Australia	Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)
16-18	Beijing, China	COTTM
17-19	Singapore	Digital Travel Summit (APAC)
18-19	Buenos Aires, Argentina	WTTC Global Summit
18-20	Almaty, Kazakhstan	KITF
22-23	Dubai, UAE	ILTM Arabia
22-25	Dubai, UAE	Arabian Travel Mart (ATM)

MAY

International

6-8	Adelaide, Australia	Annual Meetings & Events Industry Conference
6-8	Dresden, Germany	Germany Travel Mart (GTM)
7-10	Dunedin, NZ	TRENT
8-10	Durban, South Africa	INDABA
8-11	Sao Paulo, Brazil	ILTM Latin America
15-17	Frankfurt, Germany	IMEX
15-17	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Phocuswright Europe
16-18	Shanghai, China	ITB China
17-20	Gangnueng, Korea	PATA Annual Summit 2018
21-24	Singapore	ILTM Asia Pacific

JUNE

International

3-5	Sydney, Australia	IATA AGM 2018
15-17	Beijing, China	BITE

JULY

National

5-7	Ahmedabad	GPS
6-8	Kolkata	TTF
7-8	Jaipur	Travel Wedding Show
7-9	Delhi	Hotel Operations Summit India 2018
9-10	Mumbai	Kiwi Link India
12	Bengaluru	Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training
12-14	Chandigarh	GPS
13	New Delhi	Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training
13-15	Hyderabad	TTF
19-21	Lucknow	GPS

International

17-18	Singapore	ACTE Global Summit
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AUGUST

National

2-4	Kolkata	GPS
9-11	Kochi	GPS
16	Kochi	ITM B2B Event, Tourism Australia
17	Kolkata	ITM B2B Event, Tourism Australia
18	Goa	ITM B2B Event, Tourism Australia
20	Mumbai	ITM B2B Event, Tourism Australia
23-25	Pune	GPS

SEPTEMBER

National

7-9	Ahmedabad	TTF
14-16	Surat	TTF
25	New Delhi	GNT0 B2B Roadshow
26	Bengaluru	GNT0 B2B Roadshow
27-30	Kochi	Kerala Travel Mart
28	Mumbai	GNT0 B2B Roadshow
28-30	Pune	TTF

International

4-6	Florida, USA	La Cita
12-14	Langkawi, Malaysia	PATA Travel Mart
18-20	Bangkok, Thailand	IT&CMA & CTW Asia Pacific 2018
20-23	Tokyo, Japan	JATA Tourism Expo 2018
25-28	Paris, France	IFTM Top Resa
26-28	Kazakhstan	Astana Leisure

OCTOBER

National

30	New Delhi	Scandinavian Tourist Board Roadshow
31	Bengaluru	Scandinavian Tourist Board Roadshow

International

17-19	Singapore	ITB Asia
31-Nov 2	Shanghai, China	ILTM China
10-12	Italy	TTG Incontri

NOVEMBER

National

1	Mumbai	Scandinavian Tourist Board Roadshow
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International

5-7	London, UK	WTM
28-30	Khon Kaen, Thailand	PATA Destination Marketing Forum

DECEMBER

National

1-2	Hyderabad	Travel Business Show
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International

3-6	Cannes, France	ILTM Cannes
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For more details, contact: talk@ddppl.com

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Park Hyatt Chennai

Chennai

Vishal Mehra takes over as the new General Manager of Park Hyatt Chennai. With over 20 years of experience in the industry and eight hotel openings, Mehra has worked at leading brands like Burj Al Arab, Grand Hyatt Dubai, Hyatt Regency Dushanbe, Hyatt Capital Gate, Abu Dhabi, Park Hyatt Hadahaa; and Hyatt Place Dubai. Experiences like the quick turnaround, offering extreme luxury, finding constant ways to innovate experiences, maximising employee talent, ensuring that the team loves what they do and contributing towards making these hotels a success story are his most flattering achievements.



The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat

Kolkata

Vikram Singh Chauhan joins The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat as the General Manager. In his current role, Chauhan will manage the operations and will be responsible for the profitability, guest experience and strategic initiatives for the hotel. He will also work with the Westin's global and regional brand teams at Starwood Hotels & Resorts in the development and implementation of brand standards in operations and service. With a career spanning 18 years, Chauhan has worked across six countries.



