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# One-stop shop, incredibly!

**K J Alphons**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, speaks on the recently-launched Incredible India website and the initiatives undertaken for infrastructural development in the country to boost tourism.



Anupriya Bishnoi

## What are the initiatives taken up by the Ministry for the development of infrastructure in India?

As far as the Ministry of Tourism is concerned, we need basic infrastructure, connectivity, good roads, airports and cruise yards. The government has already been successful in terms of creating road infrastructure; where 4 kms of road was constructed everyday and today 25 kms of beautiful

roads are being constructed. The government is spending ₹15 lakh crores on creating basic infrastructure in road, shipping and civil aviation. For example, UDAN is a great initiative. Hundreds of destinations which were not served earlier are connected now.

## Tell us something about the new Incredible India website.

The website is very interactive. People now don't have to go anywhere else to seek information about India. Depending

“ Depending on your interest, you can browse through the multiple options available at the new website ”

on your interest, you can browse through the multiple options available. We are also linking other websites, for example, we have a link to the hotelier's association. Apart from government information, we have also linked other sectors related to tourism so that people can make their choices.

## What are the latest updates on the cruise tourism front?

We are building a cruise terminal in Mumbai. We have already built one in Goa and are in the process of building a second one in Kochi. Chennai already has one. We are also investing money in Vizag. We have relaxed the

visa regime at these destinations so that people don't need a biometric when they come on-board. We have asked the Finance Ministry to completely exempt GST from cruise tourism. Things will be much easier once this is realised. We also want India to be a home boat for cruise tourism. There is only one ship which is currently ported in India. Now we want more ships to be ported in the country to boost tourism further. 🇮🇳



# Don't ban, revise guidelines: Agents



**Ravi Gosain**  
President, Uttarakhand Tourism Professionals Association

With many unforeseen activities in Uttarakhand due to lack of safety measures, the state High Court has imposed a ban on adventure activities. Agents ask for revision of guidelines.



Simranjeet Singh Arora

As the most popular state for water and adventure activities, Uttarakhand came to a halt after its High Court levied ban on all adventure

activities popular among travellers. **Ravi Gosain**, President, Uttarakhand Tourism Professionals Association said, "We were quite shocked to acknowledge the ban because the state hardly

has any industry. Adventure tourism is one of the main industries in the state."

Gosain said, "I don't think banning any activity can lead to a solution. Recognised

tour operators with complete safety measures and high medical standards before taking up an adventurous activity are suffering in the season of tourism in the state." As adventure tourism is the

bread earner for many in the state, there is an urgent need to revise and regulate new guidelines for adventure activities so that no tour operator shall be taken for granted. 🇮🇳

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## Tourism PowerHouse in Delhi

PATA India Chapter has announced that it will be organising the Tourism PowerHouse from August 5-6, 2018, at The Park New Delhi.



Nisha Verma

The announcement about The Tourism PowerHouse was made at PATA India Chapter's 7<sup>th</sup> Update and Outlook Meeting in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism at The Claridges, New Delhi, which saw in attendance, **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Chairman, PATA India Chapter; **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; and **MP Mall**, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). The PowerHouse will be presided over by Verma and **Mario Hardy**, CEO, PATA.



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

Verma spoke at length about various initiatives undertaken by MOT for development of tourism in the country. Billa also delivered a presentation on Indian tourism and the initiatives taken. Verma addressed the concerns that PATA members shared



at the meeting. "This is one platform where the industry and the government meet and discuss their issues. We had noted down all the

the inter-ministerial group meeting chaired by Cabinet Secretary," said Verma.

Sharing details about the PowerHouse, she added, "We hope to draw eminent speakers from all over the world to speak on contemporary issues like responsible tourism, sustainable tourism,

“Eminent speakers will speak on contemporary issues and share global trends at The Tourism Powerhouse”

issues about railways and facilities offered by IRCTC. I will be taking these up with the Chairman, Ministry of Railways in a special meeting as well as with

marketing and digital marketing at The Tourism Powerhouse. They will be sharing global trends, initiatives and best practices required to emulate in our country.”

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## Digital is the way

After much ado by inbound tour operators about the lack of right promotion internationally by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), the newly-launched Incredible India website has come like a breath of fresh air. After being announced formally at the National Tourism Awards ceremony on World Tourism Day, the website took a lot of time under production, before the beta version of it was shared with a few people in the industry a few months ago. Finally, it saw the light of the day on June 14 and succeeded in impressing everyone with great visuals and an interactive platform. In fact, its feature of offering personalised experiences does take it a step ahead from many other contemporaries. Now, the new website, along with the Incredible India 2.0 campaign, combined with increasing flight connectivity and infrastructure development under various schemes, should create the right buzz around the world and help make India a coveted destination for global travellers.

## Conventions galore

Come August and the season of conventions will be on in full swing. Members of different associations will be headed to destinations both in India and abroad to network and discuss issues plaguing the industry at large. Kicking off this season would be OTOAI's convention in Cape Town in August, followed by ICPB's annual convention in Kolkata in the same month. Following closely, in September would be IATO and FHRAI conventions in Vizag and Lucknow respectively. Thankfully this year, the dates of any of these events are not clashing, unlike last year, which saw delegates skipping one event for another. While GST ruled the roost in panel discussions last year, we would like to see what innovations these associations would bring in this year for their discussions. In fact, major associations would earlier decide on one mandate for the year and achieve it by the next year, a culture now long forgotten. We hope that the upcoming convention committees focus on resolving issues instead of just having repeated discussions with expert speakers being flown over from around the country. Let's wait and watch!

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

### Then

#### Good Beginning in Israel

- In July 1993, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism gave a grand welcome to the delegation led by Sukhbans Kaur, Indian Minister of State.
- The minister was present with her team to convince the wandering tribes of Israel to come to India.
- She wanted to target the huge population of backpackers from Israel.
- After the tour, the delegates expressed the need for direct connectivity between the two countries.

### Now

#### Air India ups frequency for Delhi-Tel Aviv from July 14

- After getting a great response for Air India's New Delhi-Tel Aviv flight services, the national carrier has announced an increase in the frequency on this route by adding a fourth flight in a week, starting July 14.
- Now Air India will also fly on Saturday apart from Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday every week on the 256-seater Boeing 787 Dreamliner.



## Regional zones at WTM London

Scheduled to be held from November 5-7 at ExCel London, WTM London 2018 would have dedicated Regional Inspirational Zones for debate, research and analysis of each region's tourism industry.



The World Travel Market (WTM), London is all set to welcome travel industry stakeholders from around the world to ExCel London, offering a plethora of meeting and networking opportunities. The WTM London United Kingdom and Ireland Region play host to almost 58,000 on-stand meetings from 16,500 industry



on-stand meetings and generated over £3.1 billion in industry deals.

In 2018, WTM London will introduce Regional Inspiration Zones, set to be the centre point of the regions. In fact, these zones will



Simon Press  
Senior Director  
WTM London

hosted at these Regional Inspiration Zones.

Simon Press, WTM London, Senior Director, said, "WTM London is effectively eight shows under one roof. WTM attracts 50,000 delegates from 182 countries and regions generating £3.1 billion in industry deals. The UK is witnessing an increase in overseas visitor numbers continually, with almost 40 million visits in 2017 – up

by 6 per cent in 2016. I am delighted that WTM London plays its part in helping the UK travel industry to grow."

Another highlight of the event is the WTM London speed networking programme introducing global travel suppliers with travel buyers in a series of quick face-to-face meetings. The programme sees selected quality buyers and digital influencers from around the world gather under one roof.

“WTM attracts 50,000 delegates from 182 countries and regions generating £3.1 billion in industry deals. I am delighted that WTM London plays its part in helping the UK travel industry to grow”

professionals interested in the region. In 2017, the prestigious show recorded a good number of buyers and sellers. WTM London 2017 hosted 935,129

act as an idea hotbed for debate, research and analysis of each region's tourism industry. Content sessions, networking events and festivals will be

### WTM Highlights

- ➔ Speed networking programme introducing global travel suppliers with travel buyers in a series of quick face-to-face meetings
- ➔ Selected quality buyers and digital influencers from around the world



# JTI's shorter cruise itineraries

To attract more leisure travellers to the Northeast, JTI Group introduced a short, three-night river cruise itinerary on the Brahmaputra. The company is also adding a new vessel to its fleet.



**TT Bureau**  
In 2017, the JTI Group clocked 20 per cent business as compared to the previous year and has seen its cruises business on an upswing. **Nirmalya Choudhury**, Executive Director—Operations, JTI Group, points out that with the increase in the footfall of foreign tourists to the North-East, the tourism industry in the region has been on the rise.

For the year 2018, the company has introduced a new product on the Assam-Bengal navigation route. Choudhury



**Nirmalya Choudhury**  
Executive Director—Operations  
JTI Group

informs, "We have seen an increase in visits of leisure travellers to the North-East and usually these clients do not have enough time to do a long, traditional river cruise, which is usually of seven nights and longer. Thus, to attract a larger number of leisure travellers, we have come up with a three-night itinerary river cruise starting and ending at Kolkata. Most of the visitors can integrate this shorter cruise with any of their travel plans in India. The local DMCs can promote this product in conjunction with say three nights in Kolkata city and as a part of a larger Indian itinerary."

The company had earlier introduced a new product—single cabin, small houseboat on the Brahmaputra which has been appreciated by many. "We did not market this product too much and relied on our industry colleagues in various parts of India to send clients. So far, the response has been tremendous, and it goes on to show the increase in interest

for river cruising in India." According to him, cruise tourism is doing very well in the region with more companies entering the market and newer vessels being built. "We are also building our fourth vessel which will join our fleet in October 2018. Thus, we will have

“It is interesting to note an increase from southern states of India towards the North-east besides our usual source markets”

two vessels on the Ganges and two on the Brahmaputra," Choudhury says.

He explains that in terms of inbound travellers, the largest source market remains to be

the UK, though the region is also witnessing an influx from countries like France, Germany and Australia. In terms of domestic segment, he says, "Though WB, Maharashtra and Gujarat have been the largest source markets, it is interesting to note an increase

from the southern states towards the Northeast."

Given this interest from the south, the company will conduct few roadshows in the southern cities in collaboration with the local association of tour operators. 🇮🇳



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# Wanted: Improved infra-bility

The second edition of InfraConclave witnessed the presence of distinguished panellists deliberating over the loopholes in tourism infrastructure. TRAVTALK sought opinions from industry stakeholders...



Anupriya Bishnoi



**Raj Rana**  
Chief Executive Officer—  
South Asia  
Radisson Hotel Group

“In India, we have almost everything including mountains, beaches, heritage, spiritual tourism, etc, but you cannot enjoy all this sitting at home. You must move from point A to point B and that’s when the word ‘infrastructure’ comes into play. Convenience and cost are the two chief aspects of infrastructure. If you cannot travel quickly from one point to another at a reasonable cost, the entire purpose of the word is defeated.”



**Rattan Keswani**  
Deputy Managing Director  
Lemon Tree Hotels

“Everything in the ecosystem is about doing business and getting the result. If in the right location, the land cost is going to be 60 per cent of what you want to do, it’s never going to happen. There is a huge market in Tier-I and Tier-II cities. We have been searching for an opportunity in Varanasi for a decade, but we haven’t found it yet. Unless we shed certain idiosyncrasies related to travel, the progress rate will be slow.”



**Mandeep Lamba**  
Managing Director—Hotels  
Hospitality, JLL India

“Despite the status of tourism and hospitality in the country, the government still enjoys the revenue it gets out of these two sectors. Yet, in every budget, I sit with a magnifying glass to find the word ‘tourism’. There was just one time where the Prime Minister mentioned about tourism as one of the pillars of economy and everyone in the industry was jumping with joy, but I don’t see much happening post that. Also, we must get safety and security in place. The last six-seven years have been a disaster in that front.”

“I have been hearing, ‘India is a country with huge tourism potential’ for a very long time, but the potential still hasn’t been realised. India is a huge country with its own set of challenges and dealing with all of them in one go is challenging. So, I feel, if we take one city and involve the entire spectrum of safety, environment, etc, there is a possibility of immense growth; that model of the city can inspire others too.”



**Bhupesh Kumar**  
Managing Consultant  
Tourism and Hospitality

“Around five years ago, India ranked 58th in the world in tourism; today it’s ranked 40 according to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 by World Economic Forum. This is despite India having one of the best natural assets in the world. We have not been able to monetise our natural assets like a lot of other countries. As the third largest domestic tourism market in the world, there lies an immense potential.”



**Ashish Gupta**  
Founder, Strategy Pluto &  
Consulting CEO, FAITH

“A tourism infrastructure strategy without the critical human capital requirements is never going to succeed. The experiences of such infrastructure seen at new airports or toll expressways or rehabilitated monuments are still very ordinary. Perceived as a light weight ministry politically, the tourism industry has never had the budgets or the aggression in its leadership to push through the benefits of the enormous contribution it makes to employment and GDP.”



**Dilip Puri**  
Founder & CEO  
Indian School of Hospitality



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# Hilton aims for upward climb

Hilton, with a portfolio of 14 brands comprising more than 5,100 properties with nearly 838,000 rooms in 103 countries and territories, is definitely on the rising curve. **Jatin Khanna**, Vice President, Operations—India, Hilton, talks about how important India as a market is for the brand, growth strategy in the country and more.



TT Bureau

## Q What is your strategy for the Indian market?

We have a two-pronged strategy plan for India. One is for the big cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, etc., where we want to bring some of our iconic brands like Conrad and Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts. Also, we don't want to lose out on Tier-II and Tier-III cities which are currently booming with expansion. So, we have a robust plan for the country where we are not going to overlook smaller cities. It will be a uniform growth. We have a plan where we do not want to miss out on any of the brands or any other positioning in any city.

## Q Which of Hilton's brand is the biggest revenue generator?

We run 17 hotels in India. Conrad Pune and Hilton Chennai are iconic hotels in their respective cities. Also, when we talk about the most successful brand, it's more about how successful the F&B business is in that particular hotel. Over the years, we have

## Q How important is India as a market for you?

India is an extremely important market for us. We have made a few corrections and announcements in our India structure. I think it's very important that we put a lot of local resources closer to the market which shows how important India is for us. In the coming months, we are

## Q Do you think mergers and acquisitions are going to shape the future of global hospitality industry?

You can say that. That's the flavour of the season. Mergers and acquisitions have become a trend not just in hospitality but also in other sectors. The world is now all about partnerships and consolidation. I think, that's the way forward for businesses like ours.

## Q India as an evolving hospitality market. What are your views?

India is still not as matured as the American or European hospitality sector. Having said that, it has grown to a different level. Today, India is not just about four metros or big

cities. Also, different brands in different segments have found more acceptability in comparison to the scenario that existed seven or 10 years ago where India was perceived as a five-star hospitality market. People have started identifying brands of various segments. So, the evolution is on the right path and soon enough, we will be at par with other top hospitality markets.

“The world is now all about partnerships and consolidation. I think, that's the way forward for businesses like ours. Mergers and acquisitions have become a trend”

observed that hotels which do well have great F&B outlets and loyal patronage.

going to add a few positions in the market to reflect its growth potential.

