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Incredible India 2.0 online soon

The Ministry of Tourism has released the beta version of the Incredible India 2.0 website, which is all set to be officially launched in two weeks, reveals **Meenakshi Sharma**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the IATO luncheon meeting in New Delhi.



Nisha Verma

Wait for website

The Incredible India website was announced on World Tourism Day on September 27, 2017, which also coincided with the National Tourism Awards. With more content being added to it, now it looks like the website will soon be launched for users. **Meenakshi Sharma**, said, "We are almost ready to launch the website. The beta version is ready and we are waiting for feedback. Very soon the final version will be out and we would like the users to experience it. The interface of the new website is not complex. Just like the digital calendar, one needs to download it and start using. The new website is extremely user friendly and will be compatible

with all devices. A mobile App will also be available for the same to allow people to get the information they need."

PRASAD Scheme

A lot has been going under the PRASAD scheme and Sharma gives an insight, saying, "Under the PRASAD scheme, the sites are selected in terms of footfall. Our focus at MOT is to create the amenities for tourists whether it is to provide information or other facilitation centres, which can even include an amphitheatre depending on the destination we are working on. Currently, there are 21 projects in 16 sites, out of which three are nearing completion. Amravati is soon getting completed. Even Patna Sahib is almost done, and last year during

the 351st birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, the facilities were utilised. A lot of work is also being done in Belur as well as Kedarnath," revealed Sharma.

Working with Railways

Referring to railways as the lifeline of India, Sharma

ple travel by trains. The MOT works with railways on luxury trains. Railways has halved the haulage charges, which will make luxury trains affordable. We have just come up with three glass-top coaches along with railways which have been proving successful—one is running between Vishakhap-

initiatives on which we are working together, there are others which railways is executing on its own, including mega development of railway stations," she shared.

Buddhist Tourism

India is the land of Buddha, and Sharma says that India needs to be able to take Buddha's teachings and life to people. "We do get a lot of Buddhist pilgrims, but there is a huge scope to work on this approach. We organise international Buddhist Conclave where we share information with other tour operators. As part of Swadesh Darshan scheme, the upcoming Buddhist Circuit will connect many destinations," Sharma shared. 



“The interface of the new website is not complex. Just like the digital calendar, one needs to download it and start using. A mobile App will also be available for the same to allow people to get the information they need”

said that railways has had a huge impact on tourism. "As far as domestic tourism is concerned, a large number of peo-

ple travel by trains. The MOT works with railways on luxury trains. Railways has halved the haulage charges, which will make luxury trains affordable. We have just come up with three glass-top coaches along with railways which have been proving successful—one is running between Vishakhap-

TAAI Convention returns to J&K

The 64th TAAI Convention is set to be hosted in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir from March 27-30, 2018, at SKICC. The state will be hosting TAAI convention for the eighth time with hopes to rekindle positive sentiments and confidence among travellers.



TT Bureau

The theme of this year's convention is Incredible Tourism—Integration, Inspiration, Innovation. **Sunil Kumar**, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) explains that

“At the last TAAI Convention in Srinagar, SKICC was inaugurated and now we will be hosting the convention at the same venue which has now been refurbished and upgraded”

this year, the association has picked a cause which it felt needed attention. "Jammu and Kashmir is an enchanting state

and there was a need for visibility for tourism specialists to promote the destination. At the last TAAI Convention in Srina-

gar, SKICC was inaugurated and now we will be hosting the convention at the same venue which has now been refurbished and upgraded," he says.

As of date, the registrations are sold out, informs Kumar. "We had promoted the convention as a limited edition one and it is heartening to see that we are already sold out. We are trying to

TAAI Conventions in Srinagar

Year	President
1955	AK Sen
1962	JN Guzder
1965	VM Kotak
1968	Inder Sharma
1972	LG Ramamurthi
1984	Cyrus Guzder
1988	Vinod Kothari

Contd. on page 13 ▶



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IATO to elect new team in April

Come April 28, the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) will elect its new team under the supervision of **Akshay Kumar**, Vice Chairman, FAITH, who will be the Returning Officer for the election.



TT Bureau

The recent luncheon meeting of IATO saw full attendance by members and representation from the Ministry of Tourism. **Meenakshi Sharma**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and **Ashima Mehrotra**, Director, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, addressed the members and responded to their queries. **Pronab Sarkar**, President, IATO, said, "The agenda of our meeting was to interact with Ministry of Tourism as our members were full of queries. The MOT is doing a fantastic job, and they have cooperated with us on many of our issues and even resolved them. The interactive session with the MOT was



Pronab Sarkar
President
IATO

quite satisfactory as stated by all our members."

Another highlight of the meeting was the announcement of IATO elections. Speaking on the same, Sarkar said, "We have just announced the IATO elections on April



Rajiv Mehra
Vice President
IATO

28, 2018, at The Ashok, New Delhi. The current team is completing its two-year term, and thereafter the election process will start in due course."

Adding to this, **Rajiv Mehra**, Vice President, IATO, said that **Akshay Kumar**, Vice

Chairman, FAITH, will be the Returning Officer for the election. The last date for filing nominations is March 21 (3 pm) and the last date to withdraw will be March 26 (3 pm).

Mehra also revealed that IATO is working on development of facilities for the monuments it has adopted. "IATO has taken up Ellora caves in Aurangabad and Group of Monuments Mahabalipuram under MOT's 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme. We will be looking after cleanliness, take care of the toilet facilities and also put signages there for tourists. Our president recently visited Ellora as well for a recce. Papers are currently being signed to this effect and I think by April 1, things should be clear," he informed.



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 VIEWPOINT

TAAI revisits Kashmir

After a gap of 30 long years, TAAI is all set to hold its convention in the much-coveted Kashmir valley. The last TAAI convention that happened in Srinagar was in 1988 and one can see a few glimpses of the same in the inside pages. As recounted by the legend of the travel industry — Krishan Kumar Amla, Chairman & Managing Director, Broadway Enterprises, who reminisces very fondly about the last TAAI Convention in Srinagar. The upcoming convention will be the 8th TAAI outing to the northernmost state of the country and the destination will also be witnessing an inbound convention after a long time. Kashmir has seen the visitor numbers dwindling since the late 1980s. While tourism numbers from the destination has picked up in the recent past, it still holds a lot of potential, but unrest also makes domestic as well as international tourists apprehensive about going there. Would the TAAI convention be able to break this barrier and finally bring tourists to the state? Here's wishing the team a great event and fruitful networking sessions to members!

Election time for IATO

While TAAI prepares for its convention, IATO is all set for its election next month. The association has announced the date and venue of its elections and has set the ball rolling for nominations. By the end of this month, we shall have a better idea about who all are contesting for the elections. The final verdict would come on April 28, when IATO will vote its next team to power. In fact, the 2016 election saw many previous presidents and players of IATO coming to the forefront. It also saw a lot of faction, which is typical of every election scenario. The current team has had to face a lot of ups and downs as well, and there have been many challenges with respect to government policies and taxation. GST, demonetisation and various other new laws were the hurdles that the current team had to overcome. While they sure seem to have succeeded in getting solutions for most of the things, the members, at the time of voting, will pass their opinion on how they felt the office bearers performed. Let's wish the team all the best and may the best team win!

How can webinars help you?