Hyatt Hotels

Gurugram

Hyatt Hotels has appointed **Sunjae Sharma** as Vice President of Operations for India. A seasoned hospitality professional, Sharma will lead Hyatt's India operations and will be responsible for executing the company's operational and growth strategy in his new role. He will assume his new position at Hyatt's Gurugram headquarters. Prior to this appointment, Sharma was the Area Vice President for South & West India and General Manager of Grand Hyatt Mumbai, where he oversaw the strategic and financial performance of 16 hotels.



VisitBritain

Mumbai

Vishal Bhatia has been promoted to Country Manager-India. He has been working with VisitBritain since February 2013 when he started out as the Deputy Manager and subsequently as B2B Manager. He was Interim Country Manager from June-December 2016. He has been integral in delivering the India strategy, while leading on all B2B activities in market. Bhatia has extensive market knowledge and expertise of the local travel landscape. In this role, Bhatia will be taking on the day-to-day aspects of VisitBritain's operations in India.



Destination Queenstown

New Zealand

Destination Queenstown (DQ) has appointed **Kiran Nambiar** as the new Business Development Director. Nambiar has over 20 years of experience in the tourism and travel industry. Nambiar will oversee all channel sales and trade marketing activity including domestic and international travel trade, industry partnerships, business events (C&I) and study. He has held senior positions as Vice President and Country Manager United States with Cox and Kings Group. He has also recently completed an MBA from Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, Canada.



SOTC

Mumbai

Vimmi Deshpande has been designated as General Manager-Trade relations in Tour Operating division at SOTC. In her current role, Deshpande will lead the end-to-end functioning of the Trade Relations department at SOTC. She comes with an experience of over 21 years in travel trade. Deshpande has previously managed a wide array of roles at Kuoni Travel which extended from being a Branch Manager - Leisure Sales to being General Manager for Do-It-Yourself Holidays and Kuoni Luxury. She joins SOTC from Writer Business Services, where she served as Head - Relocations & Immigration Services, India.



Grand Hyatt

Mumbai

Roshan Rajpal has joined Grand Hyatt Mumbai as Hotel Manager. Rajpal, a graduate in Humanities has over 20 years of experience across global hospitality brands like Crowne Plaza, Carlson Rezidor and AccorHotels in various challenging roles and responsibilities. Her last assignment was as Hotel Manager at Ibis Bengaluru before joining Grand Hyatt Mumbai. Rajpal brings her operations, sales and marketing and business development acumen as well as the zeal to create moments of more not just for their guests but also for their associates.



Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

Mumbai

Deepak Sampath joins Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport as Rooms Division Manager. Sampath brings aboard over 16 years of experience in his field. In his new role, he will be responsible for securing a consistent high guest feedback rating by putting in measures that include training the team, guest relations management and repeat guest business through loyalty program enrolments. His responsibilities also include administering internal expense control measures to ensure higher profitability of the division. Prior to this, Deepak has worked in five-star hotel operations with The Park (Bangalore), Ista Hotels, Hyatt Bangalore and Radisson Blu Mahabalipuram, Chennai.



StayWell Hospitality Group

Delhi

StayWell Hospitality Group named **Vivek Singh** as its Regional Revenue Optimisation Manager. He will be responsible for the overall revenue management of the group with key focus on generating maximum revenues. He will be actively involved in short and long-term planning and preparation of the marketing strategies, hotel policies, procedures, relevant legislations and the annual budget. Singh brings with him an experience of over 11 years in hospitality industry. He is proficient in revenue management with both national and international brands. He has earlier been associated with global brands like Hyatt, IHG, Starwood, AccorHotels, Marriott, to name a few.



TALKing People

Mohit Batra, Representative-India, Scandinavian Tourist Board, is a fond golfer. He loves to enjoy his peace and quiet in his free time. Lofoten, Bornholm and Visby are three destinations Batra wishes to see within Scandinavia. However, Japan, Peru and Ecuador are destinations on his bucket list. "Scandinavia is very close to my heart but apart from that, I love Austria, Lebanon and the UK and love to revisit them. The newer generation entering the travel fraternity should not look for shortcuts. You have to know your products well and be passionate about the industry," says Batra.



Sharad Dutta, General Manager, The Westin Mumbai Garden City, has a few ways that he de-stresses. "I love spending time with my three-year-old daughter. Going for a swim, watching movies and playing guitar are also ways I unwind. I am also passionate about golf and look for every opportunity to play," he says. Dutta enjoys travelling and his most memorable vacation was the first holiday he took with his daughter at a beach destination. "It was a treat for us to watch her enjoy playing in the sand. In India, I prefer Srinagar and internationally, it has to be Barcelona," he adds.