## Target Group

Out of Hilton's 17 hotels, a couple of hotels are resorts which mostly witness leisure base. But some of the other properties are corporate or MICE hotels like Conrad Pune and Hilton Chennai

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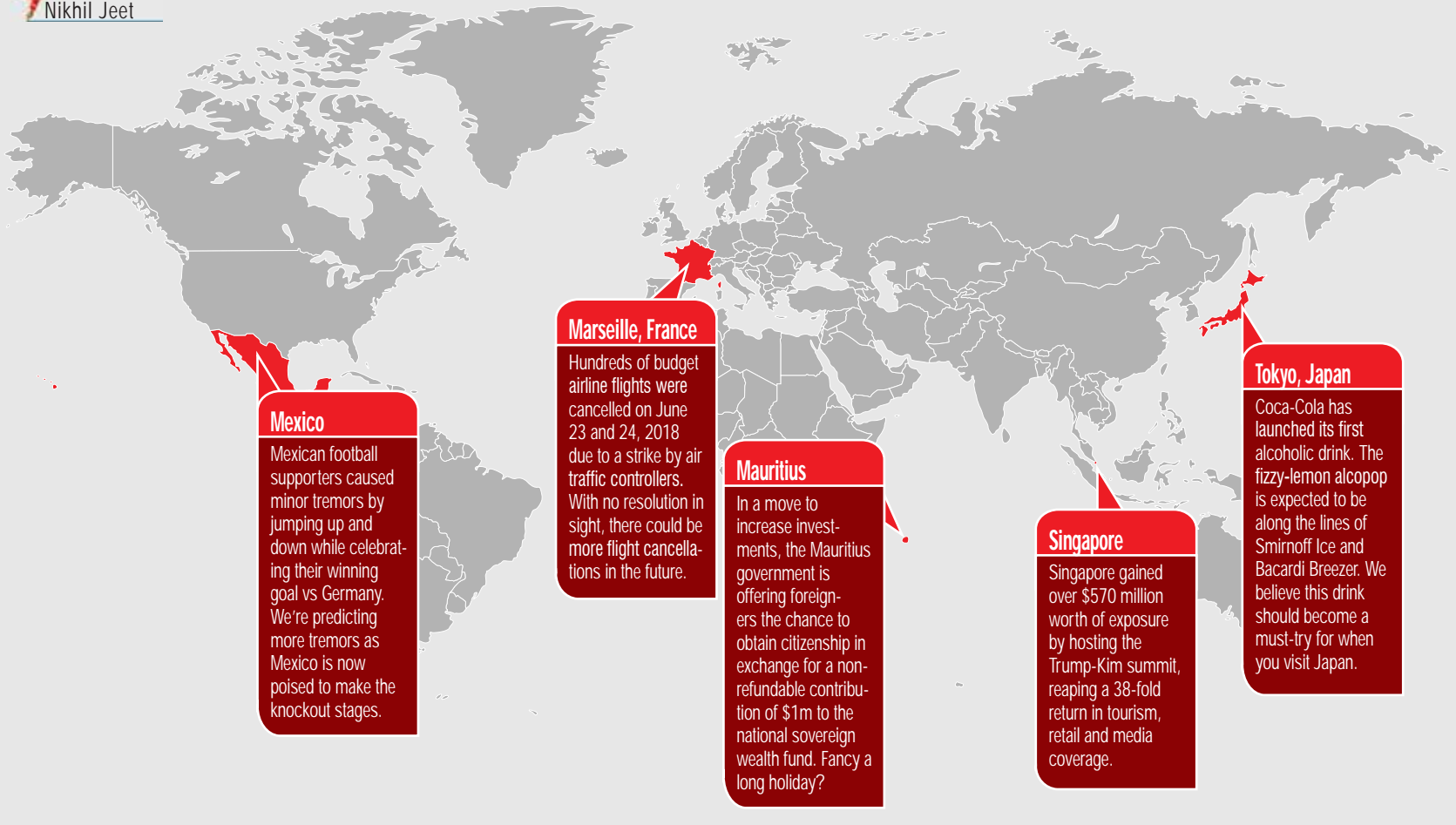




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 Nikhil Jeet



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# Striving for guests' convenience

Radisson Srinagar offers the best of the city of Srinagar with a great location and convenience to visit all its major attractions, while offering excellent hospitality to clients.

 TT Bureau

Radisson Srinagar is the first property under the brand to open its doors in the Kashmir valley. **Sumit Das**, Hotel Manager, Radisson Srinagar, says, "We are very fortunate that we are part of the team that opened this property, located in the heart of Srinagar. We want people



Sumit Das  
Hotel Manager  
Radisson Srinagar

to enjoy the confidence of the brand with a promise of Radisson. The property is very compact with 88 keys including 69 rooms in base category, 10 business class rooms and nine suites. Since it's situated on Maulana Azad Road across the polo ground, it makes for a convenient location to visit the Dal Lake or the Residency Road as well as the Shankaracharya Temple."

Das claims that the property suits both leisure and business travellers. "We have rooms that are convenient both for family travellers as well as businessmen. We have great meeting facilities along with a diverse food and beverage spread. Also, the location and layout of the hotel makes it convenient for guests to feel at home immediately after they check in. We offer specialised Kashmiri food for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests, right

from barbeque to offer a variety of teas and specialities of woodfire bakery," he shares.

Referring to the property as a perfect value for money, Das adds, "While there are other big hotels in the Srinagar market offering fantastic out-

“ Radisson Srinagar has 88 keys including 69 rooms in base category, 10 business class rooms and nine suites ”

doors and excellent panoramic views, our property acts as a home to guests after a busy

day of sightseeing as it's close to the major attractions in the city. Business guests choose


us because of the convenient location of work. We have guests coming in from all parts of the country, including Gujarat, Mumbai as well as down South."

Das claims that they have been working with the trade


very closely ever since the hotel opened its doors. "The brand standard that Radisson offers globally is something which is new for the city. Everybody knows what to expect when they enter a Radisson property," shares Das. 

## Brand Loyalty

 Radisson Srinagar shares all the information and necessary tools with its travel agents to understand the property, its features, taste of its hospitality and the promises of Radisson brand




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# Sunwing on board Hahn Air

The latest airline to come on board Hahn Air's diversified system is Sunwing Airlines, a Canadian carrier, for which ticketing on the HR-169 document has been activated.



TT Bureau

Hahn Air recently signed an interline agreement with the Canadian leisure airline Sunwing Airlines (WG). According to a recent announcement,

Hahn Air has activated ticketing on the HR-169 document for Sunwing Airlines. With this development, Sunwing Airlines has become the latest addition to Hahn Air's network of over 350 air, rail and shuttle

partners, which can be booked in Abacus, Amadeus, Apollo, Galileo, Infiniti, Sabre, Topas and Worldspan GDSs under its own code and issued on Hahn Air's insolvency safe ticket worldwide.



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Founded in 2005, Toronto-based airline Sunwing comprises Canada's youngest and most fuel-efficient fleet of over 40 Boeing 737-800 and Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. The airline offers flight services from over 33 airports across Canada and five in the USA to over 45 popular destinations across the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America and Florida. In fact, the airline has more direct flights to the sunny south than any other Canadian leisure airline.

Welcoming the move, Andrew Dawson, President—Tour Operations, Sunwing, said, "Our agreement with Hahn Air will now mean we can offer our wide range of flights to an increased audience both in Canada and in our destinations."

Steve Knackstedt, Vice President—Airline Business Group, Hahn Air, added, "We're happy to help Sunwing optimise its distribution strategy and offer wider exposure through eight Global Distribution Systems. Now travel agents, who wouldn't otherwise be able to access services of this major player in the field of leisure travel, can offer their customers additional vacation options, generating incremental business for Sunwing."

Hahn Air is the first and only airline worldwide offering free and comprehensive reimbursement in case of insolvency of the operating carrier.

### Traveller Offers

While Hahn Air's ticketing services are on offer exclusively to travel agents, travellers are also free to choose from more carriers, more routes and more destinations



# HOTELS

## CGH Earth expands

CGH Earth is all set to open two new properties in India this year – one in the Andamans and the other close to Cochin Airport in Kerala.



Hazel Jain

One of the few pioneers of sustainable hoteliering in India, CGH Earth has a two-pronged objective – to serve its guests and to spread the message of being environment-friendly in every way. **G Vijay**, CEO, CGH Earth says, “Most of our hotels already have a water bottling plant. We now want to go a step further and add it to the ones that don’t have it. Our mission is to be 100 per cent plastic-free in all our properties.”

The group is frantically getting ready to open two new properties in India within the next few months. It will open one in Kerala near the Cochin airport by August 2018 and one in the Andamans on the beach



**G Vijay**  
CEO, CGH Earth

by November 2018. “Both properties will have a water bottling as well as sewage treatment plants. The one in the Andamans is specially going to be completely sustainable so much so that we will not be using any chemicals or concrete considering that the sensitivity of the region,” Vijay adds.

Vijay passionately subscribes to the company’s philosophy of being completely ecological-streamlined. Vijay says, “Hotels have a huge responsibility of being sustainable and sensitive to the environment. This is why we start from the beginning – when the hotel is being constructed.”

He gives an example of the Wayanad Wild property where the linen in the guest rooms are sourced from a women’s organisation in Tamil Nadu that helps the local women. The property is also in the process of installing a water bottling plant and it will be ready by August 2018. The amenities in the rooms are made of locally-grown bamboo trees. Without TVs, guests are kept busy with various activities. ➡

## Taking pride in heritage

**Digraj Singh Shahpura**, Director, Shahpura Hotels talks about his plans of carrying forward the legacy of his company by setting his targets on heritage cities.



TT Bureau

With three existing heritage hotels in Jaipur, Shahpura Hotels is set to come up with new properties in five other cities of Rajasthan. In the first phase, the company is planning expansion in Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner and Kumbhalgarh, followed by Delhi and Agra in the second. Talking about his plans, **Digraj Singh**

Insisting on owning and operating only heritage properties, Shahpura says he wants to carry forward the legacy to other historic cities of the country. The company has divided its hotel business in three segments - palaces, boutiques and residences. Talking about introducing residences, he commented, “With an increasing number of budget-oriented clients, we

Explaining details about the upcoming properties, Shahpura says, “We are targeting prime locations around the centre of the city which is



**Digraj Singh Shahpura**  
Director  
Shahpura Hotels

“As we already have two properties in our assets, we are now looking to invest and have one more in Udaipur, besides taking management rights of the property”

**Shahpura**, Director, Shahpura Hotels says that he is looking to expand his portfolio of hotels at major tourist attractions. “As we already have two properties in our assets, we are now looking to invest and have one more in Udaipur. We are also looking forward to take management rights of the property,” Shahpura said.

realised that most such travellers don’t want to spend much on accommodation.”

“Equipped with all the modern amenities, all our properties will have spa, swimming pool and a lavish restaurant. Our hotels are known for providing extraordinary services to its customers,” Digraj added.

also close to tourist spots. Each property would not have more than 50-60 rooms. The pricing would depend upon the type of property, whether it is a palace, boutique or residency. So, we would be targeting all the markets and all segments of travellers; from budget clients to luxury and experiential tourists.” ➡

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# Digitalisation takes centre stage

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) is set to organise its fourth annual convention in Cape Town, South Africa from August 11-14, 2018 on the theme 'Digitalisation – The Way Forward'.



Amrita Ghosh & Simranjeet Singh Arora

The Executive Committee of OTOAI led by its President **Mahendra Vakharia** signed an MoU with **Bunny Bhoola**, Director, African Link Travel, for its South Africa convention at a press conference held in New Delhi. The association's conventions till date have been primarily held in Asia and the Middle East – Manila, Bali and Ras Al Khaimah respectively.

Explaining the core theme of the convention, Vakharia said, "To understand digitalisation in totality, it is important to understand how we can leverage that to our day-to-day business and profit liability. Interestingly, there is a line-up of esteemed speakers whom we are already in touch with and are excited to introduce them as guest speakers to our Indian outbound industry."



**Mahendra Vakharia**  
President  
OTOAI

“To understand digitalisation in totality, it is important to understand how we can leverage that to our profit liability”



**Himanshu Patil**  
Vice President and  
Chairman-Convention, OTOAI

“The pre and post Fams will include attractions like Garden Route, Kruger National Park, Sun City and Johannesburg”

bookings. What better year to hold a convention in South Africa when the country is celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birth centenary of iconic leader Nelson Mandela. I am confident that it's going to be big sell-out," he exclaimed.

**Alpa Jani**, Manager Trade Relations, South African Tourism, who was also present at the event, said, "The OTOAI convention is an excellent platform that will help us in giving a first-hand experience on the destination to the travel trade through pre and post familiarisation tours." Hoping to cross the 100,000 mark in 2018, Jani mentioned that last year, the arrival numbers from India to South Africa were closed at 98000 in 2017.

**Himanshu Patil**, Vice President and Chairman-Conven-

tion, OTOAI, said, "We are expecting a participation of over 200 members and have already received more than 75 registrations. The pre and post Fams will include attractions like Garden Route, Kruger National Park, Sun City and Johannesburg."

Clearing myths about the water scarcity issue in Cape Town, Vakharia said, "Everybody in the city is extremely conscious of how they are going to conserve and consume water. The way people have tackled the concern is incredible. Cape Town aims to cut down the usage of water to 50 litres per person within the next few months. With taps running in full swing, Cape Town is ready and alive to welcome any number of tourists." 🐦

## Prime Agenda

🐦 The objective of the convention is to develop partnerships, increase networks, get support of niche experiences, meet local suppliers, and experience and learn about the culture of both the countries

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## IATO set for convention

**EM Najeeb**, Senior Vice President, Indian Association of Tour Operators, speaks at length about various initiatives and the upcoming convention.



TT Bureau

**Q**What is the latest update at IATO? What is the association currently working on?

IATO is pursuing its objectives of working for the professional welfare of the tour operators' community in India and aggressively promote tourism industry in the country. With our new set of office bearers, we are now looking at forming a set of sub-committees to look into different responsibilities. Once the members join the sub-committees,

and the association will be focusing on the same for an effective conduct. The Global Travel Mart 2018 by the Federation of Associations in India Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH) is also going to be a major event for us.

**Q**What steps have IATO taken to pacify tourists' anxiety about the Nipah virus?

Professional association bodies of doctors along with the Ministry of Health and local hospitals have joined hands to



**E M Najeeb**  
Senior Vice President  
IATO

**Q**What are the plans ahead for IATO?

IATO will be initiating various activities to create value for members, strengthen relationships with stakeholders in tourism and systematically engage in promotional measures such as roadshows and events in marketing a destination. The Ministry of Tourism has joined hands with FAITH for organising Global Travel Mart 2018 from September 16-18 at Vigyan Bhavan New Delhi. 🐦

## IATO Convention Theme

Mission 20 Million Tourists:  
Challenges & Possibilities

full-fledged activities will be mobilised.

The National Annual Convention of IATO is on the cards

contain the problem. IATO and the tourism industry requested the government to give out statements on measures taken against the disease.