Todd Arthur, Vice President, Sabre Travel Network Asia Pacific, shares his expert view on how webinars can help companies gain traction in the competitive travel market.

We have been conducting webinars for its clients and partners for many years now. This platform is included to the media mix of virtually every campaign led by Sabre. Webinars are used to further engage with stakeholders and share information about new products, innovations and key industry topics.

enterprises can benefit from webinar sessions. Moreover, in a vast country like India, webinars are a strategic way to share information with peers at low cost. The key to executing a successful webinar is to provide relevant, timely and interesting content and ensure that it is generated with the collaboration of an

experienced partner, who will make it easy for participants to both register and attend the webinar.

Webinars are most successful when integrated with the marketing mix, rather than as standalone activations. Our webinars generate a solid turnout with attendance represent-

ing 25-30 per cent of those who initially register for the event. What is essential is that webinars drive engagement beyond traditional advertising channels. They should allow the client to directly engage with the product. Webinars are also an efficient way to generate useful data, which can later be used for e-merchandising purposes.

Webinars take place regularly throughout the year, and are based on the timing of various in-market campaigns. The feedback following webinars is varied and highly positive. The response from participants depends on the content that is being presented during webinars. As a general trend, webinars that discuss issues affecting the industry generate more reactions from participants. For example, webinars that discuss industry mandates generate phenomenal response. Agents, on the other hand, are generally interested in product-focused webinars that help explain how they can address specific challenges.

With the Indian market in full expansion, individuals and

Five to-dos for conducting webinars

- ❖ Run through the technology and content before the official presentation date to ensure a seamless experience for both the presenters and participants.
- ❖ Engage a third party to present during the webinar to increase the legitimacy of the content and avoid making the content solely sales driven.
- ❖ Collaborate with an experienced partner to execute the logistics of the webinar. Making it easy for participants to both register and assist to the webinar is an essential element to success.
- ❖ Be prepared to follow-up with participants after the webinar. Ensure that all the follow-up materials are ready to send immediately after the webinar has concluded. Use this opportunity as a starting point to drive the conversation further with participants.
- ❖ Develop dynamic subject matter and collaborate with expert presenters who will keep the content engaging, authentic, and deliver it in a natural tone.

Webinars are an effective tool to go beyond digital banners and traditional advertising methods, helping build relationships with industry players.

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

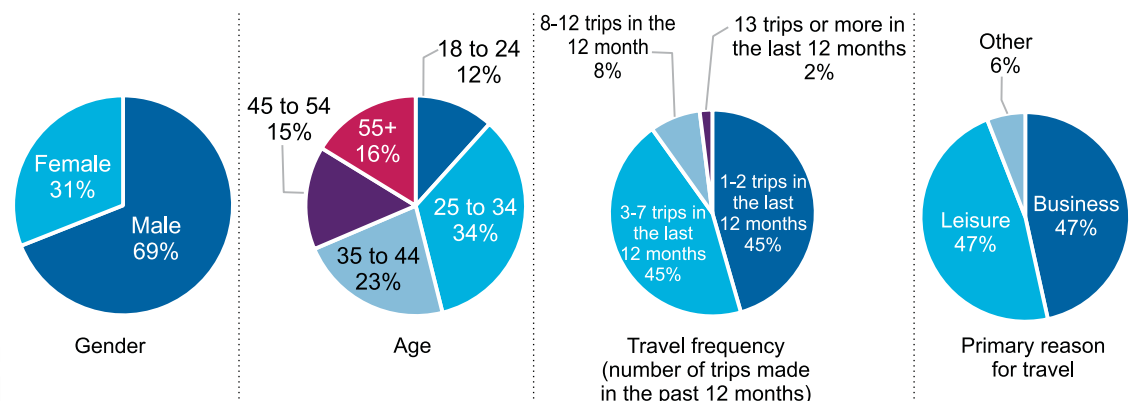


Todd Arthur
 Vice President, Sabre Travel Network Asia Pacific

What does an Indian traveller want?

It is very important for tourism stakeholders to know their clientele. Here's a demographic overview of the Indian traveller, their needs and demands.

Snapshot of Indian travellers



Source: Amadeus Journey of Me Insights, What Asia Pacific travellers want (India report)

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Impact 100 to rescue agents

UNIGLOBE Travel South Asia has launched Impact 100 programme to replenish losses incurred by travel agency partners within 100 days.



The Impact 100 programme by UNIGLOBE Travel South Asia is certainly needed for a market like India, which is currently facing the repercussions of GST as well commission cuts. **Amanda J Close**, Vice President, Global Operations & Regional Services, UNIGLOBE Travel International, says, "For the South Asia region, we came up with a programme to first analyse the impact of issues like GST on our members' businesses. Based on that, we have introduced Impact 100 to replace all the revenues that we lost within 100 days. This plan focuses on increasing our sales, maximising our revenues and reducing our expenses."

Ritika Modi, Regional President, UNIGLOBE Travel South Asia, says, "Last year was tough for most industries. The agencies have been stuck



Amanda J. Close
Vice President, Global Operations & Regional Services, UNIGLOBE Travel International

“This plan focuses on three simple things—increasing our sales, maximising our revenues and reducing our expenses”

due to the entrance of online travel companies and disruptive technologies in the market. We are here to help them survive and thrive in this environment. Most of the travel agencies have been hit by the GST issue, which is causing a lot of pandemonium in the Indian market. The Impact 100 programme will help our agencies deal with this impact and allow them to get their revenues back in 100

days.” Close adds that since they have global experience in dealing with such issues, it would not be difficult for them to aid their Indian members. “We’ve had experience over the years with UNIGLOBE of similar issues affecting our members globally. Around 23 years ago, in North America commissions

were reduced, and eventually went to zero. It was a situation where our members didn’t have any commissions coming in to pay the bills and we came up with a similar plan called 110-110 replacing 110 per cent of our revenues in 110 days,” she says. Modi, reveals, “Currently, we are 37 agencies around India

“Most travel agencies have been hit by the GST issue. Impact 100 will help our agencies deal with this and allow them to get their revenues back in 100 days”

with a turnover of `2000 crores, and we are looking at getting more members on board. This year we want to reach 50 in

number and we hope we can make it to 100 in two years, taking the turnover to around `5000 crores.”



Ritika Modi
Regional President
UNIGLOBE Travel South Asia

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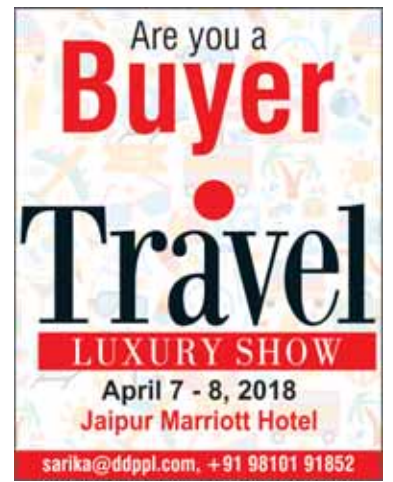
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A walk down memory lane

India Travel Award winner **Krishan Kumar Amla**, Chairman & Managing Director, Broadway Enterprises, reminisces the 1988 TAAI convention in the Valley by penning down some fond memories and anecdotes for **TRAVTALK**. TAAI is now all set to host its 64th convention in Srinagar.