Narendra Prabhu, General Manager, Signature Club Resort, loves to spend time with his family and that includes movie nights. "To de-stress, I play sports after a day's hard work. My work is one thing I am extremely passionate about and care for deeply," he says. One of his most memorable holidays is one at Madhumalai, with his team at Signature Club Resort. "We went bird watching and trekking through the thick forest at night. Ooty is one destination that is in the top five vacation spots for me."



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Concrete foundation for students

Former Managing Director and Regional Vice President of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, South Asia and industry veteran, **Dilip Puri**, has announced his new education venture – Indian School of Hospitality (ISH), with a promise to reimagine hospitality education in India.



KANCHAN NATH

QHow are you going to bridge the gap between supply and demand of talent in the industry?

Firstly, we are not looking to meet the scarcity of talent where we are promising to provide 80,000 students. We are very clear we are an institution of higher learning to develop management talent for the industry. I am not into skill development, at least not at this stage. We are preparing students to enter hospitality and allied industries through the management cadre of the country. My sense is that that we will not be catering to just the hotel industry. We expect companies to recruit for retail, aviation, fashion, luxury, FMCG, banking, and financial services. These are companies that recruit from international hotel schools. I want to make sure they come and recruit from ISH as well. I am not looking to fill the gap in hotels, and I think hotels

“We are preparing students to enter hospitality and allied industries through the management cadre of the country. I think hotels need to take responsibility for the education of students, when they are on these industrial training and internship programmes.**”**

Dilip Puri

Former Managing Director and Regional Vice President of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, South Asia



of the order to India, so that the programme is affordable, yet provides the same value and quality in terms of leadership development.

QWhat was the idea behind choosing École hôtelière de Lausanne as a partner?

ISH envisions its curriculum design to be a global benchmark of hospitality education in the near future and in order to do so, has entered into a strategic partnership with Lausanne Hospitality

and knew the market better. We are getting huge amount of value addition from them.

QIs quality over quantity something you believe in?

Yes, I do. We have kept our recruitment number so small that we cannot afford a student who doesn't meet the criteria. Our own selection criteria of profiling a student before taking him/her into the college clearly suggests that quality is way more important for us. One simple reason for

this is that it is these students who are the brand ambassadors of the institute. They are the ones who will sell ISH in the future.

QWhat role are the panelists going to play at ISH?

They will play various roles, including providing mentorship to our students. We believe that every student should have an industry mentor. The panelists will also provide internship and placement opportunities, and their executive and senior managers will be the faculty at ISH.



Fact File

The ISH campus is under development and will be ready by May 2018, in time for the maiden batch of students in August 2018

Location: Sector 83, Gurgaon

Fee Structure: ₹ 5.5 lakhs per annum. If one opts for accommodation there is an incremental cost of ₹ 10,000 per month

have started to realise that they have to look beyond the hotel institutes to recruit. For the last three years, they have been going to colleges and recruiting. By following this practice, we are not limiting ourselves to hiring people from hotel institutes alone.

Today, Cornell does a 10-day General Manager's programme. If you do the programme, that's a great leadership development for you. We want to bring that kind of education to India. We have three verticals at ISH, one is Hospitality Management and the other two are Culinary Education and Executive Education. In Executive Education, for instance, instead of following a Harvard or Cornell executive programme, we want to bring something

Consulting (LHC) for curriculum development and faculty training. ISH has partnered with LHC in preparation for an academic certification by École hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), the world's oldest and top-ranked hospitality management higher education institution. In addition to the four-year hospitality management programme, ISH will offer several long and short-term programmes in both culinary and executive education.

When I was looking for options for a good academic partner who understood our market, they were right there. Lausanne Hospitality Consulting's CEO, Yateendra Singh, is of Indian origin and has worked here in the past with Oberoi Hotels. He understood the opportunities well

The courses on offer

The core academic programmes being offered at ISH are a four-year hospitality management programme and a four-year programme in culinary arts. The education structure at ISH is aimed at providing the ideal foundation for managerial and leadership development, strategic thinking- leveraging both macro and micro perspectives, as well as building emotional and intellectual intelligence.

Beside the core academic programmes, ISH will also offer various short-term programmes in culinary specialisations as well as a whole range of executive education programmes catering to professionals in hospitality, travel, aviation, retail and other customer-focused industries.

ISH has received the Letter of Intent from the Department of Higher Education, Government of Haryana, to set up a self-financing degree college affiliated to a state university.