# Tunisia and its myriad offerings

The Embassy of Tunisia and Visit Maghreb, a Tunisia-based DMC, held a special ‘meet and greet’ session with the travel trade in New Delhi to showcase its offerings.

 TT Bureau

**Boujdaria Jamel**, Deputy Chief of Mission, First Counsellor, Embassy of Tunisia, and **Anouar Hachemane**, Co-Founder, spoke about the tourism potential of Tunisia and its popular attractions. Jamel said, “We wanted to make the stakeholders to be aware of the offerings of Tunisia and attractions in the country. From October 2017, Indians travelling to Tunisia have been exempted from a visa. Also, it is very easy to reach Tunisia via various destinations around Europe.



**Boujdaria Jamel**, Deputy Chief of Mission, First Counsellor, Embassy of Tunisia

From all the European capital cities, Tunisia is only one and a half to two hours away. With Turkish Airlines offering great connectivity to Tunisia, 75 per cent of Indians use the airline to fly to Tunisia. Besides, travellers can also fly Emirates, Alitalia and even Lufthansa to Tunisia, from the respective hubs of the airlines.”

Claiming that tourism is the primary source of income in Tunisia, Jamel claimed, “By the end of 2017, Tunisia received 7.4 million of tourists, of which Indian tourists make for a bare minimum, despite an increase in Chinese tourists to the country. Since the numbers from India are not that great, we want to

promote Tunisia as a new destination, both for leisure as well as MICE tourism, as it has everything from heritage, culture, beach, desert, golf as well as wellness.”

Hachemane also shared a few itinerary options for Indian

travellers. Talking about India as a market, he said, “We have learnt a lot from the Indian market to train our teams at Maghreb, especially on how to behave with Indian customers. We wanted to present all the destinations that Indians can visit. Tunisia is not only a

perfect destination for all kinds of tourists but also one which offers a wide range of hotels at economical prices — large resorts, luxury and boutique hotels for all sectors.”

In his presentation, Hachemane shared, “Tunisia has

a diverse range of tourist experiences— right from Mediterranean beach and water activities, to Sahara Desert and oasis experience, as well as several UNESCO Heritage sites. Another highlight is the unique Thalassotherapy at any of the coastal resorts.”



**Anouar Hachemane**, Co-Founder, Tunisia



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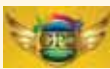
Visit Maghreb's presence in India makes it easy for the country to create itineraries and activities best suited for Indian travellers

The agency can also provide training and information about Tunisia



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TCEB MiCE Roadshow	Mumbai	5
GPS	Chandigarh	5-7
TTF	Kolkata	6-8
Travel Wedding Show	Jaipur	7-8
Kiwi Link India	Mumbai	9-10
Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow	Chandigarh	10
Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow	Jaipur	11
Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training	Bengaluru	12
GPS	Ahmedabad	12-14
Tourism New Zealand Frontline Training	Delhi	13
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Singapore Tourism Roadshow	Trichy	16
Singapore Tourism Roadshow	Ludhiana	16
ACTE Global Summit	Singapore	17-18
Singapore Tourism Roadshow	Lucknow	18
GPS	Lucknow	19-21
Singapore Tourism Roadshow	Coimbatore	18
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Singapore Tourism Roadshow	Visakhapatnam	26
IITM	Bengaluru	27-29

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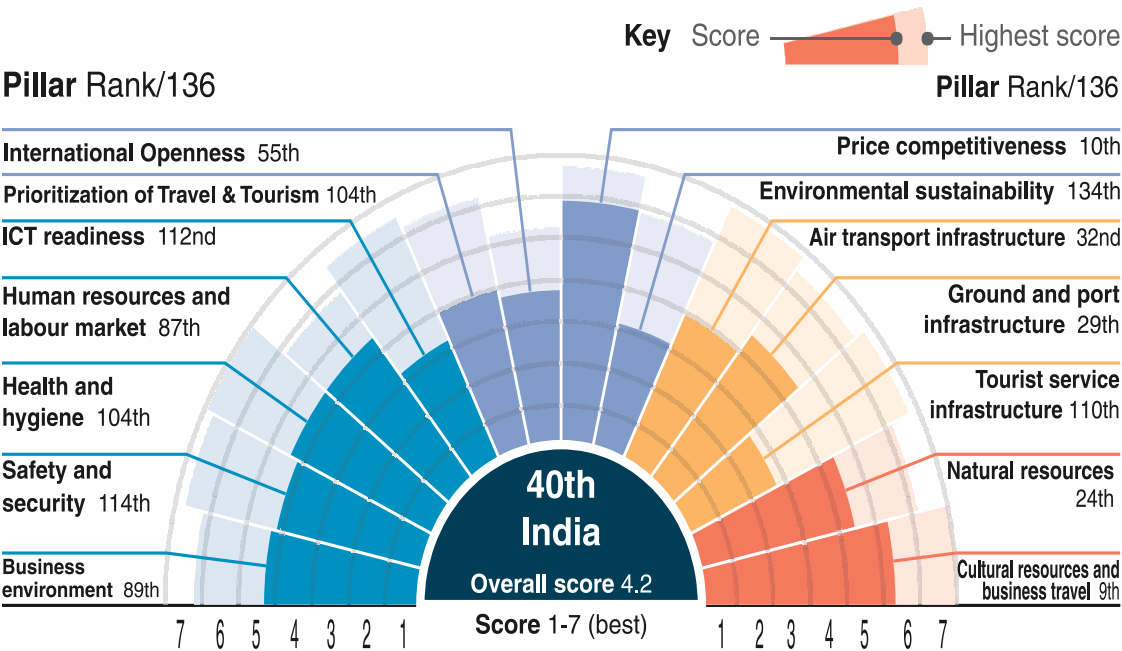
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Sri Lanka Tourism Roadshow	Coimbatore	3
Dubai Tourism Leisure Roadshow	Mumbai	3
IITM	Chennai	3-5
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Mumbai	6-7
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Delhi	8
India International Hospitality Expo	Noida	8-11
OTOAI Convention	Cape Town	11-14
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India up the global tourism chart

India has improved 12 places to reach the 40<sup>th</sup> position globally, according to the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 by World Economic Forum. The country has seen continued growth in international arrivals over the past 15 years, reaching the 8 million mark in 2015.

India: Global Ranking



India continues to enrich its cultural resources, protecting more cultural sites and intangible expressions through UNESCO World Heritage lists, and via a greater digital presence. International openness (55<sup>th</sup>, up 14 places) through stronger visa policies implementing both visas on arrival and e-visas, has enabled India to rise through the ranks.

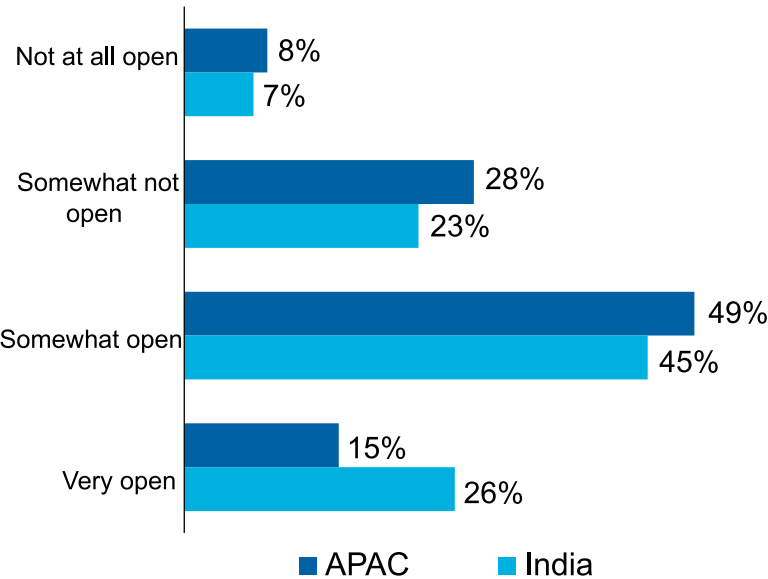
The T&T sector benefited from improvements in the country's ground transport infrastructure, which has traditionally been a challenge (29<sup>th</sup>). Health conditions are improving, though they remain inadequate (104<sup>th</sup>).

Source: World Economic Forum

Anything for recommendations

With regard to the personalisation-privacy paradox, 64 per cent of Asia Pacific travellers interviewed are open to sharing personal data for more relevant offers and personalised experiences, according to Amadeus' Journey of Me Insights report. Somewhat more cautious, 71 per cent of Indian travellers feel the same.

Openness to sharing personal information with travel providers



In the face of rising privacy concerns, some boundaries must be maintained and at all times, travel providers must respect and protect personal data and the need for privacy. And above and beyond adhering to legislation, travel players must be able to articulate 'what's the value?' to get travellers to share their data.

From when and how Indian travellers plan and book their trips, to how and why they want to stay connected while travelling, to how frequently they use sharing economy services, and the types of new technologies they would be most interested in, the study takes a multi-faceted look at what Indian travellers want.

Source: Amadeus





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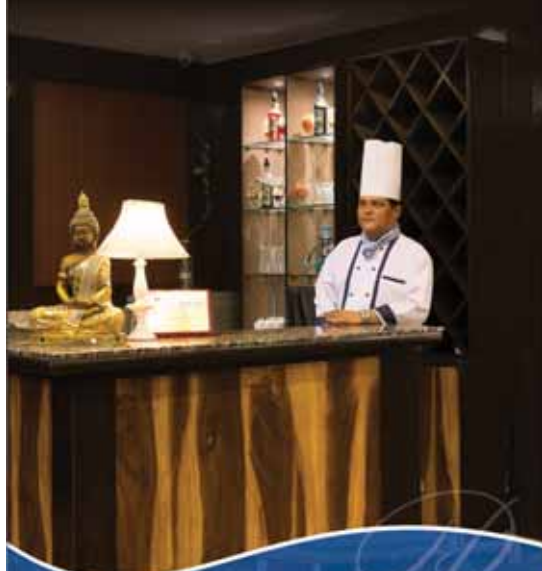
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## GoAir

### Mumbai

GoAir named **Cornelis Vrieswijk** as its new Chief Executive Officer. He will be reporting to the Chairman, Managing Director and the Board of Directors, GoAir. With over 25 years of experience in aviation and travel, Vrieswijk has rich experience in driving ventures, transitions, turn-arounds and large-scale projects for diverse organisations with emphasis in aviation and aircraft maintenance industry. Vrieswijk will work with the Board and leadership team to expand and implement a range of strategic initiatives to lead the airline into its next phase of growth. His focus will be to model the desired changes in the airline for further growth and expansion.



## Hilton

### Singapore

**Matt Fry** has been appointed as Hilton's Senior Vice President—Development in Asia Pacific (APAC). Effective August 6, 2018, Fry will oversee the team responsible for the overall development strategy for APAC. A seasoned professional, Fry brings with him to Hilton over 20 years of experience in the real estate and development industry with nearly 18 years leading diverse teams at Starwood Hotels & Resorts. Most recently, Fry served as the head of global real estate operations and America's real estate at WeWork, a company with a strong emphasis on community for entrepreneurs, freelancers, small businesses and large enterprises.



## Turkish Culture & Tourism Office

### New Delhi

**H Deniz Ersoz** has been appointed as the new Culture & Tourism Counsellor of the Turkish Embassy in New Delhi. Ersoz has been working with the Turkish Culture & Tourism Ministry since 2008, and has worked as a coordinator, responsible for bilateral relations with Europe CIS and ASEAN countries. He has a degree in Linguistic (Ankara University) and Business Management (Anadolu University). He also has a Post Graduate degree in International Relations (Eurasian Studies) from Middle East Technical University.



## JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata

### Kolkata

**Gaurav Singh** has joined JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata as General Manager and Cluster General Manager—Bangladesh. Overseeing all aspects of operational management, Singh will be responsible for enhancing productivity and guest satisfaction. Additionally, he will also administer the portfolio of hotels in Bangladesh. Singh brings with him a wealth of knowledge in hotel management, administration and operations. In his previous assignment, Singh held the position of Multi Property General Manager of Courtyard Bengaluru Outer Ring Road and Fairfield by Marriott Bengaluru Outer Ring Road.



## Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa

### Jaisalmer

**Sridhar Thota**, an 18-year veteran of the hotel industry, is appointed as General Manager of Jaisalmer Marriott Resort & Spa. Thota, after acquiring Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Hyderabad, began his career in 2000 and brings with him extensive experience and knowledge of the hospitality trade. During his career, Thota has held positions with Oberoi Hotels and Resorts for 12 years and Fairmont Hotels for three years. Most recently, he worked with Devigarh Palace under Lebua and RAAS brands. Thota will oversee the hotel's day-to-day operations while providing an experience that is unforgettable.



## Lords Hotels & Resorts

### Mumbai

Lords Hotels & Resorts appointed **Pradeep Vaid** as its new General Manager. With over 40 years of experience in the field, Vaid holds a Masters' degree in hospitality and served as the General Manager of Madhuban Group of Hotels prior to joining here. With proven track record in generating business, meeting operational goals and achieving business targets at Lords Hotels & Resorts, Vaid will be responsible for driving implementation of change initiatives across customer services, F&B, and staff development and training among other key areas. Vaid began his career in the hospitality sector at The Oberoi.



## Taj Palace, New Delhi

### New Delhi

Taj Palace, New Delhi welcomes **Samrat Datta** as its new General Manager. With over 20 years of hotel experience, Datta will be responsible for the continued success of the hotel, overseeing the day-to-day operations and providing exceptional guest service at the hotel. Having spent over 20 years at Indian Hotels Company Limited, he moved to this role from Taj Bengal, Kolkata. Prior to that, he was the General Manager at Taj Jai Mahal Palace Jaipur. He has also worked in global markets with renowned international brands. A graduate from IHM Kolkata, Datta was awarded the Brand Leadership title in 2017.



## Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

### Bangaluru

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway announced the appointment of **Vikalp Raj** as Director of Sales and Marketing. With over 12 years of experience in sales and marketing, Raj has vast knowledge in analysing latest market trends, driving RFP process to source new businesses for the hotel and understanding of target audience segmentation to achieve set targets. He will be responsible in increasing overall sales for the hotel, managing sales activities, property's reactive and proactive sales efforts and executing sales strategies.



## The Travel Corporation (TTC)

### Bengaluru

**Bhavani Arun** has been appointed as the Senior Sales Manager for the luxury brands for The Travel Corporation. Arun comes with a rich travel experience spanning over 15 years. She has always been associated with premium, luxury holiday experience in her travel career. In her current role, she will be responsible for all the luxury brands of The Travel Corporation such as Insight Vacations, Luxury Gold, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises and U by Uniworld. With her expertise and passion for travel, Arun is responsible to grow the business in South India.



## TALKing People

**Atulya Joshi**, Sales Representative, Tourism India Management Enterprises (TIME) likes to gain knowledge and understand about cultures around the globe. Talking about his favourite destinations, Joshi says, "I prefer heights over any other landscape and that is why I'd like to revisit Edinburgh in the United Kingdom. Bora Bora island is another destination which is on top of my bucket list." To motivate young fellows in the industry, he said, "Hard work, patience and humility are three main aspects for success."