Srinagar probably has the distinction of hosting the maximum number of TAAI annual conventions in the country. The last was held in the year 1988, the eighth TAAI convention in J&K. In Srinagar, I was a member on most host committees and headed a few.

The beauty and hospitality of Kashmir has always attracted tourists from everywhere—home and abroad.



Krishan Kumar Amla
India Travel Award winner and
Chairman & Managing Director,
Broadway Enterprises

“One of the highlights of the convention was the organisation of a river procession on the Jhelum, which went on to the old city and then to the lake where a regatta by school children was held. It turned out to be a great event for both visitors and locals”

However, every time there was a decline in tourism in Jammu & Kashmir, TAAI as well as Departments of Tourism, both national and state, rose to the occasion of rebuilding this destination, which justifies the many conventions held here.

The theme of 1988 TAAI Convention was 'Back to Paradise' and the objective was to further promote the Valley through the local population involving both stakeholders as well as non-stakeholders. One of the highlights of the convention was the organisation of a

river procession on the Jhelum, which went on to the old city and then to the lake where a regatta by school children was held. It turned out to be a great event for both visitors and locals.

The delegates were hosted by the local trade bodies in Gulmarg and Pahalgam on their visit. The traders were requested to give discounts to delegates on shopping, while the media reported and promoted various events that happened at the time. Banners were put up in Srinagar, Pahalgam and Gulmarg to welcome the delegates. Trade bodies such as Traders Union, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, Shikara Association, Transport Associations, schools and universities, etc were kept involved.

As a special attraction, Hotel Broadway presented a car in a draw for the TAAI members, and it was won by a delegate from Kolkata. When the winning delegate remarked, "How do I take it to Kolkata?" the then Chief Min-



JN Guzder, Chairman Emeritus, Air Freight Ltd. raising a toast at the 1988 TAAI convention

ister of Jammu and Kashmir arranged to have it airlifted to the city for him.

For the upcoming convention, it is requested from TAAI delegates to market Kashmir aggressively and innovatively to bring tourism back to health in Kashmir, which in turn will help the travel trade at large along with the people of Kashmir. 🇮🇳



KK Amla, Money Dumasia- wife of Behram Dumasia, Regional Director, North India, TCI along with wife of JN Guzder



The then J&K CM Farooq Abdullah, flanked by KK Amla and the then TAAI President Vinod Kothari handing over the keys to R. Dutt of Mini Pan Travels Kolkata, the lucky winner of Broadway Package Draw



Pooran Raina, Nazir Bakshi, MD, Shiraz Travels, A. Rauf- Manager, SITA enjoy a Wazwan meal with Usha Amla, wife of KK Amla



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Promising growth and innovation

The TAAI office bearers, **Sanjay Narula**, Vice President; **Jyoti Mayal**, Secretary General; and **Imtiaz Qureshi**, Treasurer, tell TRAVTALK what it took to put together the convention in Jammu and Kashmir and how the association is set to alter tourists' perception of Kashmir as a destination.

Convention and Theme

For years, we have been going overseas for our convention to bring foreign tourists to India and promote outbound destinations to tour operators. There has been a constant demand for a convention in India by the membership. After much deliberation over what would make the right impact, Kashmir seemed most appropriate. We attempt to strictly focus on Kashmir and its tourism.



Sanjay Narula
Vice President
TAAI

All our members are excited about the Srinagar convention. The J&K Government and Tourism Ministry are working closely with us and are truly laying out the red carpet for our members. Our apt logo emphasising on 'Integration Inspiration Innovation' for 2018 convention is self-explanatory. It will be a path to achieve, not only for our members but also for the people of Kashmir and the tourism industry.



Jyoti Mayal
Secretary General
TAAI

Since its inception, TAAI has always had a balanced approach on both inbound and outbound tourism. Our regions and chapters across the country have been constantly engaging themselves with their respective state tourism boards for promotion of tourism both on the state and national level. This convention is no different from our objective which is to bring more tourists to different parts of the country.



Imtiaz Qureshi
Treasurer
TAAI

Kashmir in focus

We have received an overwhelming number of registrations this year. SKICC, our venue for this convention, opened many years ago with a TAAI convention only. Hence, this is homecoming for us. The event would allow our members to engage with local partners in the state and build strong partnerships with tour operators and house boat owners, an offering unique to Kashmir.

Our domestic inter-state tourism is growing year-on-year more than 20 per cent and our youth with disposable income are travelling frequently. Hence, there is a huge opportunity of promoting domestic tourism. We are hopeful that this convention will build the bridges to promote tourism for both domestic and inbound, thereby nurturing growth, sustainability, peace and prosperity.

There is a lot of enthusiasm in our membership for visiting this paradise, and I believe this would help re-establish J&K as a must-visit tourist destination. Networking events are scheduled for our members with various airlines, hoteliers and trade partners. We expect this convention to be one of the finest in giving our membership value additions to enhance their knowledge, skills and contacts.

Achievements

We have been working closely with the government and airlines to resolve issues that frequently plague agents. The TAAI team has put in their heart and soul in working effectively as a collaboration.

As former chairperson of my region, I tried to promote knowledge by showcasing new avenues, ease of transacting business with airlines, embassies, government and other suppliers.

Increase in remuneration from airlines, giving our membership value-added services for training frontline staff, etc, were major concerns, the processes of which have been initiated already.

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4 FESTIVE ADELAIDE

South Australia was named Best Event State for the second year at the 2016 Australian Event Awards. In January, February & March, when nights are at their longest and balmiest, Adelaide enters party overdrive. In the space of a few months, Adelaide hosts the massive Adelaide Fringe Festival, Adelaide Festival of Arts, WOMAdelaide, Tour Down Under and Clipsal 500 Adelaide. It doesn't stop there. The Cabaret Festival and Guitar Festival warm up the very mild winter months, while OzAsia, the Adelaide Film Festival and Feast Festival kick-off in spring.



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Day 02: Adelaide: After breakfast at the hotel enjoy panoramic city tour. Visit the Gouger St Restaurant precinct and Adelaide Markets, the Adelaide Zoo, the Adelaide Oval, Haigh's Chocolate Factory, The National Wine Centre and much more. Overnight stay at the hotel (B)

Day 03: Adelaide - Barossa - Adelaide: After breakfast, enjoy Grand Barossa with Hahndorf tour. Just over an hour's drive from Adelaide brings you to a choice of over 80 cellar doors in the Barossa. Enjoy a two course lunch at Barossa Chateau, followed by a tour of the Hermann Thumm Collection in the

Chateau's private museum. Travel through the Adelaide Hills dotted with quaint villages to Hahndorf, Australia's oldest German settlement. Return to Adelaide via the delightful village of Bridgewater. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 04: Adelaide - McLaren Vale - Adelaide: After breakfast enjoy the McLaren Vale Winery Experience tour. Enjoy the scenic drive through the beautiful mid-south coast with its glistening views of the Gulf St Vincent and pristine beaches. Pass through rolling vineyards and visit local wineries for wine tasting. Best known for Shiraz, Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay as well as Spanish and Italian varieties such as Fiano, Vermentino, Tempranillo and Sangiovese. Travel back to Adelaide for overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 05: Adelaide - Kangaroo Island: After breakfast, depart Adelaide and enjoy a scenic trip through Fleurieu Peninsula to Cape Jervis where you will board the Sea link ferry for the 45 minute journey across Backstairs Passage to Kangaroo Island. On arrival in Penneshaw, join Scenic Kangaroo Island Trail tour including Remarkable Rocks, Seal Bay Conservation Park, Hanson Bay & Admiral Arch. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 06: Kangaroo Island - Adelaide: Breakfast at the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. You enjoy this unique island on your own till return journey to Adelaide. Overnight stay at the hotel (B)

Day 07: Adelaide: Breakfast at the hotel. Free time till transfer to airport for your flight to next destination. (B)

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Pushing for a level-playing field

The TAAI Managing Committee is leaving no stone unturned to not only do justice to the various roles they have been assigned under new positions, but also ensure that the Srinagar convention benefits both its members, travel agents in the state as well as the destination.