The institute's Advisory Council comprises leaders from hospitality and other service sectors, who will provide strategic inputs, guidance, and mentorship to the faculty and students, as well as support ISH in terms of internship and placement opportunities in India and overseas.



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India

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TRAV/TALK



ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The MICE industry in India is a prominent segment of the booming tourism and hospitality industry. Seen as a lucrative arm that incorporates the meetings, incentives, conferences and events, the sector is a perfect amalgamation of exhibiting trends, infrastructure and packages for MICE groups in the tourism industry. As a tribute, India MICE Awards recognises the achievers of the MICE and the tourism industry, who have worked steadfastly towards enhancing the environment to allow the growth of the MICE wing in the country.

Our topmost honour, the Gold Maya, is awarded to those stalwarts who have shaped the industry to the way it is today and created innovative ways and products to take this sector a notch higher. We also honour young guns who are paving the way forward for the industry with their innovative thinking and proactiveness.

At the black-tie, Silver Service event, various performers enthral and amuse the audience. The first edition of India MICE Awards in Delhi ensures the beginning of a new journey of long-term associations.

India MICE Awards will be travelling to various other cities in India in its subsequent editions. Thus we take it upon ourselves, in our own small way, to revive and enhance MICE in India and award these who are taking this industry to a greater height.

SanJeet

India MICE Awards

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India MICE Awards debuts in Delhi

A first-of-its-kind, India MICE Awards, made its debut at The Lalit New Delhi on November 27, 2017. The award ceremony, which had the Tourism Minister **Alphons Kannanthanam** and Tourism Joint Secretary, **Suman Billa** as the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour respectively, left no stone unturned in keeping the guests engaged and entertained throughout the evening.

Kanchan Nath

The delightful awards ceremony highlighted the growing importance of the Meetings, Incentive, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. Gracing the evening as Chief Guest was **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. In his address to the audience, he said, "The MICE sector creates a lot of employment and at the end of the day as a tourism minister, I am concerned about employment generation; this sector does both. Since hospitality plays such an important role, we have to go out of our way to promote such functions. Also, MICE attracts people who are interested in doing

serious business. This sector brings in people and creates jobs - a mandate for the development of the tourism industry." The Ministry of Tourism is focused in its approach to the tourism and hospitality sector and is willing to undertake initiatives that will help broaden its spectrum. Elaborating on this, Kannanthanam said, "We will be coming out with a tourism policy in 2018; it has to go to the cabinet for the approval, we are in the process of drafting and finalising that. The whole objective is to create the right infrastructure, milieu for people to visit our country and for Indians to travel around. The idea is to make it a happy experience for them."

Informing on the soon-to-be launched website of Incredible India, the minister

said, "The objective is to have a comprehensive website which will be useful to the traveller. Also, we are coming up with a new website that would show India comprehensively to the travellers. It will be in user-friendly languages, formats, fonts, etc. Travellers who wish to know more about the country shall witness a seamless experience through the website."

SanJeet, Mentor, India MICE Awards, said, "We are glad to create an all-India platform to recognise those behind the success of the MICE industry and to make them feel like achievers. We are happy and proud to announce the India MICE Awards as an exclusive one-of-its-kind event. The award ceremony will be held annually."



(L-R): Nitin Shankar Nagrale, Dilruba Pandey, Jyotsna Suri, Alphons Kannanthanam, Suman Billa, Marisha Kaul and SanJeet



Chief Guest |

ALPHONS KANNANTHANAM

The Chief Guest of the glittering awards, **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, expresses, “Initiatives like India MICE Awards are great because this is one sector which showcases tremendous potential. It results in long-stay guests and occupied hotel rooms. Therefore, we need to focus on how to bring in more of MICE into the country, because they are huge money spinners.”

► **Alphons Kannanthanam**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Minister of State, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, recieved the award for Chief Guest and was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Mentor, India MICE Awards; **Jyotsna Suri**, Chairperson and Managing Director, Bharat Hotels and **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.





Guest of Honour |

SUMAN BILLA

Tourism policies and procedures are undergoing continuous change. Speaking about the induction of single-window clearance for group visa in the new tourism policy, Guest of Honour, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, says, “We are still in talks with the Ministry of Home Affairs because even though we have e-Visa, it does not apply to conferences. Firstly, we want to electronically upgrade the conference visa, secondly, we want to initiate group clearance for conferences.” “We want to harness the growth of the MICE industry. We want to set up convention promotion bureaus at various destinations and at state levels. We also want the ICPB board to become the mother body,” concludes Billa, while speaking about the potential of the MICE industry and how it can be made competitive.