Passionate about dance and yoga, **Sukhmani Singh**, Co-Founder & CBO, Tripshelf, loves to go for scuba diving during vacations. She says, "Ocean is where I find my Zen, and people call me an aquaphile for the same reason." Singh talking about her wish to visit Europe, saying, "I don't want to cover the whole of Europe in one go. As I speak a little bit of French, I'd definitely love to cover France, live in the outskirts and explore that part." Being new to the travel fraternity, Sukhmani believes that the travel space is extremely creative.



**Ruhi Munshi**, Director, N Chirag, loves to meet her friends, get connected socially and watch movies at leisure. "To pick a single destination would be very difficult on the world map because I'm not inclined towards a single terrain or a landscape. My last trip was to South Africa and I loved it!" said Munshi on her favourite terrain. Sharing her experience, she said, "My experience in the industry has been good so far as I got to learn how to deal with clients and what they are inclined towards."





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# Air India, what next?

Sharing the achievements of Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) in the last four years, **Suresh Prabhu**, Minister of Civil Aviation, revealed that the government is reviewing the status of Air India disinvestment despite not receiving any bids till the deadline of May 31, 2018.



Nisha Verma

## Best years for aviation

The Prime Minister had set an ambitious agenda for the aviation sector with a driving force that connectivity once provided would yield great results for the aviation sector in India. Sharing details about improved connectivity, Prabhu said, "The destinations and number of people travelling by air now has increased manifold. Some of the pathbreaking initiatives attributed are Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme for regional connectivity, which was conceived to connect smaller towns to major cities.



ble to keep Air India healthy, efficient and forward-looking. Currently suffering from quite a few legacy issues like huge

the situation and discussed the recent changes in the aviation industry including the fuel cost. Meanwhile, a plan is being prepared by the airline management to ensure that Air India continues to operate efficiently," said Prabhu.

“ Under NABH Nirman scheme entailing a comprehensive programme to build billion trip airport capacity, we are already working on modernisation of airports ”

As a result, even those who could only dream of seeing an aircraft and couldn't afford to travel by air, can now fly."

debts, the bottom line gets affected as there is a large interest cost to pay. In view of this, the government decided to invite a strategic investor for the airline, which did not happen. "Headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, we reviewed

## Reviving Air India

As the country's flag carrier, the government is responsi-

travelled in an aircraft for the first time have also increased.

## NABH Nirman

Prabhu explained, "Under NABH (Nextgen Airports for Bharat) Nirman scheme entailing a comprehensive programme to build billion trip airport capacity, we are already working on modernisation of airports. In fact, new airports are being created in the next few years." Airport expansion is necessary to sustain the expansion of airlines' fleet and increase in the number of passengers. The big challenge, Prabhu believes, is the availability of land. Hence, MOCA is in consultation with experts within India as well as outside, to find out ways to create new airports with less land.

## For a brighter future

Prabhu shares that a policy is being framed on making drones in India. "While we are making this policy, we are also talking to top players in the world who are manufacturing in India. This will be a Make in India programme, and add value, create jobs and create a domestic industry which can be used as a launching pad for global markets." ↴

## National Civil Aviation Policy 2016

Heralding India into a new era of aviation, the National Civil Aviation Policy is fully under implementation. Most of it has already been implemented and resulted into new areas getting connected. While the number of travellers has increased, fares have also come down. Owing to this, people who

## Aiming for the best airports in the world

In the last four years, the passenger trips in India have doubled from 10 crores to 20 crores. With increasing numbers, we are ensuring that airports in India are some of the best in the world in terms of service and design. Under UDAN, we have connected smaller airports like Jamshedpur to big cities. We believe that the 100<sup>th</sup> airport will be Pakyong in Sikkim. 32 more airports are yet to be covered under UDAN. We also inaugurated the Air Sewa App for addressing the grievances of customers in the aviation sector, under which 10,000 complaints have been filed whose closure rate has been 96 per cent. Besides, the operating turnover of Air India has been excellent in terms of load factor, on-time performance and flight plane utilisation.



Jayant Sinha  
Minister of State for  
Civil Aviation

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03



Lucknow-Goa with IndiGo

05



Lucky 7 for Accor in Chennai

12



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# Education takes flight

After 26 years of presence in the B2B sector, Udaan India ventures into the B2C industry with the inception of 'Study With Udaan', an education consultancy firm. **Rounak Dua**, CEO, SWU, talks about her future plans.



TT Bureau

Udaan India has set its foot in the education sector with 'Study With Udaan' (SWU) to provide end to end educational visas and help students get admission in foreign colleges and universities. Explaining the idea behind the birth of SWU, **Rounak Dua**, CEO, SWU, says, "We came up with this initiative because we have been receiving a lot of queries from agents and stu-

dents directly for visa-related issues. It's a major step for us to venture into the B2C sector."

Talking about her plans, Dua says that her chief focus lies on Tier-II cities. "With our second office in Nagpur, we now want to target Tier-II cities where there are fewer consultancies and less resource available. We want to promote the international education system and help students get a mindset about the lifestyle, education and knowledge abroad," she added.

Briefing about the portfolio of services which the company offers, Dua says, "We are promoting all the countries worldwide out of which destinations like the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and UK are top favourites. We are also promoting MBBS in

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries."

"This year, we are focusing more on sending students aboard for pursuing medicine. With a lot of competition among students, countries like

of Udaan; I know the company in and out. Having religiously worked in the online department, foraying into education sector was a challenging decision but I automatically got intrigued because it's an interesting concept."

student visa from work and tourist visa is not easy, it's a complicated process but we are working hard." she further adds.

Dua concludes by explaining her vision for 'Study

“With our second office in Nagpur, we now want to target Tier-II cities where there are fewer consultancies. We want to promote the international education system and help students get a mindset about the lifestyle, education and knowledge abroad”

Georgia, Russia and Armenia provide good education facilities in this field," she said.

Dua recounted her experience and expressed joy over her association with Udaan for over three years. She says, "I have worked with every department

Speaking about the challenges she faces while propelling SWU, Dua insists that she is learning with each passing day. "My father is my role model. Following his footsteps, I want to take Udaan's legacy forward. Stepping into the business of

With Udaan' and the tourism industry. With a lot of ideas to implement, she feels that there could be no better time for Udaan to step into the B2C segment."




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# Here's why the Travel Wedding Show is Good for Business

## Last year's Facts & Figures

**100%**  exhibitors said that their objective was achieved after attending the event

**95%**  of the exhibitors said that they will attend the next edition

**80%**  exhibitors said quality of buyers was excellent

 **100%** objective was achieved after attending the event

 **86%** of the buyers claim that the quality of exhibitors was excellent

 **100%** of the buyers are confident in growing their market base after the B2B meetings



**Hemant Mediratta\***  
**Oberoi Hotels & Resorts**

I think the show is focused and well executed. It brought together the hoteliers, travel agents and wedding planners, all on one platform.



**Christine Mukharji\***  
**ANTO**

It was a well-organised show and we met really serious buyers. This platform is very apt for the kind of products we are trying to market in India.

## Wedding Planners



**Rajeev Jain\***  
**Rashi Entertainment**

This is our second time at the show and the format of the show in particular is its highlight. Well-timed meetings allow us to interact with every exhibitor without missing anyone.



**Siddhartha Chaturvedi\***  
**Event Crafter**

Great thing about this show is the way the quality engagements between you and the destinations/hotels are facilitated. It's a great environment created with some superb take backs.

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# Lucknow-Goa with IndiGo

With the launch of its non-stop flights from Lucknow to Goa from July 15 and Lucknow to Pune from July 16, IndiGo becomes the first airline to introduce this daily service from Lucknow to these sectors.

 Nisha Verma

IndiGo has launched non-stop flights to the Lucknow-Goa-Lucknow and Lucknow-Pune-Lucknow sectors, previously unserved by any other airline. The bookings for the new routes is already open with fares starting from ₹ 3999. Known for its on-time performance, IndiGo's average daily departures will now be 25 flights out of Lucknow to 13 destinations.

According to a statement by the airline, the new flights are designed to cater to business and leisure travellers who are constantly on the lookout for new

and affordable flying options. The launch of these new flights is set to further strengthen the airline's operations and provide enhanced connectivity between Lucknow and other key cities.

"We are pleased to announce the launch of these two sectors from Lucknow to provide more flexibility of choice to our

customers. Lucknow continues to hold immense potential for IndiGo and we are indeed happy to be the first airline to operate maiden flights between Lucknow-Goa-Lucknow and Lucknow-Pune-Lucknow. We are providing affordable fares on these new routes for 6E travellers," a

senior IndiGo official said. Also, in line with the recent increase in IndiGo flight frequencies for business and leisure travellers, the airline continues to record the highest on-time performance of 80.9 per cent in May 2018, as per the Traffic Report released by Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

On-time performance of the scheduled domestic carriers has been computed for four metros including Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai by the regulator. The official concluded, "On-time performance is core to our business and is one of the three values that IndiGo stands

for. We are happy to record 80.9 per cent OTP for 6E flights operating out of country's busiest airports including Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Mumbai. We thank over 48.53 lakh passengers who flew with IndiGo in May 2018. IndiGo will continue to provide an on-time, hassle-free service."



IndiGoals

 With on-time performance core to its business, IndiGo was ranked as the fourth most punctual airline globally in the mega airline category by OAG, an air travel intelligence company

# 'Tis the season of networking

American Airlines recently held its networking event in Kolkata and Chandigarh for the travel trade. A product presentation was also organised for almost 25 agents each from the cities to highlight the airline's latest product updates. Lucky participants also stood a chance to win various prizes.





# Educating trade is the key

In a workshop organised to inform and educate the travel trade, **Vivek Anand**, Country Manager, MTPA, briefed about promoting Mauritius as an adventure destination among travellers.



Manas Dwivedi

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MPTA) recently organised a training workshop for travel agencies and operators at The Park, New Delhi. The workshop, which also had product presentations on some Mauritian hotels and DMCs, was aimed towards informing and educating the trade whilst simultaneously promoting Mauritius as an adventure tourism destination.

## Future Plans

With eyes set on achieving a double-digit growth, Mauritius tourism is focusing more on destination weddings, MiCE and adventure tourism

Presiding over the event, **Vivek Anand**, Country Manager, MTPA India, presented an overview about tourism in Mauritius. Around 17 DMCs showcased offerings about their hotel and resorts. Apart from MTPA and Air Mauritius officials, the workshop was graced by **Jagdishwar Goburdhun**, High Commissioner of Mauritius, who shared his thoughts and experiences about the country.

On the bilateral ties between India and Mauritius, Goburdhun lauded the initiatives to promote tourism in both the countries. While explaining about the endless possibility of tourism in Mauritius, he also read out excerpts from the latest Mauritian budget about tourism. Presenting Mauritius as a safe adventure tourism destination, Anand said that the island

country is much beyond than just a honeymoon destination.

Speaking about the idea behind conducting such workshops, Anand says it helps people in the industry know a destination

“We keep organising workshops in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. With our last session held in Lucknow, we will now be heading to Jaipur next”

more efficiently. “We keep organising such workshops in all the cities, especially Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Our last session was held in Lucknow and we will be heading to Jaipur next. Till now, we have covered around 23 places in India,” Anand added.

Talking about the strategies which MTPA India is conceptu-

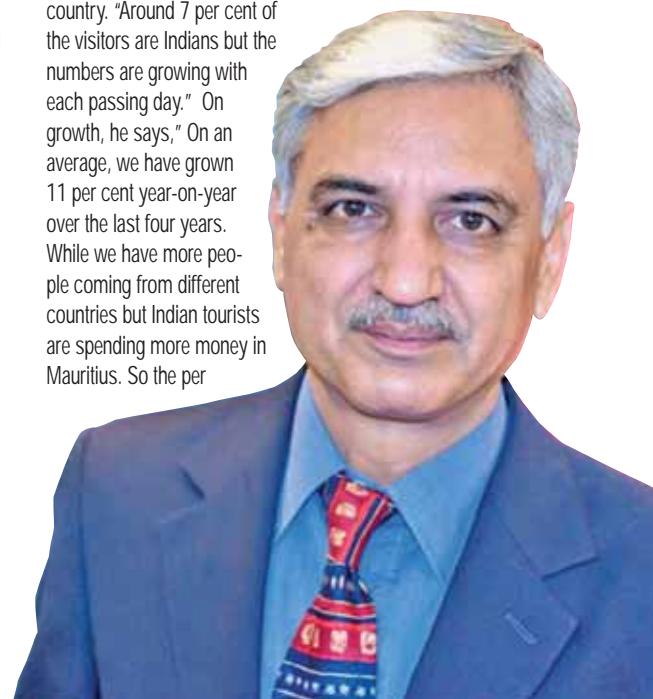
alising to enhance its presence in India, Anand says, “Besides workshops, we keep organising roadshows in different cities. For directly engaging consumers, we do advertising, billboard and newspaper campaign.

We also take part in various consumer fairs.”

The year 2018 is also special for Mauritius as the island country is celebrating 50 years of independence. To promote tourism, MPTA India is planning a mega event later this year, where the authority will showcase Mauritian food, culture, handicrafts and drinks. Count-

ing on the importance of Indian market for Mauritius, Anand explained that more and more Indians now prefer to visit the country. “Around 7 per cent of the visitors are Indians but the numbers are growing with each passing day.” On growth, he says, “On an average, we have grown 11 per cent year-on-year over the last four years. While we have more people coming from different countries but Indian tourists are spending more money in Mauritius. So the per

capita spend of an Indian tourist is very high.”



## Adelaide Oval felicitates Zaheer Khan



Adelaide Oval, the historic cricket ground, felicitated Indian bowler **Zaheer Khan** at the stadium recently for his contribution to cricket. Khan along with wife **Sagarika Ghatge** lunched at the Hill of Grace Restaurant and spent the rest of the day at the Adelaide Oval discovering different experiences.



## Offers for corporates

International Travel House partnered with TrawellTag Cover-More to offer travel assistance and insurance for corporate travel to its clients.



TT Bureau

International Travel House (ITH) has joined hands with TrawellTag Cover-More to offer travel assistance and insurance for corporate travels. ITH is a leading travel management company offering a bouquet of travel solutions for the last 34 years. Meanwhile, TrawellTag Cover-More is a leading provider of travel assistance and insurance solutions to numerous business houses and corporate giants.

TrawellTag Cover-More will provide corporate travel assistance services along with comprehensive medical and

## Promises Kept

With cutting-edge technology, TrawellTag Cover-More will continue to offer best services to customer base of ITH



**Dev Karvat**  
Founder & CEO (India & Emerging Markets),  
Cover-More India

personal assistance services to the customer base of ITH. Having been in the business of corporate travel solutions, ITH has allied with TrawellTag Cover-More to offer seamless provision of expert, real-time travel protection.

Talking about the partnership, **Ajay Kumar**, CEO, Interna-

tional Travel House, said, “This partnership is a joint effort of both the groups to service our customers. TrawellTag Cover-More’s product offering goes beyond traditional travel insurance. We look forward to working with TrawellTag Cover-More.”