 Nisha Verma

“The convention theme confirms to travel fraternity of India and abroad that TAAI members are very much into domestic tourism and promotion. For the current term of 2017-19, I have been given the job of GDS and website development for our association. Since the time I have taken up this job, we decided to work on how fast we can register for the convention. We need to make our website user-friendly, offering all the information with respect to travel and tourism matters. I am happy to inform that we are developing a mobile app for our members to connect them instantly. GDS is still challenging. We are in touch with them to give some extra privilege to TAAI members and have also been sending mailers to cope with the day-to-day changes in the technology realm. We are building exclusive link and payment gateway for overseas members to register seamlessly to increase global membership.”



Anil Kumar
MC Member & Chairman—GDS-Website Allied Members Council, TAAI

“The convention at Srinagar will focus on Incredible Tourism to help promote domestic tourism, inbound, MiCE, specialty events as well as outbound. My key role is to bring better working relation and co-operation between our members and airlines. The travel industry is facing multi-faced challenges to survive and make profit. As TAAI, we strive to bring better working relations. This convention strives to promote and encourage domestic and inbound tourism. The members would have an opportunity to meet industry leaders and listen to their presentation on future trends. The India Travel Trade Expo (ITTE), a B2B buyer-seller exhibition would offer an opportunity to interact with travel trade delegates and suppliers to establish partnerships.”



Bhagwan Ramnani
MC Member & Chairman—Airlines Council, TAAI



Devaki Thiagarajan
MC Member & Chairman—Membership Development, TAAI

we conducted seminars on GST, attended to all queries raised by the members and came up with solutions for the same. Now, in my current role, I am responsible in bringing new members and strengthen TAAI's growth.”

“Jammu & Kashmir has been chosen as the destination for the convention to bring about awareness among travellers and our travel partners to promote it as a safer destination. This is my second tenure as a MC member at TAAI. I was the Chairperson of Taxation Council and Co-Chairperson for Legal matters. I represented TAAI before the Government of India and Ministry of Civil Aviation to discuss and recommend GST related issues of travel industry. In all regions and chapters,



Anoop B Kanuga
MC Member & Chairman—Tourism Council

“With technological advancements, tourism as an industry is growing at a fast pace. Also, with the government's various initiatives such as visa on arrival and e-visas for more countries, inbound tourism has got a tremendous fillip. Recognising this fast-growing industry, TAAI realises the benefits it can give members through revenues earned in foreign exchange besides indirect benefits of increased jobs, transportation and accommodation. My role is to establish a greater connect between our members and various tourism boards. TAAI's membership strength helps the tourism boards to reach secondary cities to educate members through workshops and training programmes on destination promotion. I am also working on various MoUs with NTOs and tourism boards.”

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It's tee-off time in Srinagar!

Rajan Sehgal, MC Member and Chairman—Public Relations & Allied Services, TAAI, spills the beans on what golf enthusiasts can expect during the TAAI Convention in Srinagar.



Offering a showcase of the golfing facilities in Srinagar, TAAI will be opening its convention with a press conference at The Royal Springs Golf Course on March 27, 2018. Sharing details of the same, Rajan Sehgal said, "The convention will be inaugurated with a press conference at the famed golf course. This will be followed by a golf tournament in which many corporates will be participating along with the delegates, travel trade as well as local golfers. In the evening at the inaugural gala dinner, we will be felicitating all the winners and golfers at a special awards ceremony."

The government of J&K is supporting this tournament. Sehgal said, "This golf tournament is being organised on special request by the Chief



Rajan Sehgal
MC Member and
Chairman—Public Relations &
Allied Services, TAAI

“This plan focuses on three simple things—increasing our sales, maximising our revenues and reducing our expenses”

Minister and Tourism Minister of J&K, with an aim to showcase golfing facilities in the state to the world. The state has two major golf courses. Srinagar is also popular for its Tulip Festival, which will be opening around the same time as the convention. Delegates will have a great time there with golf, skiing as well as abundant natural beauty.”

Talking about the convention going inbound, he said, "We chose Srinagar so that it gets positive attention from around the world. There has been a lot of negative publicity about the state, despite 30 flights landing in Srinagar with 4000 passengers everyday. We want to make

the destination tourism-friendly and project it as an iconic city for trade too. Over 500 delegates are expected to participate at the convention. We are inviting delegates from every part of India along with several travel writers who would write about the destination." 📌

J&K excited to welcome TAAI

▶ Contd. from page 3
accommodate more members in collaboration with the tourism department of the state. Also, this year every region of India is largely represented in the convention," he adds.

According to **Zahoor Qari**, Chairman, TAAI-J&K Chapter, and the Convention Chairman, the state is very excited to host the convention and hopeful that it will really boost the morale in promotion of tourism in the state. He says, "Since the last convention, tourism in the state

has been hit adversely and the footfalls reduced. The main reason for this decrease has been the negative publicity given to the state. However, J&K Tourism has been campaigning from state to state by way of organising roadshows with the support of all travel associations." He further points out that during the event, the state will showcase various properties which include hotels and houseboats, the unique selling product of J&K. "We have been supported by all stakeholders involved from the government to the private sec-

tor and with their support, we will be arranging complimentary pre and post tours to Dal Lake, Nigeen Lake, Gulmarg and Pahalgam," explains Qari. Kumar further adds that there are 100 rooms free of cost on offer for the members to experience the unique selling product of the state. TAAI will also conduct its MC Meeting on March 25-26 at WelcomHotel Pine-n-Peak, Pahalgam. The Convention will be flagged off with a TAAI Golf Tournament led by **Rajan Sehgal** at the Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar. 📌



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Focus on training and workshops

The regional chapters of TAAI are trying their best to uplift members through workshops and training programmes along with helping them face challenges, both local and IATA-related. Here's how...



“The TAAI Convention 2018 in Srinagar will offer a first-hand experience of the destination to members and allow them to promote tourism across segments like domestic, inbound, outbound and MiCE. We had to get PCI DSS compliance ruling as given by IATA which we successfully managed to acquire with support from TAAI. We are connecting with tourism boards to educate members on destinations and increase skill sets to diversify their product portfolio.”



Neeraj Malhotra
Chairman—Northern Region, TAAI

“We are working closely with the government, tourism boards, NTOs, DMCs and big tour consolidators/aggregators for awareness of our products. Workshops and roadshows are conducted at regular intervals in coordination with these organisations. As a result of this, international tourist arrivals in India and inbound tourism has been showing remarkable improvement in recent years which has led to a growth trend in FEEs. Due to lack of proper infrastructure, human resources, service levels, lack of adequate marketing and promotion, taxation, our tourism industry faces numerous challenges.”