► **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, received the award for Guest of Honour and was felicitated by Team, India MICE Awards.





Gallery of Legends |

AMAN NATH

Awards received, should impel one to work and grow even more, feels **Aman Nath**, Founder and Chairman, Neemrana Hotels. He further says, "We at Neemrana are passionate about what we do. We want to be in every state and touch every ruin. We want to bring employment and empower people, that's our aim." Elaborating on the awards, he says, "I receive this award in humility. I think that in the journey of karma, an award is just a milestone, it's not the destination, because you never know how far you are going to travel. Receiving an award should not be an impediment and one should try and achieve more. The journey is continuous."

► **Aman Nath**, Founder and Chairman, Neemrana Hotels, received the award for **Gallery of Legends**

DDP Game Changer |

SUNIL GHADIOK

Commenting on the awards' evening, **Sunil Ghadiok**, Chief Executive Officer, Nidra Hospitality (a part of Shanti Hospitality Group), says, "I think DDP puts in a huge amount of effort, which is commendable. I think it's a huge process in selecting the right and the most deserving people. To reward them is a great encouragement, not only for all the players in the industry, but also the people who have put in effort into making what MICE is in India today."

► **Sunil Ghadiok**, Chief Executive Officer, Nidra Hospitality, received the award for **DDP Game Changer**



DDP Trailblazer |

HIMMAT ANAND

He left the corporate world to pursue his decade old dream of creating a hospitality brand. **Himmat Anand**, Founder, The Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels, shares, "The awards, which begun a few years ago are an amazing success story. The fact that you have taken it pan India and diversified it to not just tourism and travel, but other segments as well. The awards recognises the best of the best. I wish the team all the best."

► **Himmat Anand**, Founder, The Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels, received the award for **DDP Trailblazer**



Guest of Honour |

MARISHA KAUL

Marisha Kaul, Gladrags Mrs. India-North 2017, expresses, "It was indeed a pleasure being present at the India MICE awards as the guest of honour. Kudos to the organisers for taking up the initiative to recognise, honour and encourage all those behind the success of this industry and organising the event so well. I feel a prestigious recognition of this kind will stimulate much more talent in the years to come."

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

Best MICE Hotel |

CROWNE PLAZA, GREATER NOIDA

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida boasts of being more than just a hotel, with the most versatile meeting spaces, including indoor and outdoor options, magnificent and functional venues, personalised service and exceptional food. They are always "one step ahead", says **Greesh Bindra**, Regional General Manager, North & West India IHG and General Manager Crowne Plaza Greater Noida. "Winning this award is like a testament of our claim to be the most preferred international hotel brand for business, events and celebrations. The inaugural edition of the India MICE Awards was truly grandeur as it brought the entire hospitality industry together," he adds.

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza, Greater Noida** and received by **Nivesh Bhagtani**, Duty Manager and **Greesh Bindra**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida



Best Experiential MICE Agent |

BLUE MOON TRAVELS

Stating that MICE is the only way to grow in this competitive trade, **Vijay Dadhich**, Managing Director, Blue Moon Travels, says, "We believe we need to raise our bar. For MICE, we have done all shapes and sizes of people. We have been the official travel partner for IFFA for the past 10 years. We have done MICE from Las Vegas, to Europe to Asia, all the way to Australia, and within India. We have always been looking for an experiential journey for our customers. The awards ceremony was wonderfully executed. Sanjeet always felicitates people who do good work in the industry."

► The award was given to **Blue Moon Travels** and received by **Sachin Varma**, Manager, Business Development and **Vijay Dadhich**, Managing Director



Best Organizer of Conferences - Domestic | ICE GROUP INDIA

Thrilled to have received their first award, **Disha Shah**, Director, ice Group India, expresses, "It was a good evening and a well organised event. We are very thrilled to have received this award. We will keep doing the hard work and hope to be here again next year. It was the first MICE awards and I must compliment the organisers."

► The award was given to **ice Group India** and received by **Disha Shah**, Director and **Mohit Khanna**, Managing Director

Best Business Hotel | CROWNE PLAZA NEW DELHI MAYUR VIHAR

The hotel is at a short distance of 20 minutes from the commercial hub of Noida. The destination provides an excellent base for guests travelling to key business districts such as Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Jasola and Nehru Place. Corporate travellers can appreciate amenities including the 24-hour business centre with free high-speed internet access.