Elaborating on the collaboration, **Dev Karvat**, Founder & CEO (India & Emerging Markets), Cover-More India, added, “ITH desired a product that is beyond traditional travel insurance to serve their frequent corporate travellers. Since our products are all-inclusive and concurrent with the customers’ travel needs, it is a perfect fit for ITH’s requirement.”

Over the years, TrawellTag Cover-More has been providing expert travel assistance and insurance services to different corporates.



# Lucky 7 for Accor in Chennai

Expanding its India portfolio, AccorHotels launched its new property in Chennai — Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road. With 100 well-appointed rooms, the hotel boasts of contemporary design and interiors.

 TT Bureau

Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road is the seventh property in Chennai under the AccorHotels brand, taking the brand's room count in the city to over 1000. Located in the heart of the city, the chic property is located at a walk-

including four suites as well as rooms designed for the specially-abled. The property boasts of a swimming pool and a fitness centre, both of which have a stunning view of the Chennai skyline. Four meeting rooms at the property can accommodate more than



Gaurav Shiva  
General Manager  
Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road

of Tamil Nadu. Chennai is fast becoming a key market fuelled by both strong business and leisure traveller growth in an improving economic climate. It forms an integral piece of our densification strategy to become leaders in the market

segments we operate in. We look forward to making all our guests 'Feel Welcome'." said Jean-Michel Cassé, Chief

Gaurav Shiva, General Manager, Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road, said, "Chennai is one of the

we look forward to extending the brand's signature services to diverse guests travelling to



“ We look forward to extending the brand's signature services to guests travelling to the city. Our great location, world-class service and best-in-class amenities will ensure that they have a memorable stay at our hotel ”

ing distance from Madras Club and elite neighbourhoods like Boat Club. Even the Marina beach, T Nagar shopping district and the business hubs of Nungambakkam, Egmore, Adyar, Mylapore and Alwarpet are only 10 minutes' drive from the hotel.

100 guests for conferences, meetings, events and other social gatherings.

“The opening of this hotel marks our seventh property in Chennai and eighth in the state

Operating Officer—India & South Asia, AccorHotels.

major economic, cultural and tourism centres in South India. With the launch,

the city. Our great location, world-class service and best-in-class amenities will ensure that our guests have a memorable stay at Novotel Chennai Chamiers Road. 

The property features 100 well-appointed rooms,



Holland's famous Canal Cruise



# Fancy a floating breakfast?

The Residence Maldives is offering an exciting in-villa floating breakfast to help guests start their day while defying gravity. Falhumaa, the restaurant at the resort, also organises culinary classes for adults every week.

TT Bureau

Guests at The Residence Maldives can now start their day with a sumptuous breakfast while enjoying the cool waters of their private swimming pool. The resort is offering an in-villa floating breakfast which includes a Floating Bubbly Breakfast at around USD 75 per person and a Floating Breakfast (without bubbly) at around USD 55 per person. The travel agent commission is at 20 per cent pre-booking and pre-payment required. This option is available only for guests booking



the pool villa categories. The In-Villa Floating Breakfast is not part of any meal plan or package.

The Residence Maldives, represented in India by Outbound Konnections Reps, is located in the



Maldives – a country known for its blue-green atolls, white sandy beaches and coral-filled reefs. What sets the island of Falhumaafushi apart is its location on one of the largest and deepest atolls in the world, the Gaafu Alifu Atoll. The biodiversity of marine life here is rich and the healthy coral flourishes due to the depth of the atolls.

It has a Spa by Clarins located away from the island and connected only by a jetty with views of the Indian Ocean. The resort also has a restaurant inspired by a local legend of a spice merchant and a mermaid – The Falhumaa is the ideal place to sample Maldivian cuisine at its best. If guests want to learn Maldivian cuisine, the

Falhumaas organises culinary classes for adults every week.

This resort boasts beach and water villas that offer the best views of sunrises and sunsets over the horizon. For the ultimate in luxury, the pool villas with plunge pools overlooking the ocean are most preferable.



# Witness Kerala in all its glory

Onam is a harvest festival in Kerala which falls during the month of 'Chingam' (August-September). The festival, which is celebrated with a lot of fanfare, witnesses an influx of tourists to the state during this period.

TT Bureau

Onam is the festival of homecomings, a tribute to peace and harmony and a celebration of the true spirit of 'God's Own Country'. Elaborate festivities mark Onam that starts formally on the day of the 'Atham' asterism and goes on for 10 days. A key highlight of the celebration is the 'Athapookalam' or floral carpets that adorn the front yard of homes to give king 'Mahabali' a glorious welcome.

Another major attraction of

Onam is the 'Thirupunithura Athachamayam', a procession that marks the beginning of the Onam. Celebrated with a lot of fanfare on the day of Atham at Thirupunithura in Ernakulam district, the highlights of the event are folk dance performances, dance recitals by renowned artists, musical ensembles and caparisoned elephants, to be held on August 15.

Scores of snake boats, manned by 100-125 oarsmen, participate in this event regarded as the largest team sport in the world. The Nehru



Trophy Boat Race will be held in Alappuzha on August 11. Though celebrations are held across the state

during Onam, the Tourism Week Celebrations held in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram by Kerala Tourism

is the biggest. A range of programmes will be held from August 24-30, including food festivals

and art festivals, followed by a grand procession.

A major highlight of Onam is the 'Pulikali', a 200-year-old folk art performed by trained artists. The dancers, painted from head to toe to resemble feisty tigers, indulge in a cat-and-mouse session with gun-wielding hunters, in rhythmic steps, to the music of ethnic drums such as 'Thakil' and 'Udukku'. The 'Pulikali' will be held on August 28 at the Swaraj Grounds, Thrissur.



# Live life resort style at Lords

Lords Hotels & Resorts is set to launch its 16<sup>th</sup> property in Gujarat with Lords Resort Chotila near the famous Hindu temple in the Rajkot region with the same name.



TT Bureau

Lords Hotels and Resorts has announced its plans of launching a new resort in Gujarat. Based around Rajkot region's famous Chotila Mata Temple, Lords Resort Chotila is expected to be fully operational by Diwali 2018. With all kind of recreational facilities, the 46-room property will offer accommodation to pilgrimage

tourists and travellers coming for leisure activities as well.

Talking about the development, **Ajay Pawar**, Regional General Manager, Lords Hotels and Resorts, says the property will be a perfect destination for pilgrimage tourists. Explaining about the USP of Lords Resort Chotila, Pawar says that it's the only property in the Saurashtra

traditional architecture of the resort, Pawar says that apart from four inter-connecting rooms, two suits and 32 regular rooms, six 'bhoongas' are the special attraction of the property. "Bhoonga is a traditional Gujarati hut. They are generally round in shape to avoid the influx of heat inside it. It has a vibrant art work on the interior and exterior. People can

phases. As part of the first phase, the water park and food court are already operational while the entire complex will be ready in the second phase of 2018.

Lords Chotila Resorts is looking to keep the prices competitive keeping in mind the needs of the mid-budget traveller. 📌

“Lords Resort Chotila is the only property in the Saurashtra region which offers a water park, food court and a multiplex to travellers”

region which offers a water park, food court, multiplex and a party plot to travellers along with the resort.

experience a flavour of Gujarat by staying in a Bhoonga.”

Pawar adds that the resort will be operational in different

The folk-themed resort is aimed towards catering the large number of tourists who visit Chotila Mata Mandir during Navaratri and on full-moon days. Speaking about the

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### Lords' Portfolio

📌 Lords Hotels & Resorts currently owns and operates 27 hotels in two countries and seven states.

📌 The company is planning to add 10 more properties by the end of 2018



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# Cleanse your soul with yoga

The hospitality industry along with the ministries celebrated International Yoga Day to highlight the importance of healthy living and overall wellbeing. Various activities showcased different postures of yoga asanas breathing techniques, meditation to encourage people to take up the discipline which ultimately leads to harmony and peace both within and outside oneself.



Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, performs Yoga in Chennai on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga 2018



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# Reunited with Reunion Island

Reunion Island Tourism Board re-appointed Representation World as its official India representative fourth time in a row, with **Vineet Gopal** as Director—India for the destination.



TT Bureau

Ecstatic on having Reunion Island again onboard, **Vineet Gopal** said that he was extremely happy to be re-associated with the destination, especially after having



**Vineet Gopal**  
Director - India  
Reunion Island Tourism Board

“We are focusing on small exhibitions, so that we are present in every city. Tier-II and III will be in focus apart from our metros, which are major markets for Indian arrivals to Reunion Island”

recorded phenomenal growth from India last year. “The Indian arrivals to Reunion Island witnessed a growth of 175 per cent and we are hopeful to sustain this growth for this year as well,” he said.

**Rasika Mathur**, Senior Sales Manager - India, Marketing & Promotion, Reunion Island Tourism Board, added, “We are focusing on increasing the traffic further. We recorded

around 4000 arrivals from India to Reunion Island. We wish to do better than 175

partners. We will also be tapping the B2C segment with many new initiatives.”

helped us in promoting the destination and it is because of our team that we are able

Mathur added, “We would also be coming up with various incentive schemes for our

connected with Air Mauritius from both Delhi and Mumbai as well as other stations. The connecting flight from Mauritius to Reunion Island is 35-40 minutes, offering hassle-free travel for visitors to the island.”

Commenting on how Indians are clubbing Reunion Island with a trip to Mauritius, Gopal said, “People are clubbing the two destinations because they are only 35-40 minutes apart by air. But we have people who are only going to Reunion Island itself. The destination



**Rasika Mathur**  
Senior Sales Manager - India,  
Marketing & Promotion, Reunion  
Island Tourism Board

has a lot to offer and I think one is not doing justice if they are staying less than six days on this island. It is very different from any beach destination as there are around 500 micro climates on the island, and one would experience a different climate on travelling every one hour. Apart from some beautiful beaches, there are mountains, which even includes the highest peak in the Indian Ocean. Our USP is the volcano, which is the most active and the safest in the world. In fact, one can do a hiking tour to see the volcano or even go there by helicopter. One can never be stuck on just the island and the beach, but can indulge in a plethora of activities, good restaurant options as well as music festivals.”

## Air Connections

Air Astral is the only airline offering direct connection between India and Reunion Island from Chennai

<b>Readership</b> 600,000	<b>Distribution</b> Pan India	<b>Audience</b> also in Tier II & III cities
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to achieve these numbers.”

Going forward, the strategy, according to Gopal, is to focus on exhibitions. “We are focusing on small exhibitions, so that we are present in every city. Tier-II and III will be in focus apart from our metros, which are major markets for Indian arrivals to Reunion Island. We are moving towards having consumer campaigns as well. We are planning many Fam trips for trade to Reunion Island so that they can explore this beautiful paradise,” shared Gopal.

travel partners selling Reunion Island, like the one we had last year.” She also said that one of the agendas for them would be to work with their airline partner Air Astral. It is the only airline offering direct connection between India and Reunion Island from Chennai. However, there is a need for more connections.

Gopal agrees, saying, “We are in the process of sending Air Astral the request to start operating from other cities as well, but that will take time. However, we are well con-

per cent growth, for which we will be focusing more on Tier-II cities, participate in exhibitions and work closely with tour operators and B2B

Claiming that the major reason behind this growth was the support from trade, Gopal claimed, “All our partners and tour operators have



# Indaba buzzes with offerings

The significance of tourism to Africa and its economy was once again cemented at this year's Africa's Travel Indaba held in Durban with over 7000 delegates from 80 countries in attendance. Team India was represented by 50 representatives.





# Sarovar debuts in Jhansi

Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi, Sarovar Hotels' latest property in Jhansi, is set to strengthen the group's expansion in the Uttar Pradesh market.

 TT Bureau

With 75 operating hotels across 50 destinations in India and Africa, Sarovar Hotels has now launched its latest property in Jhansi—Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi. The property was inaugurated in the presence of **Sanjay Khanna**, Managing Director, Nataraj Mobiles and **Ajay K Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts.

Bakaya said, "We are glad to open the first branded hotel in Jhansi and the fifth hotel in Uttar Pradesh. Jhansi is an important destination with rising number of visitors from across



**Ajay K Bakaya**  
Managing Director  
Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

the country. It is an important location for us and a significant addition to our product portfolio. This is set to be the best hotel in the city and will cater to the needs of corporate, groups, leisure and conferences."

Owned by Nataraj Sai Hotels, Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi is the first contemporary hotel in the Jhansi. The property features 72 well-appointed rooms and suites, equipped with all modern amenities complemented with personalised services. Apart from making sure that the guests have a memorable stay, the hotel offers fully equipped conferencing and banquet spaces and facilities that can accommodate up to 500 guests. The multi cuisine restaurant—Flavours—offers sumptuous meals for patrons, while guests can sip on amazing cocktails, beers and other drinks at 'Lancers – The Bar'.

Nataraj Sarovar Portico Jhansi also has a well-equipped fit-

ness centre, 24 hours in-room dining, swimming pool, salon and free hi-speed internet access, ensuring that the guests have a comfortable stay. Situated in the heart of the city, the property is only two

kms from the railway station, and located in the vicinity of palaces, forts, temples, IT hub and shopping malls. This makes it a perfect place to stay, whether on business or leisure trips.

Sarovar Hotels is targeting 100 hotels under its portfolio by 2020. Other properties expected to open in 2018 include hotels in Jaisalmer, Somnath, Dibrugarh, Junagadh, Gorakhpur and Lusaka, Zambia. 



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# Kesari targets North India

With a stronghold in the western region of India, Kesari Tours recorded impressive growth in South India after taking initiatives to promote the company. Its next target is North India.

TT Bureau

The holiday season for Kesari Tours this year has been showing impressive numbers. **Himanshu Patil**, Director, Kesari Tours, says, "This season is going extremely well. We are seeing a 20 per cent growth in numbers. Again, Europe is

the most popular

destination with us. Central and Eastern Europe is also gaining popularity."

Speaking about how the growth has been in the last few years, he says, "In the last two years, we have grown in double digits with 15-18 per cent growth at least. One of the reasons for this is that, we have been doing our best to have maximum presence across all media like digital marketing, radio, print and outdoor activities."

The tour company has already established itself in its home market – western India. It has now trained its focus on the other regions where it does have much presence at the moment. "While we are strong in Maharash-

tra, our presence in Gujarat is also prominent. Our efforts have shown results and we have also been seeing growth in South India, specially given our Bengaluru market which also caters to the surrounding areas. We now want to tap the northern states like Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh specially Lucknow and of course, Punjab.

“We now want to tap the northern states of Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, UP and of course, Punjab and enter with a direct presence”

We will soon be entering these markets with a direct presence. On our radar now are Lucknow and Chandigarh. Even Raipur has a lot of potential for us and we are working on it. Though we have a Delhi office, we need to focus more on the north region.

We are looking at more business coming from the north," Patil reveals.

He adds that while the Maharashtrian community is a key segment for the tour operator, a lot of people from other communities are also joining Kesari Tours due to its quality service and the trust the

company has built. "Our aim is to go pan-India and have no boundary of any state, region or community," Patil says.

The company also recently celebrated its 34th anniversary for which it organised a blood

donation camp and many employees came forward to be part of this noble cause.