K Shahul Hameed
Chairman
TAAI-Southern Region

“Our focus is to educate our members on how to go beyond ticketing and become travel consultants. We are trying to conduct training sessions at various destinations and plan educational trips within India and abroad. We are also encouraging our members to get themselves registered with India Tourism to and increase inbound business. With issues galore, we haven't yet gotten over GST and now we have PCI DSS on our platter. The New Gen ISS is being implemented by IATA soon, which will bring a lot more people into the business, thereby squeezing margins further.”



Sameer Karnani
Chairman—Western Region, TAAI



Rajesh Poddar
Secretary—Western Region, TAAI

“Our initiatives will include building relations between members and tourism boards, hotels and suppliers. We want to do more roadshows with tourism boards and educate members on other sources for revenue. I am happy to receive immense support from my team members. Shrinking revenue from ticketing and increasing costs for IATA agents like PCI DSS and NDS are major challenges of members. The biggest challenge I feel is online portals giving huge discounts on hotel bookings, which most of us aren't able to compete with.”



Vikas Sarawgi
Secretary—Eastern Region, TAAI

“We are planning to increase our membership extensively to strengthen the association. GST and NDC are the new challenges for the members and we are trying to educate them about the same. We also intend to develop tourism among our members on an all India basis to promote the North East states. The convention will be a great platform for members to exchange views on ways to promote Kashmir, and discuss issues and find solutions to the problems they are facing in day-to-day business.”



Gaurav Dogra
Secretary—Northern Region, TAAI

“The focus of the J&K convention is to remind members and the Indian travel trade of our foremost responsibility. The intent is to stand together and send a message that we will do everything possible to create a positive image to boost tourism in J&K. We are responsible in providing value to our members to allow them to promote tourism in a significant way. TAAI has been unfortunately branded as an association of air ticketing agents and it is important to change this perception. Such conventions refresh the destination and encourage the travel industry.”

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Great expectations from the Valley

Sanjay Kumar, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo, shares how the upcoming TAAI convention would boost business to Srinagar, and how IndiGo would play a major part in this growth story.

 TT Bureau

IndiGo is the partner airline for the upcoming TAAI Convention in Srinagar from March 27-30, 2018. Extending full support to the association, the airline is offering incredibly low rates to delegates attending the convention. **Sanjay Kumar**, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo, says, "It is a great pleasure for IndiGo to be partnering with TAAI for its convention. As part of the offering, we have given special prices for the delegates so that they not only enjoy the convention, but also the beauty of Srinagar. The ultimate objective is to showcase Srinagar to the entire travel fraternity, and we believe that IndiGo can be a partner in helping achieve the overall target of promoting tourism and connectivity in that market."

IndiGo also benefits with the convention going to Srinagar. "Currently, we oper-

With five flights a day to Srinagar on IndiGo, Delhi remains the biggest source market for the state. "As we expand our network and fleet, we have plans to increase this frequency to more than double. This is of course, subject to the slot and various other requirements in place," he elaborates.

Talking of their expansion plans, Kumar says, "Fleet

and network expansion is part of our ongoing activities in IndiGo.

We are currently operating a fleet of 155 aircraft, with more than 1000



flights a day, covering 50 destinations across the network, and in the next six months we are looking at adding more aircraft into the field. Also, that will result in more destinations and frequencies on the existing routes and the expansion will continue to happen." 




Sanjay Kumar
Chief Commercial Officer
IndiGo

“As the summer season is nearing, we have a lot of expectations from travellers across the country as well as abroad to travel to Srinagar”

ate about 11 flights a day into Srinagar, out of which five fly from Delhi and one each from Jammu, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Amritsar and Bengaluru. Our objective is to increase the connectivity into this market. As the summer season is approaching, we have a lot of expectations from the travelling public across the country into Srinagar. This will also help airlines like us to expand our operations," he explains.






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Renewed optimism about Srinagar

TAAI's State Chapter heads believe that taking the convention to Jammu & Kashmir is a bold move by the association, and with so many agents under one roof, tourism to the state shall surely boom. The state leaders share their opinions in showcasing the Valley in the right perspective.

TT Bureau

“We have had some very successful conventions in Dubai, Turkey, Abu Dhabi, etc, making it a grand show not only for trade partners but also for boosting tourism industries in India and partner countries. Srinagar has always been a dream destination for everyone. The members have been encouraged to participate in setting an example for the world to follow TAAI in terms of development of tourism. A successful event will attract the world and reinstate confidence in the destination.”



Manoj Sogani
Chairman
TAAI Rajasthan Chapter

“The convention at Srinagar shall surely be a head turner for all who have been longing to visit this beautiful state but apprehensions kept them back. J&K needs to be showcased in its right perspective. TAAI conventions have always been rewriting tourism, providing a wide-angle view to any city or country it is held at. Members look forward to the conventions where they pay nominal charges towards registrations and air fares and get an opportunity to meet the stalwarts of the trade and network under one roof, and get educated on the upcoming issues.”



Sunil B Satyawakta
Chairman
TAAI Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand Chapter

“It is after almost 30 years that the association is conducting its convention in Srinagar. This has been made possible through the rigorous efforts put in by Tourism Minister of Jammu & Kashmir and the TAAI—Jammu & Kashmir Chapter. My expectation from this year's convention is focused on tourism promotion in the state. After having gone through tough times, I believe this convention will build confidence among people to travel to the Valley. It is a good platform for local suppliers and tourism boards at the convention to interact with travel agents from across the world.”



Ashish Mittal
Chairman
TAAI Punjab Chapter



Anil Anand
Chairman
TAAI Chandigarh Chapter

“The TAAI Convention is back to Srinagar after 30 odd years. Srinagar has always been close to my heart and I have visited the Valley numerous times, but the beauty of the destination lies in its uniqueness in every visit. The TAAI convention aims to convey to the world that there is no turmoil in the valley and tourists should visit this state without any apprehensions. The event will be instrumental in boosting inbound tourism to the state and to India as a whole.”



Mukesh Patel
Chairman
TAAI South Gujarat Chapter

“With its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, the tourism sector in Jammu & Kashmir has much to offer. It also plays a key role for economic growth and diversification of the region. The 64th TAAI convention in Srinagar after 30 years intends to create a concrete base for tourism industry. This will help us in connecting with new partners and clients among visitors representing tourism agencies, tour operators and other industry professionals.”



Sita Antao
Chairman
TAAI Goa Chapter

“Three decades is a long time and at last an ideal choice. Having earned the moniker of ‘Switzerland of India’, Kashmir is popular with travellers since the Mughal times. Srinagar will give us an opportunity not only to enhance the state's tourism landscape and its economy, but also give us a chance to show our solidarity to the trade there. The convention is set to boost tourism into the state once again and I hope it gets more tourists in the coming season.”

Contd. on page 18 ▶

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San Francisco - Lake Tahoe - Las Vegas - Los Angeles - Hershey - Niagara Falls - Washington DC - New York

Departures: May: 05, 12, 26 | June: 16, 30 | July: 14 | August: 11

Tour code: IVI/S/1946 17 Nights / 18 Days

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Future of J&K post Convention

“This convention is a comprehensive programme providing networking in all aspects of tourism. The schedule is designed to provide value to our members. Besides networking, the most important benefit we are looking forward to is to showcase Kashmir as a fascinating and safe destination. Our colleagues in Srinagar have become invaluable through their hard work and willingness to make this convention a success. Very rightly, we call this convention ‘Incredible Tourism’. We are waiting to meet members from across India to work together and put this destination back on the tourism map of India— Welcome to Kashmir!”