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza New Delhi Mayur Vihar** and received by **Vikas Oswal**, General Manager and **Veenu Rastogi**, Area Director - Sales & Marketing, North & West India



Best MICE Operator - Domestic | COX & KINGS

Be it a business executive, a frontline salesman, a neighbourhood retailer or a business agent, there are a few things that drives one to perform at their peak. Cox and Kings ensures its customers some extraordinary offerings that exhibits excellence. The company surpassed its performance to win the recognition of Best MICE Operator - Domestic at the India MICE Awards.

► The award was given to **Cox & Kings** and received by **Nagender Panwar**, Head Operations

Leading MICE Company | CONCEPT CONFERENCES

Grateful to his team for their contribution, **Ashish Jagota**, Executive Director, Concept Conferences, says, "It's amazing to receive this award. It's not just an award but a responsibility to go on. I am thankful to my team for getting us to this platform. These awards are a good appreciation for our clients who we work with. It's a good recognition in the industry."

► The award was given to **Concept Conferences** and received by Executive Directors, **Venessa Williams** and **Ashish Jagota**





Best MICE Travel Agency of the Year

TED TRAVEL & EXPERIENCES

Stating that the event goes a long way in promoting the industry, **Manoj Raina**, Domestic Operation – Head, Ted Travel & Experiences, shares, “This is a good event, we should do such programmes often, just to promote our industry. We are just a two-and-a-half-year-old company and have been doing good business, domestic as well as international. We have achieved a 100 crore business in the last two years.”

► The award was given to **Ted Travel & Experiences** and received by **Aakash Tufchi**, Manager Sales, **Manoj Raina**, Domestic Operation - Head

Best MICE Destination

NBTC HOLLAND TOURISM

Pooja Sabharwal, Account Director, Destination Holland - India, says, “It is such a proud moment for NBTC Holland Tourism to receive the award for Best MICE destination. Year 2017 was a great year for Holland not only with respect to leisure tourism, but also with respect to being pitched as a top European destination for meetings, incentives, conferences and events. Being the proud recipient of ‘Maya’ was possible due to the continued commitment of our travel partners to promote the MICE facilities in Holland amongst Indians.”

► The award was given to **NBTC Holland Tourism** and received by **Pooja Sabharwal** Account Director and Team



Best MICE Start-up

TENTH PLANET GROUP

Tenth Planet Group is a leading digital technology company from Mumbai. **Shivdutt Das**, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Tenth Planet Group, on receiving the accolade says, “We have been nominated because we are one of the most promising start-ups today and are working a lot in the digital space. The kind of footprints we have created in the past one year is remarkable and that’s what brought us here.” Expressing on the ceremony, he said, “I think the ceremony has opened a door of opportunities. The recognition makes us more responsible towards our customers.”

► The award was given to **Tenth Planet Group** and received by **Shivdutt Das**, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder

Best Customized Tour Operator

MYUZ HOLIDAYS

Encouragement through awards can be a great motivating factor, feels **Ripos Das**, Managing Director, Myuz Holidays. He further shares, “This is the first time for us and its very special. For the last seven years we are delivering in the service industry. The accolade is amazing and encourages us to provide better services to customers. We are further motivated to improve our services.”

► The award was given to **MYUZ Holidays** and received by **Ripos Das**, Managing Director





Best MICE Resort - 4 Star

POOVAR ISLAND RESORT

Unspoilt and unexplored, enveloped by the most serene backwaters, and opening out to the Arabian Sea, Poovar Island Resort is truly a window into paradise. Built on 25 acres of lush green coconut gardens alongside the beach, the resort comprises of elegant land based superior rooms, and is unique for the floating cottages and villas. Located 30 kms from Trivandrum International Airport, the resort is accessible only by a 10-minute boat ride on the river.

► The award was given to **Poovar Island Resort** and received by **S. Jaykumar**, General Manager (extreme right)

Best Emerging MICE Travel Agency

MADRAS TRAVELS & TOURS

Privileged and excited to have won the recognition, **Vatsala Subramanian**, COO, Madras Travels & Tours, Chennai, says, "I am feeling highly energised, motivated and encouraged after receiving this award. In the last six to eight months, we have done quite a few groups, ranging group size from 35 to 300 to various destinations, due to which we were nominated. I think it's a wonderful initiative. We are thankful to DDP publication. It not only encourages and motivates us, it's a milestone and we hope to cross many more year-after year."