**Top destinations**  
Patil says that while the traveler today is approaching with their own selected destination, Europe still remains the popular one. "Initially, it was Western Europe that was popular but now it is Central and Eastern Europe which is gaining traction. Canada is also coming up and so are some of the south American countries. In Asia, on the other hand, the Philippines and Bali particularly are more in demand," Patil says.

In terms of inbound traffic, he says international tourists usually choose the Golden Triangle which has retained its top position. Spa tourism is also gaining popularity and

Kerala has witnessed a huge jump, according to him. "It has now become a year-round destination for inbound. Kashmir too has been steadily growing mostly because the J&K Tourism is taking efforts to promote it. Not to mention the North East states which are also picking up. Earlier, it was only Darjeeling and Gangtok but now all seven sisters are getting popular. People want to explore the lesser-known destinations beyond Darjeeling and Gangtok," Patil shares.

## Major Hotspots

- Initially, Western Europe was popular but Central and Eastern Europe are now gaining traction
- Canada and S American countries are also in demand

## Seychelles goes glam

CELEBRITY WATCH

Delhi-based fashion designer duo **Shivan and Narresh** chose Seychelles as an inspiration for their latest resort wear and destination wedding wear collection after their maiden trip to the beautiful islands in January 2018. Their latest EdoMer Series comprises five exclusive prints, all drawing inspiration from Seychelles.



## Disha Patani is Well-Being advocate of Westin

CELEBRITY WATCH

Westin Hotels & Resorts introduced Bollywood actress **Disha Patani** as the newest Westin Well-Being Brand Advocate in Asia Pacific. As part of her new role, Patani will create a three-part video series, helping guests envision an enhanced concept of wellness especially when on the move. This announcement follows on the heels of Westin's Let's Rise global campaign, which addresses the distractions and unpredictability of travel; thereby empowering people to regain control of their well-being routine while traveling.





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# TRAVEL AWARDS

Pages: 24



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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

South India is undoubtedly a perfect blend of traditional and modern, preserving its rich culture and heritage besides encouraging contemporary infrastructure development. The region is fast moving towards becoming a major hub for both inbound and domestic tourists and we would like to support the efforts of individuals who have been instrumental in helping the tourism sector grow in this region.

As a tribute, DDP Group decided to hold India Travel Awards to recognise the achievers of the travel and tourism industry, who have worked steadfastly towards enhancing the environment to allow the growth of this business. These stalwarts need to be acknowledged, appreciated and encouraged in every region, and we have started the journey this year from South India.

Our highest honour, the Gold Maya, is awarded to those stalwarts who have shaped the industry in the way it is today by creating innovative ways and products to take the industry a notch higher. The earlier editions of the South India Travel Awards have set the beginning of a journey of long-term associations with some and a renewal of the bond with many others.

Overall, the fifth edition of South India Travel Awards was another successful chapter in this journey.

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

SanJeet

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# Maya regales yet again in



The winners of South India Travel Awards 2018 with their trophies at Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa, Bengaluru

Now in its fifth edition, India Travel Awards awarded the tourism and hospitality industry's forerunners in South India. The glittering, black-tie ceremony, held at Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa, Bengaluru, was underscored by the presence of key stakeholders from every segment of the industry.

 IT BUREAU

**R**enowned as a platform which recognises hard work and constant efforts of tourism industry players in their respective regions, India Travel Awards—South brought together the who's who of

the industry to a glamorous, black-tie awards ceremony. **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation, and the chief guest for the event said, "I am honoured to be a part of this prestigious ceremony where hard work is rewarded. These awards are a motivation for those

who work in the field of tourism. I believe that tourism is all about sustainability and good practices and I hope that the award winners learn from the good work put in by their colleagues. This year, we missed the nomination date but next year, we shall make sure to file the same." Adding to the glamour quotient

of the ceremony, **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India—Maharashtra 2018, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour and presented the awards alongside the dignitaries.

The well-attended ceremony recorded the presence of nearly



(L-R) SanJeet, Harmandeep Singh Anand, Anita Mishra, Kumar Pushkar, Manish Kriplani and M. Balaji



# South India to reward trade



150 people from the tourism and hospitality industry. **Sanjeet**, Mentor, India Travel Awards, asserts that tourism is synonymous with progress, development and opportunity and this sentiment is echoing all over the country. He believes that every small hotel, restaurant, tourist attraction and tourist shopping contributes to the growth of the industry. He says, "But, are we doing enough to recognise the players who are contributing to this growth? We have instituted these awards to address this gap.

The regional awards recognise those establishments which may not be able to see the light of day at the national level. Through this event, we recognise the real heroes who are constantly working to take the travel industry to the next level. This recognition that we bestow on our regional players puts the spotlight on them to acknowledge their contribution and simultaneously ensure that they are maintaining the high industry standards."

The awards are divided into



four categories. The Personal Awards are for the legends and leaders who have established themselves and the youngsters who need the encouragement; Business Awards are for those organisations which have been outstanding in their respective fields and deserve the recognition; Trending Awards, decided by critics, are awarded to individuals who have done extraordinary work and the Partner Awards recognise and appreciate the partners who contribute to make the awards ceremony a grand success. "Everyone is free to nominate themselves. However, as a policy we do not consider those who are not nominated. The voting is carefully monitored to avoid duplication and ensure transparency," adds Sanjeet.

In the Personal Awards category, the Gold Maya was awarded to **Sherif Salman**, Chairman, Sherif Travel and Cargo Services, who entered the Gallery of Legends. **Raj Andrade**, Vice President—Business Development, Marketing and Strategy, Bangalore International Airport, took home the DDP Game Changer trophy this year. **Ronaldo Colaco**, Owner, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa, Bengaluru and **Vivek Kumar**, Managing Director, Clarks Brij Hotels, Pride Hospitality and Brijrama Hospitality, were both named the DDP Trailblazers while **Nirupa Shankar**, Director, Brigade Hospitality was declared the Face of the Future.





## Gallery of Legends | SHERIF SALMAN



► **Sherif Salman**, Chairman, Sherif Travel and Cargo Services, received the award for **Gallery of Legends**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018

Applauding the initiative to institute regional awards for the tourism industry, **Sherif Salman**, Chairman, Sherif Travel and Cargo Services, said, "Today, I stand proud as a member of travel and tourism fraternity and this is an important moment for me. I would like to thank the organisers and the jury to have appreciated my 50 years of service in the industry. Reward is an important way to keep today's entrepreneurs motivated."

Salman shared six rules from his experience of 50 years of service which he believes the entrepreneurs today should inculcate in their lives to stay focused and be successful.

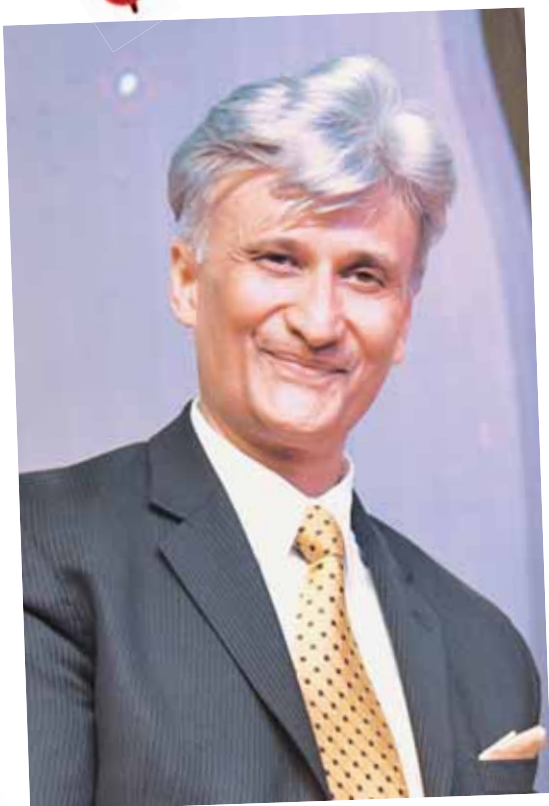
"Trust yourself, no matter how crazy it may sound to other people. Break the rules but not the law because it is impossible to be original if you are too well-behaved. Don't be afraid to fail because you make decisions only when you are not afraid of failure. Don't listen to naysayers who repeatedly tell you that something cannot be done; remember, hard work always pays off. Always find a way to give back to the society as this can provide you with utmost satisfaction."

“Trust yourself, no matter how crazy it may sound to other people. Break the rules but not the law because it is impossible to be original if you are too well-behaved”





## DDP Game Changer | RAJ ANDRADE



► **Raj Andrade**, Vice President-Business Development, Marketing and Strategy, Bangalore International Airport received the award for **DDP Game Changer**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018

Reminiscing his journey with India Travel Awards, **Raj Andrade**, Vice President-Business Development, Marketing and Strategy, Bangalore International Airport, said, "I have had the opportunity to get on this journey with India Travel Awards four years ago when I joined Bangalore International Airport. What particularly impresses me is the professionalism and highest efficiency with which the ceremony is hosted. It allows an opportunity to be recognised to those who are excelling at what they do and also opens doors to those who are younger in the trade to strive and be industrious enough to be a part of a large industry."

“Every winner of the award who is part of the travel and aviation market is going to be critical in making sure that our country gets to a global platform that surpasses all”

Andrade feels that India is at the cusp of being something phenomenal and even greater than where it is today. He explains, "The country is going to be the third largest aviation market in the world by 2025. Every winner of the award who is part of the travel and aviation market is going to be critical in making sure that as a country, we get to a global platform that surpasses anything the world has seen before. We have the capability, understanding and ceremonies like these that help us give a boost to encouragement."



## DDP Trailblazer | RONALD COLACO



► **Ronald Colaco**, Owner, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru, received the award for **DDP Trailblazer**. He was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018

Expressing his gratitude to the organisers of India Travel Awards, **Ronald Colaco**, Owner, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, Bengaluru said, "The award is a testament to our dedicated service throughout the year. Our commitment to unmatched hospitality and delightful experiences shines through this award." An NRI based in Dubai, Colaco started his career in Oman way back in 1975 as an accountant and quickly moved to become a financial controller. He was also the Commercial CEO for a consortium of three multinational corporates based in Greece, Germany and Italy. "India Travel Awards is a massive boost for all of us involved in inspiring us to work hard in serving our clients efficiently. It indeed feels great to have been awarded one of the highest

accolades in travel and tourism in the country," Colaco added. Apart from being a successful entrepreneur, Colaco is a pioneer in providing infrastructure facilities for the public. He was involved in several turn-key projects such as construction of world-class petro-refineries, gas processing and reinjection plants, townships and airports. In 2015, he won the International Recognition Award for Leadership in Service Excellence from the office of the Prime Minister of Australia.

"India Travel Awards is a massive boost for all of us involved in inspiring us to serve our clients efficiently. It feels great to have been awarded one of the highest accolades"





## DDP Trailblazer | VIVEK KUMAR



► **Vivek Kumar**, Managing Director, Clarks Brij Hotels, Pride Hospitality and Brijrama Hospitality, received the award for **DDP Trailblazer**. He was felicitated by **Sanjeet**, Director, DDP Group; **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018

Celebrating upon receiving the Gold Maya, **Vivek Kumar**, Managing Director, Clarks Brij Hotels, Pride Hospitality and Brijrama Hospitality, said, "I thank the jury and the team at DDP for the honour and for choosing our hotel as the venue for the first awards in this year." Kumar has been an astute businessman and philanthropist with the mind of a creative thinker. Hailing from a family steeped in retail, textile and hospitality, his grandfather established one of the first five-star group of

“At our hotel, we have been planting numerous trees to maintain greenery and focus on mental and physical health of our employees, as the hotel industry demands long hours of work”

hotels in India way back in 1935 as well as the Indian Textiles Company. Kumar diversified his grandfather's company into uncharted territories by establishing a manufacturing unit and has been instrumental in the establishment of renowned global retail brands. Kumar emphasised on the importance of sustainability and protection of environment and how industry players can be part of the initiative. He said, "At our hotel, we have been planting numerous trees to maintain greenery and focus on mental and physical health of our employees. The hotel industry demands long hours of work and though it looks very glamorous, it is a very stressful job. Thus, it is important that employees are taken care of so that they are more efficient and healthy in general."

of hotels in India way back in 1935 as well as the Indian Textiles Company. Kumar diversified his grandfather's company into uncharted territories by establishing a manufacturing unit and has been instrumental in the establishment of renowned global retail brands. Kumar emphasised on the importance



## Face of the Future | NIRUPA SHANKAR



► **Nirupa Shankar**, Director, Brigade Hospitality, received the award for **Face of the Future**. She was felicitated by **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Group; **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) and **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018

According to **Nirupa Shankar**, Director, Brigade Hospitality, India Travel Awards is a unique platform which recognises not just achievers but also encourages the newcomers in the industry. She exclaimed, "I would really like to thank the DDP team and the jury for conferring me with this prestigious award. My entry into the hospitality industry was quite by accident. I joined the company when we had one hotel. Today we have six and another six are under construction. However, every hotel owner understands that hotels are a tough business and every investor reiterates that hotels make no financial sense. But during my journey of about 10 years in this domain, I have seen that the hospitality industry has undergone a metamorphosis."

She further pointed out that a decade ago, the types of hotels were different and so were the travellers. "There were not half as many brands in the country. Today, with a diverse range of brands, the trends of F&B consumption of guests has changed and it feels amazing to be a part of this industry at this point in time when we are edging towards something bigger," she added.

“Today, with a diverse range of brands and F&B trends, it feels amazing to be a part of this industry when we are edging towards something bigger”







## Chief Guest | KUMAR PUSHKAR

Applauding India Travel Awards, **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) said, "Any award at any stage in life encourages and motivates. In the tourism sector, the private players have a major role to play. The government can provide support through its trade-friendly policies and infrastructure development. Karnataka is one state with many worlds and we have so much to showcase to the world. Tourism is growing but with this growth, we have to work harder. We need to work in a more responsible and sustainable manner. Through events like these, we can promote good practices in the industry. For the last one year, Karnataka Tourism has been concentrating on destination development. The state government has decided to develop 20 important destinations across the state. Out of the 20 iconic sites identified by Ministry of Tourism, Hampi in Karnataka will be developed as a model destination."

► **Kumar Pushkar**, IFS and Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC), received the award for **Chief Guest**



## Guest of Honour | ANITA MISHRA

**Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018, felt that India travel Awards offered a spectacular platform to recognise the frontrunners of the tourism industry. She said, "I feel proud and privileged to be a part of such an important event. I am happy that we are celebrating travel, a millennial dream today. I believe that travel, tourism and hospitality industry is one of the key drivers of growth in India. It contributes almost 9 per cent to the country's GDP and brings in foreign exchange. Thus, it is fair to say that it has the potential to change the nation and make it one of the leading countries in the world." An avid traveller herself, Mishra further added, "It is an honour to felicitate the hard work and innovation of those who are trying hard to put India on the top spot on the tourism map."