Bahram Pashootanzadeh
Chairman
TAAI Pune Chapter

“This convention will provide a good exposure to the India market, especially to Kashmir. It will lead to an increase in inbound tourists to the destination and give more confidence to travellers visiting Kashmir. Holding a huge convention is always an eye-catcher and sends a positive message to the entire travel fraternity. Kashmir will get an opportunity to showcase its infrastructure, hospitality and culture. Not only would it educate our members about the destination, but also inform the end consumer that travelling to Kashmir is safe with enough tourism offerings for every kind of traveller.”



Devendra Shah
Chairman, TAAI Saurashtra & Kutch Chapter

“The Srinagar convention after 30 years can be equated to homecoming. We want to show the world that Kashmir is a very safe place and hope that travel agents will start selling more of the state to their clients. This move will be a win-win situation for both the trade as well as the state. It is the legacy of Kashmir that draws tourists from all over the world. This convention will increase awareness about the state, its facilities and other infrastructure available in the state. This is a great opportunity for the local agents to have a one-on-one conversation with the trade.”



Kishor Parate
Chairman
TAAI Nagpur Chapter



Paras Lakhia
Chairman
TAAI Gujarat Chapter

“What better platform than to have more than 600 travel industry stakeholders gather in India’s paradise—Kashmir! The upcoming convention shall surely create the buzz that Jammu & Kashmir tourism needs. More importantly, this show will convey a strong message to the world that Jammu & Kashmir is a safe destination for tourists. Also, a convention in India shall encourage greater participation from the industry. I hope the members from all parts of the country at-

tend the convention in big numbers and promote the state further to bring its magic back for tourists.”



Ross Masood Padiyath
Chairman
TAAI Kerala Chapter

“Excellent speakers, great debates, more learning, showcasing great products, entertainment, gourmet cuisine and fabulous locations are some of the highlights of each convention. After every TAAI convention abroad or in India, one finds a travel boom to the place. Tourism in the state of Kashmir will also benefit greatly as this convention will bring more than 500 travel professionals who are sellers to the state. Every agent is looking forward to the convention. All credits are extended to Jammu & Kashmir Tourism for bringing this event to Kashmir after a gap of 32 years.”



Amish Desai
Chairman
TAAI Karnataka Chapter

“TAAI Conventions have always been quality affairs and I don’t believe this year will be any different. It will be even better than the last couple of grand conventions, which TAAI has had in Bali and Abu Dhabi. J&K is set to get a tremendous amount of mileage as the top 400-500 travel agents from India will be attending the event along with international delegates. When agents visit a destination and experience it first-hand, it becomes much easier for them

to market the destination, thereby resulting in greater arrivals for the host state or country. The event in Kashmir will certainly help increase number of tourist arrivals over the next few years.”

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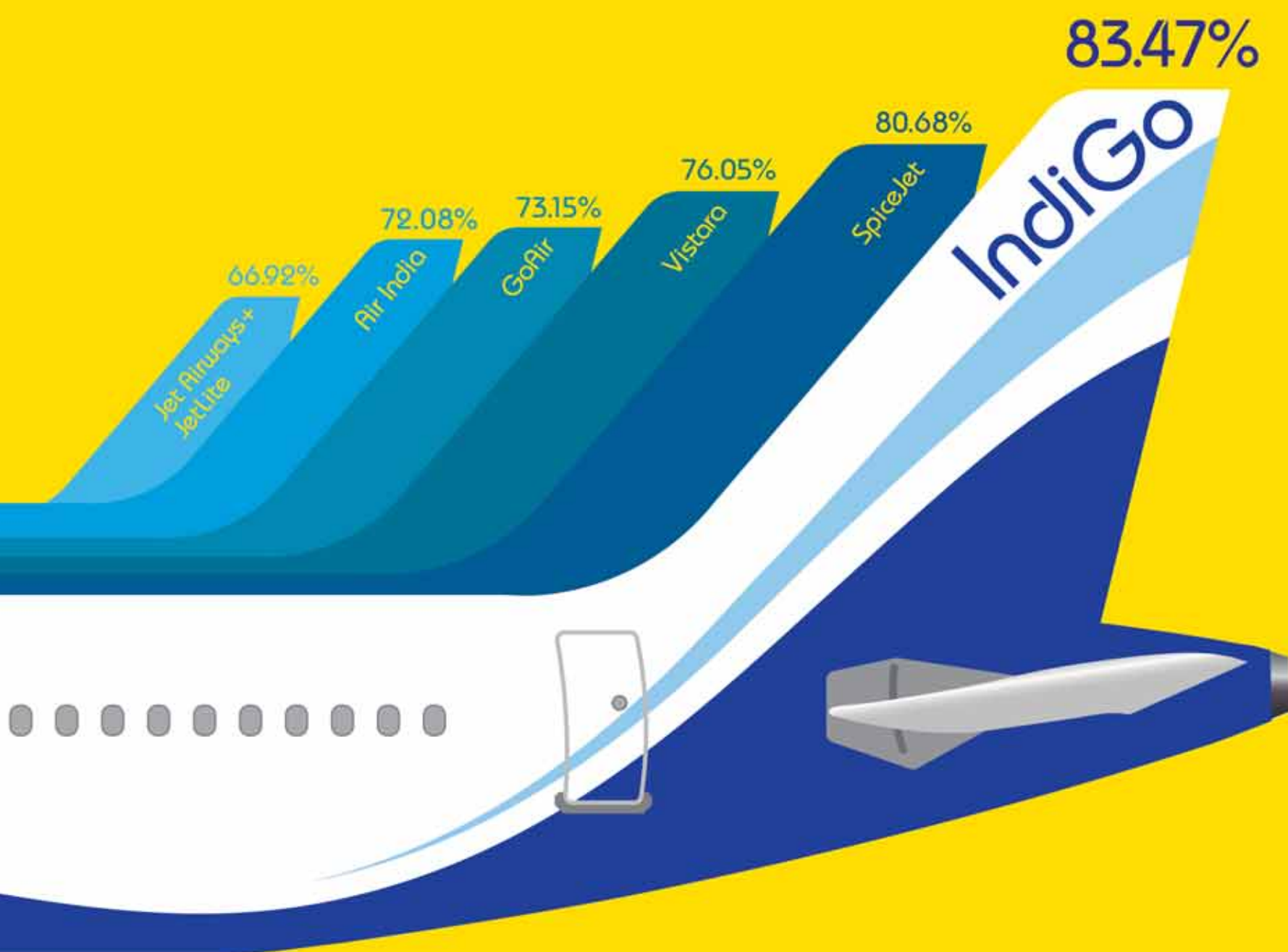
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Streamlining processes for agents

Agents can now work through a seamless process to deal with customer credit information through the new PCI DSS Certification Wizard Tool launched by Travelport, says **Sandeep Dwivedi**, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient.