► The award was given to **Madras Travels & Tours** and received by **Vatsala Subramanian**, Chief Operating Officer



Best Conference Venue

18.99 LATITUDE BANQUETS

Elated to witness MICE being recognised through this one-of-a-kind platform, **Shantanu Wagle**, Regional Sales Head - West, 18.99 Latitude Banquets, says, "We are a one-year-old organisation based in Mumbai, which is blessed with an ideal location, completely suited for the discerning corporate and social requirements. It is pleasing to see that MICE category is being recognised on such platform. We are witnessing collaboration with all kinds of players. I think the future is very exciting for the industry and such gatherings will only encourage the industry to grow swiftly."

► The award was given to **18.99 Latitude Banquets** and received by **Rajneesh Wakhloo**, Regional Sales Head - North and **Shantanu Wagle**, Regional Sales Head - West

Fastest Growing MICE Travel Agency

FRONTIER HOLIDAYS

Award functions always excite everyone because of the appreciation for the hard work that is put in. When it is organised as well as the India MICE Awards, it is a great to participate in them, says **Bharathi Shetty**, MD & CEO, Frontier Holidays. "This award has set a higher benchmark for us, as a team to deliver more. We wish to bring the hidden treasures, well informed and ever demanding traveller needs. We at Frontier always believe in being a go getter and for us the sky is the limit," adds Shetty.

► The award was given to **Frontier Holidays**





Best Event Organizer |

WIZARD EVENTS & CONFERENCES

From one of the leading MICE agencies in the fraternity, **Kapil Arora**, Director- Sales & Operations, Wizard Events & Conferences, on receiving accolades shares, "It's a good initiative and MICE itself is a very big industry, so, it needs to be differentiated. It was a good initiative by DDP. The awards showcased good players who are helping to grow this industry well."

► The award was given to **Wizard Events & Conferences** and received by **Kapil Arora**, Director- Sales & Operations

Best Meetings and Conventions Hotel |

LULU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER & GARDEN HOTELS

Awards empower those who work behind the scenes, constantly contributing to a company's success, shares **Jose Sebastian**, General Manager, Lulu International Convention Center & Garden Hotels. He says, "These awards are important for the companies who exhibit their performance at the national level."

► The award was given to **Lulu International Convention Center & Garden Hotels** and received by **Reji Mathew**, Assistant General Manager and **Jose Sebastian**, General Manager



Best Convention & Exhibition Centre |

CLARKS EXOTICA CONVENTION RESORT AND SPA

The glittering ceremony saw exceptional work being recognised on an industry platform. **Varun Sharma**, Director - Food & Beverage, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa, shares, "The event was organised 'flawlessly'. This platform aims in developing innovative, creative hoteliers who stand the chance to become global players."

► The award was given to **Clarks Exotica Convention Resort And Spa** and received by **Varun Sharma**, Director - Food & Beverage and **Ramachandra Bhat**, Director - Finance

Best MICE Concepts |

EPIC INDIA TOURS & EVENTS

Epic India Tours and Travels believe that their faith in 'Hard Work comes with a price, Work Smart' culture gets them closer to perfection everyday. **Pankaj Malhotra**, Director, Epic India Tours & Events, shares, "India MICE Awards was a well organised and very professional curated event along with the element of wit, which took it to a different level."

► The award was given to **Epic India Tours & Events** and received by **Pankaj Malhotra**, Group Head, **Rahul Dham**, Associate Director - MICE Operations, **Nupur Sood**, Director, **Kapil Dev Chhawary**, Assistant Manager - MICE Operations



Best Debut Hotel - MICE |

EFCEE SAROVAR PORTICO, BHAVNAGAR

The awards give you a benchmark to improve yourself further, feels **Komalkant Sharma**, Chairman & Managing Director, Efcee Sarovar Portico, Bhavnagar. He further states, "We are from Leela group of companies, primarily into ship breaking and construction. It's our maiden property and a year has been completed. These awards for sure are motivational. Also, it generated a good networking platform for newcomers like us."

► The award was given to **Efcee Sarovar Portico, Bhavnagar** and received by **Komalkant Sharma**, Chairman & Managing Director



Best Organizer of Conferences - International | **PARRY TRAVELS**

A well organised event can be a pleasure for all to attend. Talking about recognition through the awards, **Laxmi Angara**, BU Head, Parry Travels, says, "We are more specialised in international exhibitions and annual conferences, more of MICE events. We also do trade shows, buyer-seller meets. The evening was very well organised, the flow of the event was awesome. We are proud to receive the award."