► **Anita Mishra**, Gladrags Mrs India-Maharashtra 2018, received the award for **Guest of Honour**





## General Manager of the Year

### SHIPRA SUMBLY KAUL

**H**oliday Inn Express and Suites Bengaluru Racecourse is the first Express brand in the city, informs the hotel's General Manager, **Shipra Sumbly Kaul**. She says, "Getting an award re-emphasises the hard work that is put in running a business successfully. The hotel adds a new concept in Bengaluru which allows the guests to stay in the corporate hub and yet enjoy horse racing at leisure. We are the largest Express in the country with 270 rooms."

► **Shipra Sumbly Kaul**, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru Racecourse, received the award for General Manager of the Year

## Best Hospitality Professional

### RAJAN MALHOTRA

**R**ajan Malhotra, Director—Sales & Marketing, Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru, exclaimed that there is no bigger joy than winning at South India Travel Awards; that too among peers and colleagues in the industry. Malhotra said, "This award is special and makes me very nostalgic as I look back at the years of professional journey. I made a very humble beginning in the domain of sales and marketing and had the opportunity to work with the leaders who shared great knowledge and helped me pave the way through till here coupled with prodigious brands that have added great value to my career."

► **Rajan Malhotra**, Director—Sales & Marketing, Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru, received the award for Best Hospitality Professional



## Best Sales & Marketing

### PROFESSIONAL | SACHIN K S

**U**pon receiving the award, **Sachin K S**, Director—Sales and Head—Travel Trade South, Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore, said, "I am thankful to the team to have recognised my 18 years of efforts in the hospitality industry." He further elaborated that for the company's business, social media and public domain create maximum impact. "Today's corporate companies' research is based on comparatives in which recognition awards are a true differentiator. Three out of ten business guests look at last minute deals and the buying decision sometimes gets a larger weightage based on accolades."

► **Sachin K S**, Director—Sales and Head—Travel Trade South, Hotel Royal Orchid Bangalore received the award for Best Sales & Marketing Professional



## Most Enterprising Hospitality Professional | M BALAJI

**C**elebrating the achievement, **M Balaji**, CEO, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa, explains, "One of the biggest challenges today is the large number of international chains in Tier-I cities which has resulted in dilution of overall revenue, thereby affecting the overall average room revenue quite drastically. We need to create an all-encompassing market view which includes the Tier-II and Tier-III cities as well. This should ideally be targeted towards corporate businesses and support local tourism and heritage sites."

► **M Balaji**, CEO, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa, received the award for Most Enterprising Hospitality Professional







## Best Global Distribution System

### TRAVELPORT GALILEO

Travelport provides air distribution services to over 400 airlines globally. Beyond air travel, the company offers over 650,000 hotel properties. With over 37,000 car rental locations and 50 cruise and tour operators, the company aggregates this travel content to more than 68,000 travel agencies, 1000s of corporations and developers who create travel websites and Apps. Travelport has leveraged its domain expertise in the travel industry to design a pioneering B2B payment solution that addresses the needs of travel intermediaries to efficiently and securely settle travel transactions.

► The award was given to **Travelport Galileo** and, received by **K S Ganesh**, AVP South and **Suneel Suseendran**, Regional Manager Karnataka

## Best Leisure Hotel

### HYATT PLACE RAMESHWARAM

Attending the award ceremony has been one of the best experiences in the last couple of years, exclaimed **Deepak Sharma**, Director—Sales, Hyatt Place Rameshwaram. He said, “This is the first time that I have had the opportunity to be a part of the DDP family and I’d want to applaud the effort put in for making the show such a grand success. It is a great initiative to help tourism and hospitality industry regional by way of recognition.” Sharma further added that the award will boost the business for the hotel. “We are not just promoting the property at the destination but also Rameshwaram as a leisure hotspot. It is a new destination and there are many opportunities for holiday at the place beyond pilgrimage,” he added.

► The award was given to **Hyatt Place Rameshwaram** and, received by **Deepak Sharma**, Director—Sales and **Santanu Mukherjee**, First Assistant General Manager



## Best Regional Airline

### SILKAIR

Celebrating the award, **Steven Yit**, Manager—Karnataka, SilkAir, exclaimed that it was an honour for the company to be awarded at this regional platform. Yit said, “It is a proud moment for us. It is always a great feeling to be recognised. Many people in this industry work very hard for very long hours and many times it could be a thankless job. It feels great to receive recognition once in a while. Also, such events can spur more people to be a part of this dynamic and growing industry.” He further elaborated that Singapore Airlines and SilkAir are extremely involved in furthering tourism in South India and continue to contribute to the development of the tourism industry in India as a whole.

► The award was given to **SilkAir** and, received by **Steven Yit**, Manager—Karnataka, Singapore Airlines; **Jagdish Bhojwani**—General Manager India, SilkAir; **Srilakshmi Arjun**, Sales Head - Karnataka and **Kanchan Pai**, Sales Manager—National Corporate



## Best Corporate Hotel

### THE OTERRA

Located in Electronics City, Bengaluru, The Oterra is the only five-star deluxe hotel in the city’s IT hub, informs **Raghu Nair**, General Manager, The Oterra. With 264 rooms, flexible meeting spaces and world-class restaurants, the hotel is well-equipped to host large-scale functions and MICE events. Nair says, “Winning this prestigious award encourages my team and further reinstates our purpose as a brand which in turn affects and enhances our business. As one of the most prestigious awards, India Travel Awards serves as a motivation to the industry. It is amazing to see that there are so many brands and unsung heroes who work tirelessly and this platform recognises those talent and efforts.”

► The award was given to **The Oterra** and received by **Raghu Nair**, General Manager







## GLIMPSES of South India Travel Awards







## Best B2B Travel Portal TRAVEL BOUTIQUE ONLINE

TBO has been winning this award for many years in a row, among other prestigious awards from the trade, says **Aarish Khan**, Chief Commercial Officer, TBO. "Winning always motivates and nothing succeeds like success. In business prospects, people are made aware of the brand. Our client base has doubled over the years. We have grown to become the largest and leading B2B portal in India. We are a trusted brand for over 46,000 travel partners across more than 93 countries," says Khan. He further adds that the cutting-edge technology makes the company's transactions seamless with scalability and it continues to innovate to stay updated. "India Travel Awards has become a household name when it comes to recognising brands which are honest and unswerving."

► The award was given to **Travel Boutique Online** and received by **Sajeeth R Nair**, Regional Manager - Karnataka

## Best Hotel and Resort Marketing Company STERLING HOLIDAY RESORTS

Winning an award at a platform like India Travel Awards makes a lot of difference to a company, explains, **R Dileep Nair**, Regional Head—South Resort Operations, Sterling Holidays and Resorts. He says "We curate experiences for families and other guests at our property. For the FIT travellers, we have a hybrid business model which includes all offerings which a leisure traveller looks for. Along with activities, we also focus a lot on the food we serve. We offer Malabari cuisine with local flavours to our guests to allow them to have the real experience of the region."

► The award was given to **Sterling Holiday Resorts** and received by **R Dileep Nair**, Regional Head—South, Resort Operations



## Best Luxury Tour Operator - Outbound | BAYWATCH TRAVELS

Expressing gratitude upon receiving the award, **Manish Kriplani**, Managing Director, Baywatch Travels, says, "Personally, I feel satisfied upon receiving this award that someone has recognised me for the work that I have been putting in for the growth of tourism. My clients can be reassured of the quality offered to them once they know that we are the recipients of one of these trophies." He adds that as a company, Baywatch Travels has been associated with the idea of luxury travel for long now. "Our business has been growing by 20-30 per cent YOY. Some of the destinations which picked up very well for luxury travel include Croatia, Prague, Budapest, Iceland, Scandinavia, etc," adds Kriplani.

► The award was given to **Baywatch Travels** and received by **Manish Kriplani**, Managing Director



## Best Business Travel Agency OSAKA AIR TRAVELS

Osaka Air Travels has stood for delivering quality services to its customers since 25 years, informs **P B Boss**, Managing Director, Osaka Air Travels. He says, "This is a unique platform which identifies the hard work and contribution of various regional players towards the tourism industry." Boss feels that with digital revolution, the tourism industry is going through a myriad of changes and has been divided into two segments. He adds, "The segments are both traditional, the generation which is older than 45 years and digital, the younger generation which is in their 20s. We, as a company, must make sure to find ways to balance the two segments to further growth in the industry."

► The award was given to **Osaka Air Travels** and received by **P B Boss**, Managing Director







## Best Business Hotel

### HOWARD JOHNSON BENGALURU HEBBAL

An award reiterates the business offerings of the company, believes **Anshul Goswami**, Director—Sales and Marketing, Howard Johnson Bengaluru. She said, “Receiving an award at a platform like this not only helps us be recognised in the fraternity but also backs our product offerings with credibility. It goes a long way in emphasising on the product and value to a guest.” She explained that the hotel is located in the hub of the silicon city of Bengaluru and offers all facilities that a business traveller seeks. “Be it rooms, dining facilities, security of location, spa, swimming pool to a fitness centre, we cater to all needs of the travellers under one roof,” adds Goswami.

► The award was given to **Howard Johnson Bengaluru Hebbal** and, received by **Rishi Neoge**, General Manager and **Anshul Goswami**, Director—Sales & Marketing

## Best Tour Operator - Inbound

### CHOLAN TOURS

Cholan Tours has 14 offices in India and the company is a premium player in the southern region of India, informed **Pandian**, Director, Cholan Tours. “The unique thing about our company is that we do not hire from other travel companies; only fresh talent. The idea is to train our people while keeping the company ethos in mind. Today, if we look around, most of the companies are a copy of each other. We are different because we do not function as a corporate organisation but work as a family and follow no hierarchy. An award like this is a motivation for all the staff members because it is their work that is recognised at such a big platform,” he said.

► The award was given to **Cholan Tours** and, received by **Pandian**, Director and **Balu P**, Assistant Manager—Operations



## BEST BUSINESS HOTEL CHAIN

### FORTUNE HOTELS

Celebrating the victory, **Ajay Sharma**, General Manager, Fortune Select Trinity, Bengaluru, says, “It is a great feeling to be recognised for all the efforts we have been investing. It feels great to have Maya, the shining trophy as a reward for all the hard work that goes into putting our business to the forefront.” He further elaborates that this award shall certainly add to all the achievements of the hotel. “This is most certainly not the first and the last award. We look forward to more of such awards in the future,” he says.

► The award was given to **Fortune Hotels** and, received by **Ajay Sharma**, General Manager, Fortune Select Trinity, Bengaluru and **Rupesh Kumar Pandey**, General Manager, Fortune Park JP Celestial

## Best Tour Operator | 68M HOLIDAYS

Hosting the awards at a regional initiative recognises players from all across the country, believes **Syed Murtaja Ali**, Managing Director, 68M Holidays. He says, “Winning an award motivates us to work harder and also helps in making the tourism ecosystem better. It also gives us credibility with our clients. We offer exclusive, end-to-end tour packages which entails travelling, accommodation, food, car hire, sightseeing, guide services, transfers, etc. With us, you can be sure of bagging on great deals and great savings.” Ali also said that the company believes in offering quality, personalised services to all its travellers. “We do not compete with the online space or compromise on value for cost,” he added.

► The award was given to **68M Holidays** and received by **Syed Murtaja Ali**, Managing Director







## Best Airport

### KEMPEGOWDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BENGALURU

**Raj Andrade**, Vice President, Business Development, Marketing and Strategy, Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, explains that the airport in Bengaluru is striving to deliver a seamless experience to its passengers. He says, "India occupies a unique position today. We are going to be the third largest aviation market in the world very soon. It has come upon all of us, as an industry today, to ensure that we take this towards a brand-new level of excellence in what we are trying to do both individually and as part of organisations."

► The award was given to **Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru** and, received by **Nripendra Singh**, Deputy Manager (Airline Marketing); **Raj Andrade**, Vice President (BDMS); **Sharad Gambhir**, Manager (Airline Marketing) and **Shikhin Pawar**, Assistant General Manager (Airline Marketing)

## Best Foreign Exchange Company

### CENTRUMDIRECT

"The name, India Travel Awards, is enough to associate quality and value to anyone who gets the award. We have been lucky to be the recipients of the award for the last three years," said **Suvan Kumar Prusty**, Vice President—Head Karnataka, CentrumDirect. He informed that the company is the leading foreign exchange player in India. "With a total of 86 branch offices, we do \$400 million business via cards," added Prusty.

► The award was given to **CentrumDirect** and, received by **Eshwar Murthy R**, Vice President - Karnataka & AP Airports; **Amit Khurana**, Head Institutional Business, Senior Vice President; **Suvan Kumar Prusty**, Vice President; **S Anthony Arokianathan**, Vice President - South India Institutional Business Forex & Financial Services



## Most Promising Airline

### TRUJET

An award at India Travel Awards would strengthen brand statement, loyalty and hence business, believes, **Senthil Raja**, Head—Commercial, TruJet Airlines. TruJet, promoted by Megha Engineering and Infrastructures, has made a notable place in the aviation world by pioneering the UDAN project a reality. It now connects 14 major destinations in South and West India with a strategic connectivity between Tier-III cities and their nearest metros. We have been the first airline to successfully commence flights to all Tier-III airports awarded under the first phase of UDAN. This is the biggest testimony of a promising future," says Raja.

► The award was given to **TruJet** and, received by **Shashikanth Yakkarnall**, Sales Manager—Pan India and **Arun Rajappa**, Senior Sales Executive—Karnataka

## Best 5-Star Business Hotel

### ALOFT BENGALURU WHITEFIELD

Celebrating the victory at the awards ceremony, **Vinod M**, General Manager, Aloft Bengaluru, Whitefield, exclaims, "It feels amazing to attend such a ceremony where amidst industry colleagues, the hard work and effort is recognised by a prestigious organisation. This is the second time we have been on the stage for the same category and it feels as good as new to hold the beautiful trophy—Maya, once again. Being nominated as the best business hotel in the five-star category and then winning the award for it definitely adds another feather to our cap."

► The award was given to **Aloft Bengaluru Whitefield** and, received by **Vinod M**, General Manager and **Deleep Bolan**, Director—Sales & Marketing



## Best Corporate Travel Agency

### ARCHANA TRAVELS

Being awarded for hard work is an encouragement to work harder in today's competitive market, feels **Baddam Bhoja Reddy**, Managing Director, Archana Travels. The company recorded a growth of nearly 60 per cent this year as compared to the previous year. "Last year, we handled approximately 6000-7000 passengers which increased to nearly 16000-17000 passengers in a year. We operate in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand for FITs and group travellers. Tourism is important to offer better services to the customers," adds Reddy.

► The award was given to **Archana Travels** and, received by **Baddam Bhoja Reddy**, MD and **Laxmi Kumari**





## Best Restaurant - South Indian Cuisine

### NANDHANA PALACE

“Winning an award adds value to our services. It boosts business in terms of generating publicity in the market and also motivates the staff who work hard behind the scenes,” said **Harshwardhan**, Corporate General Manager, Nandhana Group. He explained that the company has been operating in the hospitality business for the last 20 years. “We specialise in offering Andhra and Malay cuisine. The value for money, quality and variety which we offer is unparalleled,” added Harshwardhan.