Travelport has launched the new PCI DSS Certification Wizard Tool to streamline processes for agents. "The PCI DSS Certification has been launched to help all customers achieve PCI DSS certification before March 31, 2018 through a simple, low cost and streamlined process. This certification is necessary for IATA certified travel agencies to combat criminal activity that is critical when dealing with customer credit card information. From March 2018, any IATA agent who ac-

global travel industry bears annually," reveals Dwivedi.

Speaking on the aim behind launching this certification, he says, "To help facilitate travel businesses' continued compliance with the new PCI

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

Travelport has also tied up with SecurityMetrics. Dwivedi

says, "With this partnership, we have made a very complex process of certification, a simple, low cost and streamlined process. The PCI DSS Certification program provides customers with an online Wizard Tool to guide agents through the

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

When asked about why this certification would be advantageous for Travelport, Dwivedi reveals, "Combining consumer protection with customer-driven solutions is essential as it creates frictionless payment processes."



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

“This certification is necessary for IATA certified travel agencies to combat criminal activity that is critical when dealing with customer credit card information”

cepts card transactions against its own merchant agreement or issues Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP) card transactions is required to provide proof of PCI DSS compliance to IATA," says Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient.

The new certification is going to help the agencies in the long run. "The latest version of Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) is a more secure encryption protocol, Transport Layer Security (TLS) 1.2 or higher, designed to encounter fraud and hacking costing the

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Need for tailor-made experiences

With the tourism business going unwieldy in terms of 'real time earnings', representatives of the industry deliberate over creating specialised packages according to the requirements of clients.

 Inder Raj Ahluwalia



MP Bezbarua
Former Secretary &
Permanent Representative
(Hon), UNWTO

“One of the mega trends in the tourism industry today is ‘specialisation’ to meet the specific needs of discerning new-age travellers. The tourism industry, it was said, has become a market of one. However, it is not an ‘either’, ‘or’ situation. The huge segment of mass tourism still depends on conventional operators to service their demands. Ultimately, survival will depend on the quality of service and innovations of the service providers. That is the key.”



Subhash Goyal
Chairman
STIC Travel Group

“Segmentation of tourism clients is essential today. The Indian tourism industry is facing enormous challenges with the emergence of online travel agents. With customers now able to book their tickets and packages online, only those travel agents and tour operators will survive who adapt themselves to change and specialise in different aspects of tourism like adventure tourism, religious tourism, medical tourism, Meetings Incentives Conferences & Events (MICE), etc. This is the reason why we are seeing increasing segmentation in the tourism industry.”



Sarab Jit Singh
MD
Travellite India

“The internet has dramatically changed the travel industry’s work scenario. It has ensured that today’s travellers have quick access to all their travel-related information. This includes services earlier provided by agents and tour operators. This situation makes agents somewhat redundant, so to stay afloat they need to focus on clients’ special needs for all sorts of holidays. Today’s tourists seek more ‘experiences’ rather than just seeing monuments and other routine tourist attractions. So it’s important to segment them, identify their needs and provide quality inputs to cater to those needs.”

“Since today’s clients are well aware of what they want from their holidays, agents and tour operators should use this as their work-plan and act accordingly. They have to focus on clients individually and ensure they fulfil their individual needs. General work systems won’t serve the purpose in the current scenario. There’s a need to be specific in terms of services provided. The emphasis should be on providing exactly what clients want as per their taste, interest and budget. The industry has to focus on special client segments to have an edge over competition.”



Vijay Thakur
Past President, Indian
Association of Tour Operators

“Today’s competitive scenario makes it essential for agents and tour operators to focus on special client segments. While segmenting and segregating clients isn’t easy, it is essential. An organisation can then use its resources to the optimum level, both for generating business and profitability. The time has come when agents should seriously consider introducing ‘commitment deposits’ to test clients’ seriousness. The amounts could be adjusted against services provided. General ‘client-servicing’ is no longer going to yield optimal dividends.”



Cdr C P Sharma
Managing Director
Neptune Travco

“‘Nothing is constant except change’ and this is especially true of the travel industry which has been evolving for the last decade. The advent of the worldwide web, easy online access, shrinking boundaries, B2B specialists and dynamic pricing have all combined to give the industry clients a distinct edge in terms of information, pricing and quality. Agents who have adapted and focused on their strengths have progressed. One has to specialise in certain categories, destinations, segments and products, and have a robust online selling mechanism, as that’s the current trend.”



Punam Singh
Associate
Travel Show



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Equipping trade with online lessons

National Tourist Offices (NTOs) in India are on spree to educate travel trade about destinations using online training programmes. Here's a sneak peek into the viewpoints of country heads...



Nisha Verma



Vishal Bhatia
Country Manager—Tourism, India, VisitBritain

“Our online training programme ‘BritAgent’ was launched in India in 2011 and within a few years, we had over 500 registered BritAgents in India. Currently, we have just over 800 of them. Now, we’re targeting to cross 1000 in the next few months. We keep updating existing modules and introducing new ones in line with our product development and distribution strategy. The key to having a successful online destination training programme is to keep it dynamic.”



Ignacio Ducasse
Director & Tourism Counsellor, Tourism Office of Spain

“Our free e-learning Spain 360° Expert programme has recently been upgraded to a new platform. It allows travel trade professionals to get an in-depth analysis about Spain and its diversity. We have attained over 1260 registrations by September 2017 out of which 350 agents have successfully completed the course. Our platform allows agents to monitor their progress and refer to the lessons that have been completed.”



SanJeet
Tourism Attaché, Philippines Tourism Marketing Office India

“We have an online training programme called Philippines Specialist Programme for agents in India. It’s an 8 to 9 module programme, which gives an insight to the agents on destination’s food, places to see, night life, etc. I believe that both online training and traditional training approaches have their own advantages and their own set of target audience. We are entering into the digital age and everything is just a click away.”



Isra Stapanaseth
Director of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), New Delhi

“The Amazing Thailand Online Training Program 2017 conducted from January-April turned out to be a huge success. We received 1417 registrations and 208 travel agents were qualified with 80 per cent marks. Travel trade partners are well educated about Thailand. There were five online training modules comprising new products and destinations. These online programmes definitely help us reach to the front-liners.”

“Tourism New Zealand recently introduced the improved version of its 100% Pure New Zealand Specialist Programme. This programme aims at enhancing travel sellers’ knowledge of NZ while presenting an opportunity to increase their sales and referrals. As India is a priority market for us, it is important for us to constantly educate our Indian trade partners with product knowledge and new developments taking place in New Zealand.”



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

“Our SA Specialist Programme assists travel agents to become experts on South Africa. These programmes are essential to market the diverse offerings of South Africa and cater to all travel segments and requirements, because a thorough understanding of the destination and its product offering allows agents to bring well-tailored packages to the table. Online training is a useful tool as agents can browse and learn at their convenience.”




Alpa Jani
Acting Hub Head, MEISEA, South African Tourism

“Our Aussie Specialist Programme is meant to build our travel partners’ knowledge levels. Once an agent is familiar with the destination, they have the confidence to sell it. Based on the positive word of mouth that they ultimately get from their customers, the agents can keep promoting that destination. It’s all inter-related and hence, a lot of impetus is on training and education. We are constantly upgrading the programme.”