► The award was given to **Parry Travels** and received by **Laxmi Angara**, BU Head

Best Hotel and Event Facilities |

UDAY SAMUDRA LEISURE BEACH HOTEL & SPA

UDS located at the famed beaches of Kovalam, just 15 meters from the sea, is an exclusive 5 Star leisure beach hotel - a destination by itself. The setting, facilities, people, spa, cuisine and its whole philosophy is dedicated to one's personal wellness in a luxurious environment. The landscaping has its own serenity, a harmony of a defined architecture, spacious lawns, blue water pools and soaring coconut grooves all set in four tranquil acres by the sea.

► The award was given to **Uday Samudra Leisure Beach Hotel & Spa** and received by **Raja Gopaal Iyer**, CEO



Best Destination Management Company | **STHI HOLIDAYS INDIA**

The Leaf Holidays has been established by a group of experienced professionals with a deep knowledge of the hospitality industry, spearheaded by finest individuals from the trades of the hotel/ travel industry. The team guarantees the best services at all times. The Leaf Holidays Singapore has its branch office in Malaysia, Dubai and India.

► The award was given to **STHI Holidays India** and received by **Krishan Gupta**, CFO and **Vinil Kumar**, IT and Admin Head

Best Conference Hotel |

CROWNE PLAZA NEW DELHI ROHINI

Winning the accolade highlights our dedication towards the services and facilities that we provide to our guests, says **Sarad Upadhyay**, General Manager, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini. "We direct our efforts towards making each guest feel at home and ensure that they enjoy their time with us. We aim to work hard and look forward to achieving many more," he adds.

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini** and received by **Srishti S. Narula**, AM - PR & Marketing and **Sarad Upadhyay**, General Manager



Best Strategic Business Unit |

PACIFIC WORLD

"We received the recognition due to the kind of work we have done in the MICE business," says **Naveen Rizvi**, Regional Director India & Indian Ocean, Pacific World. He added, "I think receiving the award will help us take the company forward. This will add credibility to our business."

► The award was given to **Pacific World** and received by **Naveen Rizvi**, Regional Director India & Indian Ocean



Best Organizer for Incentive Programme

HI WALK TRAVELS

Rajesh Gupta, Founder, Hi Walk Travels, while receiving the award shared that it was Hi Walk's ability to display creativity and imagination, while servicing its incentive clients, which was the key reason for garnering the prestigious recognition. Apart from thanking clients, he says, "DDP did a fantastic job, the event was extremely well structured and precise. The award reassures us that we are on the right track."

► The award was given to **Hi Walk Travels** and received by **Rajesh Gupta**, Founder

Best Small Hotel for Meetings & Incentives

SAROVAR PORTICO JAIPUR

The corporate traveller will find the state-of-the-art business facilities and conference rooms exceeding his expectations at this hotel. On receiving the award, **Rahul Sinha**, General Manager, Sarovar Portico Jaipur, says, "The MICE award is a good recognition, for a hotel like us. The accolade showcases to the world, our numerous offerings on the MICE segment."

► The award was given to **Sarovar Portico Jaipur** and received by **Sharafat Ali**, Sales Manager, **Rahul Sinha**, General Manager



Best MICE Operator - International

ADIONA TRAVELS

Incentive travel is a global management tool, it uses exceptional travel experiences to motivate participants for increased levels of performance in support of organisational goals. **Pawan Kharab**, Director, Adiona Travels, shares, "I appreciate the award ceremony. It was fantastic. Recently, we organised MICE tour of 700 people to Thailand and 500 people to Australia for which I feel we have been recognised. It's a great feeling when you get an award, especially in your own field, it's always a double pleasure."

► The award was given to **Adiona Travels** and received by Directors, **Lalit Sharma** and **Pawan Kharab**



Gold Partner

ASPRI SPIRITS

Aspri Spirits today represents some of the finest brands in the world of wines, beer, cider and spirits and has emerged as the top player in the alcoholic beverage segment. The company with its commitment to ensure highest quality standards focuses on the sales, marketing and distribution is dedicated to building premium international brands in travel retail and domestic markets across the Indian sub-continent.

► The award was given to **Aspri Spirits** and received by **Sachin Abrol**, Controller Sales - North & East



Hospitality Partner

THE LALIT NEW DELHI

Keshav Suri, Chairperson and Managing Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, says, "For any hotelier, it is a matter of pride and honour to be nominated and to win. I would like to congratulate the team for carving this niche and also thank them for recognising the initiatives we have taken at The Lalit and awarding them."

► The award was given to **The Lalit New Delhi** and received by **Vishal Sharma**, Head of Sales Banquet and **Vijay Bhalla**, National Head - Corporate Sales





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