► The award was given to **Nandhana Palace** and, received by **R Ravi Chandar**, Chairman & Managing Director and **Y V Shekhar**, General Manager—Operations & Sales

## Best MICE Destination

### CLARKS EXOTICA CONVENTION RESORT & SPA

India Travel Awards is a good initiative to recognise the contributions in the hospitality segment, opines **M Balaji**, CEO, Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa. Balaji says, “Our strategic location close to the Bangalore International Airport ensures guests enjoy their day-outing, corporate or social events within a hand’s reach of central Bengaluru. The 70 acres of lush green spread provides a fresh and calm environment for all categories of events.”

► The award was given to **Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & Spa** and, received by **Nilisha Ghuliani**, Director—Human Resources; **Varun Sharma**, Director—Operations; **Shafali Kishore**, Director—Sales and **Mahesh B**, Associate Director—Purchase



## Best B2B Travel Event

### GLOBAL PANORAMA SHOWCASE

Celebrating the award for the exhibition, **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase said, “I feel GPS has grown across the length and breadth of India. Last year, we conducted two shows in Coimbatore and Kochi and this year, we will again be conducting one show of GPS in Kochi.” He further added that it has been a privilege for the company to be a part of India Travel Awards. “Receiving this award goes a long way in showcasing to our exhibitors, partners as well as the participants,” said Anand.

► The award was given to **Global Panorama Showcase** and received by **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Managing Director



## Fastest Growing B2B Travel Portal

### JUSTCLICKKARO.COM

Sharing the excitement after receiving the award, **Navjot Bhasin**, Director, JustClickKaro.com, said, “I have not walked alone on this path to success but have been accompanied by many dedicated employees.” Bhasin further added that the company shall continue to offer flawless service to the industry. “India Travel Awards can be defined as a mixture of luxury and professionalism. It is a great honour to meet the legends of the trade and network with them,” he said.

► The award was given to **Justclickkaro.com** and, received by **Navjot Bhasin**, Director; **Nagaraju BK**, Regional Sales Head—India; **Bhavani A**, Head - Hotel & Holiday Packages South and **Pavan Kumar HB**, State Head—Karnataka



## Best Foreign Exchange Aggregator

### FXKART.COM

Praising the awards, **Abdul Hadi Shaikh**, Co-founder and CEO, FxKart.com, exclaimed that it was an honour to be felicitated by the lovely lady—Maya. He said, “It has always been a very distinct feeling when we are recognised by the fraternity.” Shaikh explained that an award is a boost to business and adds credibility. He added, “When clients visit my office and see this trophy, it establishes an immediate connect because they have seen the award in various publications. It adds an extra level of credibility, recognising us as one of the premium players in the market.”

► The award was given to **FxKart.com** and received by **Abdul Hadi Shaikh**, Co-founder and CEO







## Best Transport Company SOUTH TOURISM

South Tourism takes pride in offering in-depth knowledge of all South Indian destinations and experienced team to assist tour planning, informed **Pandian**, Founder Chairman, South Tourism. He said, "In the last financial year, we handled as many as 59,000 clients and did not have any complaints. We are probably the only company which takes live online feedback from the customers. When customers check-out, they can register their feedback on the mobile App and it is published directly on the website without alteration which ensures transparency and genuine service."

► The award was given to **South Tourism** and, received by **Vijay Kumar**, Manager - Transport and **Dharmaraj**, Tour Consultant

## Best Luxury Hotel SHANGRI-LA HOTEL BENGALURU

Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru comprises a collection of 397 guestrooms and suites. The Horizon Club rooms offer the discerning traveller an extra degree of comfort and personalised service. All rooms are stylish and spacious, with contemporary furnishings and spectacular views of the low-rise cityscape. The hotel's 30 suites, including three Governor Suites and the exclusive Shangri-La Suite, are among the finest in the city. The property offers an array of restaurants with Shang Palace being the hotel's signature restaurant. Guests can explore the city's heritage, architecture, art museums to beautiful parks and superb shopping on Brigade Road.

► The award was given to **Shangri-La Hotel Bengaluru** and, received by **Rajan Malhotra**, Director—Sales & Marketing and **Saharsh Vadhera**, Director—Sales



## Best MICE Hotel CROWNE PLAZA KOCHI

Located at an ideal business location in the city, Crowne Plaza Kochi offers panoramic views of backwaters and exquisite cuisine combined with rejuvenation at the Sohum Spa. Ideally located on the new business district of NH 47 Bypass, the hotel offers easy access to Info Park Kakkanad, Cochin Special Economic Zone, MG Road, Cochin Port, Shipyard, Naval Base. Leisure travellers have access to major sightseeing areas like Fort Kochi, Mattancherry and the hotel is 45 minutes away from Cochin International Airport. The hotel offers 269 spacious business rooms and suites with excellent views of the backwaters and the city.

► The award was given to **Crowne Plaza Kochi** and received by **Amrita Ghosh**, Director—Sales

## Best Travel Insurance Provider TRAWELLTAG COVER-MORE

"It is a great feeling to receive an award. This award is a recognition supported by the travel agents and our clients, without whom, none of this would have been possible," said **Ravi Ancheril**, Assistant Vice President Kerala and Karnataka—Retail Sales, TrawellTag Cover-More. He further added that the award is not just recognition of the work done over years but also a responsibility to do more. "The travel industry is changing and travel insurance also needs to keep pace with the change. The award will encourage us to be more accountable and be very innovative to bring out more products to keep up with the changing industry demands and trends."

► The award was given to **TrawellTag Cover-More** and, received by **Ravi Ancheril**, AVP, Kerala Karnataka Retail Sales and **Shiraz Ahmed Iqbal**, Key Relationship Manager



## Best Family Resort ESTHELL – THE VILLAGE RESORT

**Ahamed Basha**, Manager—Operations, Esthell—The Village Resort, lauded the ceremony as one of the most professionally hosted events. He said, "The award will definitely establish our property in the market." Basha informed that the resort is just 20 minutes away from Mahabalipuram. "With just 75 rooms spread over 30 acres of land, the property promises absolute privacy. We offer 15 acres of outdoor area for entertainment. The swimming pools, Ayurvedic spa, and more make it the perfect family destination," said Basha.

► The award was given to **Esthell – The Village Resort** and, received by **Chandra Shekaran**, Vice President—Marketing & Sales, Esthell Village Resort and **D Devadas**, Vice President, Esthell Continental Group of Hotels & Resorts





## Best DMC- South East Asia

### TRAVELBULLZ

**K**anwer Deep Singh, Founder and President, TravelBullz, dedicated the award to his team. "TravelBullz is constantly challenging the norm to enhance customer experience. This year for us is dedicated towards enhancing customer service. We will keep innovating our services to offer a smooth hassle-free experience which includes, pre-sales, post sales and on-ground services. A first-of-its-kind offer in the DMC model is the launch of fully escorted Land Combo Packages for Bangkok and Pattaya which ensures that all our guests get the best on ground service on a SIC budget. We expect this new product to be a big success and soon will be replicated in all cities with our presence," he said.

► The award was given to **Travelbullz** and received by **Amit Paul Singh**, General Manager

## Best Boutique Resort

### THE LEAF MUNNAR

**I**ndia Travel Awards gives an opportunity to regional players to be recognised for their work and efforts put to grow the tourism and hospitality industry, claimed **Jolly James**, General Manager, The Leaf Munnar. He said, "The Leaf is a two-year old property and relatively very new in the hospitality industry in the region. We are proud of getting the award. It is an encouragement and I am sure that in the coming years, it will help us boost awareness and business both." James further added that he found the award ceremony very entertaining and dedicated the award to his team at the property.

► The award was given to **The Leaf Munnar** and received by **Jolly James**, General Manager



## Best Airport Aviation Marketing

### BANGALORE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**T**hanking the organisers for awarding the company, **Shikhin Pawar**, AGM—Airline Marketing (Passenger), Bangalore International Airport, says, "We are honoured to win two awards this time. Indian aviation is growing by leaps and bounds and we at Bangalore International Airport are steadfast in getting the lion's share of this growth by deploying innovative approach to everything we do at the airport. We want to thank the organisers for honouring us for the efforts as we are putting along with our partners and concessioners in making it a great airport for passengers."

► The award was given to **Bangalore International Airport** and, received by **Nripendra Singh**, Deputy Manager (Airline Marketing); **Shikhin Pawar**, Assistant General Manager (Airline Marketing) and **Sharad Gambhir**, Manager (Airline Marketing)

## Best Luxury Family Resort

### STERLING WAYANAD

**A**n award enhances publicity and allows the brand to be more visible in the market, feels **R Dileep Nair**, Regional Head—South Resort Operations, Sterling Holidays and Resorts. "It is also a motivation for the team members who put in a lot of hard work in making the property a success. It also encourages working harder and striving for more achievements," says Nair. He further informs that the property is located right in the middle of the jungle and offers every facility for families. "For those seeking adventure, we offer activities like zip lining, aqua zorbing, paddle boats for the kids and a host of other activities for our guests like pottery classes, etc. Thus, it makes for a curated and experiential holiday for all," adds Nair.

► The award was given to **Sterling Wayanad** and received by **R Dileep Nair**, Regional Head - South, Resort Operations







## Best Mid Market Corporate Hotel RAMADA BANGALORE

“India Travel Awards has recognised us and we thank the jury for the same. We, as a mid-segment corporate hotel, make sure that we provide state-of-the-art facilities and are more focused on the guest satisfaction index,” says **Sachin K S**, Director—Sales & Head South Travel Trade, Ramada Bangalore. Sachin further added that Ramada Bangalore has been known for its comfort, convenience, efficiency and affordability. “Our location makes it a favourite for business travellers looking at maximum value for money. We emphasise on our breakfast experience which is an essential part of any guest stay. The staff has been trained and groomed to be very quick in guest response and exceeding guest expectations.”

► The award was given to **Ramada Bangalore** and, received by **Sachin K S**, Director—Sales & South Head Travel Trade (2<sup>nd</sup> from left); **Rajiv Achuthan**, Assistant Vice President—Sales (South) and **Suresh Melvin**, Assistant Director—Revenue Management

## Excellence in Customer Service THE FOG MUNNAR RESORTS AND SPA

Celebrating the award, **Vimalroy V**, General Manager, The Fog Munnar, exclaimed that the award received by the property is an addition to their marketing tools. He explained that the award will not only boost business but also increase awareness about the hotel. Vimalroy said, “It is a proud moment for us to be recognised for the hard work we have put in making the property so successful. The ceremony was wonderful and we feel elated. The award is a stimulation and an inspiration to work harder. I submit this award to all my staff members who are the actual people behind the scenes.”

► The award was given to **The Fog Munnar Resorts and Spa** and received by **Vimalroy V**, General Manager



## Best Debut Hotel | HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS & SUITES BENGALURU RACECOURSE

Applauding the India Travel Awards platform as one of the most innovative initiatives, **Varun Kamra**, Director—Sales and Marketing, Holiday Inn Express and Suites Bengaluru Racecourse, said, “It is a fabulous feeling to receive an award. We are a very new property, just five months old and to be recognised as the best debut hotel in South India is very encouraging.” He further added that the kind of publicity and recognition that this platform promises are sure to help in growing and boosting business at the property. “I feel this award will work very positively for us in the future,” added Kamra.

► The award was given to **Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bengaluru Racecourse** and, received by **Shipra Sumbly Kaul**, General Manager and **Varun Kamra**, Director—Sales and Marketing

## Best Serviced Apartments OAKWOOD RESIDENCE KAPIL HYDERABAD

The Oakwood brand in Asia offers five products - Oakwood Premier, Oakwood Apartments, Oakwood Residence, Oakwood Studios and Oakwood Suites. Every product is designed for a different lifestyle. Oakwood Premier caters to travellers who seek luxury and style, combining impressive apartments with the amenities and services of luxury hotels; Oakwood Apartments provides chic and functional accommodation with modern essentials located in the heart of the city for independent travellers; Oakwood Residence offers spacious apartments that capture all the comforts of home for relocating families; Oakwood Suites offers comfort in a private and exclusive environment of modern luxury for seasoned travellers and senior executives while Oakwood Studios adds a new dimension to urban city stays, offering curated spaces for creators.

► The award was given to **Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad** and, received by **Vijay Nagpal**, General Manager and **Shakul Pant**, Executive Assistant Manager—Sales & Marketing







## Most Scenic Resort

### WAYANAD SILVERWOODS RESORT

“An award is like litmus and to be recognised by an authority like this, gives us an edge to market ourselves better. The customers when booking the property would not have to look at any other parameter since the award speaks for itself, says **Jaya Benny**, Whole time Director, Silvercastle Holidays and Resorts (India). She further added that the title of the award befits the property the company represents. “I do not think that anybody who has visited Wayanad would have any doubts about the scenic beauty of the place. From the infinite pool to the view from all rooms, the view of the Banasura Hills through the Banasura Lake, the entire landscape is unparalleled,” she added.

► The award was given to **Wayanad Silverwoods Resort** and, received by **Jaikumar P U**, Senior Manager—Sales & Marketing and **Dr Jaya Benny**, Director

## Best Destination Management Company

### STHI GROUP

Winning an award puts you on a pedestal of accredited recognition amongst the equals and the spoken reputation travels faster. This is then imbibed in the fraternity and gets you more business through engagement, empowerment and fulfillment, feels **Gagan Kumar**, Director, STHI Group. He said, “I think we were able to provide the best services in vogue to our esteemed clients which outshined and paved way to be the best amongst equals. Going forward, we will ensure that the faith reposed in us is held in high esteem. India Travel Awards is a platform which is shared by the fraternity and one is awarded for work in designated space. It will be a good idea if a presentation is shared giving out USP of processes and procedures adopted to be the best in the category.”

► The award was given to **STHI Group**



## Best Green Resort

### MANGO MIST RESORT

“We have been a strong layer in the hospitality sector in South India. We do not compare our standards with other hotel groups but have set our own service standards which I believe is the reason for the recognition,” said **Mani Varma**, General Manager, Mango Mist. Varma feels that the award will be instrumental in promoting the property at the national and international level as the publicity garnered from the event will go a long way. “We look for standardisation and with this award, awareness about the property will increase in the market. This will also add value to the guest satisfaction,” added Varma.

► The award was given to **Mango Mist Resort** and, received by **Venugopal Reddy**, CMD; **Mani Varma**, General Manager and **Jayanthi**, Interior Designer



## Hospitality Partner

### CLARKS EXOTICA CONVENTION RESORT & SPA

**Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa** overlooks the mistiness of Nandi Hills and celebrates the spirit of the city of Bengaluru. Equipped with rooms ranging from Exotica Rooms, Club Exotica Rooms, Exotica 1BHK Rooms, Exotica 2BHK Rooms, Club Exotica Suites, Exotica Executive Suites, guests here are spoilt for choices. The property offers lavish restaurants, namely, Ambrosia, Illusion Bar and Buvette Coffee Shop, and also caters to the wellness quotient at its Seventh Heaven Wellness Spa.

► The award was given to **Clarks Exotica Convention Resort & SPA** and, received by **Rakesh Kumar**, Associate Director of Rooms and **Vidhyashri S Rao**, Marketing & PR Manager







# Nominations

## Now

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# INDIA TRAVEL AWARDS WEST 2018

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

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