Nishant Kashikar
Country Manager Tourism Australia



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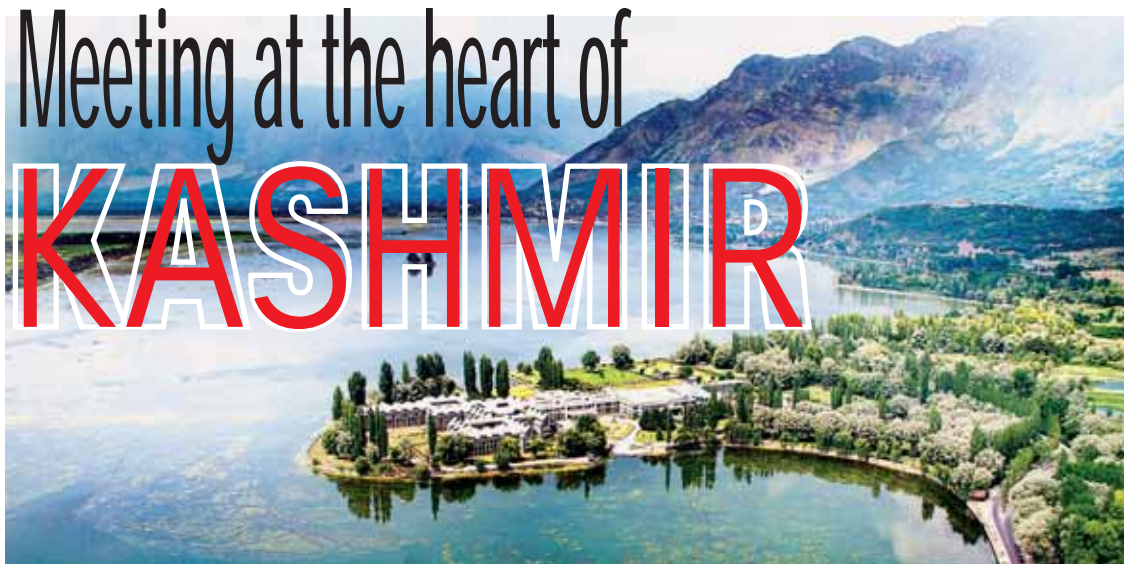
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Meeting at the heart of **KASHMIR**

Imagine holding your meetings and conferences in a picture perfect destination! Jammu and Kashmir helps you do exactly that. The Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar, one of the most modern convention facilities in the country, will play host to TAAI's 64th Annual Convention.

TT Bureau

Where the great mountains descend to stand vigil by a lake and the sun sets crimson on the Dal Lake, stands the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC). Located along the Boulevard that encircles the Dal Lake,

the SKICC is designed by renowned architect Joseph Stein, and brings to Srinagar all the facilities of a modern conference venue. It is within easy access from the Srinagar International Airport and the central city of Srinagar. Most of the tourist attractions are located at 5-7 minutes' drive from the convention centre.



“We have one of the best conference centres in Srinagar, and have extended conference facilities to Pahalgam and Gulmarg as well. The back lawns at the centre can accommodate

10,000-15,000 guests for various concerts and events. Every day we have at least one event at our convention centre. We have upgraded the facilities at SKICC and are upbeat to host the TAAI Convention there. For the entertainment of guests, a state-of-the-art musical fountain will be inaugurated, which will be a permanent feature at SKICC. Traditional Kashmiri cuisine will also be served to give a taste of local flavours to the delegates.”

Shahnawaz Shah
Manager-Marketing, SKICC

SKICC is equipped with infrastructure of international standards best suitable for contemporary requirements of MICE. This multifunctional venue has a variety of conference halls, exhibition spaces and lawns. The auditorium—Plenary Hall, is the main attraction, and has a climate-conditioned auditorium with a capacity of 700 delegates. It is braced with the latest audio-visual system, simultaneous interpretation system into five languages and video conferencing facility backed by broadband Wi-Fi. The meeting rooms and event spaces can accommodate large groups for all kinds of events. SKICC has had distinction of hosting some of the very important conferences and conventions and visits of senior government officials.

SKICC is not just a convention centre but a destination in itself, offering a variety of activities for leisure and pleasure of the delegates. Those visiting Srinagar for a conference can enjoy post-convention indulgence and visit destinations like Sonmarg, Gulmarg and Pahalgam, and enjoy a stay at the houseboats on the Dal Lake. The golf lovers can try their hands at the international standard 18-hole golf courses in the vicinity while adventure enthusiasts can enjoy a slew of activities adjacent to the conference centre. All major accommodation facilities are a stone's throw away from SKICC, allowing for easy access. ↴



TUTC gears up for Hampi

After a great response for Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa, The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC) is set for its Hampi debut, reveals **Dhun Cordo**, Co-founder, TUTC.



TT Bureau

Glamping as an option for travellers is on the rise, said **Dhun Cordo**. "In 2017, we witnessed a significant increase in demand for our



Dhun Cordo
Co-founder
TUTC

luxury camping tents in Thiksey, Diskit and Kohima. We also forayed into semi-permanent accommodation and expanded our luxury portfolio with the launch of a rebranded luxury lodge experience – Jaagir Lodge Dud-

hwa in Terai, Uttar Pradesh," she shared.

In terms of new developments, TUTC will now be heading to South India. "TUTC will soon be expanding its glamping services down south with the opening of TUTC Kishkinda Camp, Hampi, in Karnataka," she revealed.

“In 2017, we witnessed a significant increase in demand for our luxury glamping tents in Thiksey, Diskit and Kohima”

Detailing the USPs of TUTC Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa, she said, "It is a colonial structure built in the 1940s, deep within the forests leading to four different forests reserves, which are home to different species of animals, most of them endangered like tigers, one-horned rhinoceros, nearly extinct 12-horned swamp deer, Ganges river dolphins and fishing cats."

Saying that experience is the key, she added, "We aim to create an experience for travellers that blend tradition and luxury at Jaagir Lodge. We want to enable them to observe wildlife in its natural surroundings in Dudhwa, while educating them about conservationist Arjan Singh's commitment to conservation. Immersed in nature and wildlife, TUTC Jaagir Lodge

is an intimate farmstead housing four luxury rooms, three luxury suites and two stilted villas embedded in the natural world." Luxury camping as a concept is rapidly evolving in India, claimed Cordo. "There is an increase in bookings for our camps in Ladakh and Kohima both. As for luxury lodge experience, it is a hugely untapped segment," she said.

Innstant solutions for agents

Integrating with all segments of the industry, Innstant Group provides global travel solutions using its own proprietary technology.



TT Bureau

Operating in different parts of the world ranging from China, Brazil, Ireland to Australia, Innstant Group is quite diverse with its multi-lingual platform as it serves partners in 16 different languages. In a bid to expand business, the company has increased about 20,000 apartments in addition to 300,000 hotels. The company also has plans to launch online cruises which will start with 16 cruise companies.

"We face many difficulties in business, but we try to identify the requirements of the market and create solutions accordingly. Understanding the needs of customers, we always try to be client centric in our work," says **Darryl Ismail**, Director, Innstant Group.

Divided in four different groups, namely, wholesale group, travel technology di-



Darryl Ismail
Director
Innstant Group

vision, hotel connect, and a B2C website mainly operating in the US market, Innstant Group has diverse clients with the hotel industry widely covering four segments. For the Indian market, it provides the content with a single switch with 120 XMLs. These segments depend on the market but the business is mostly between leisure and corporate with tech companies being the strong partner. The company's USP is technology solutions and distribution.

"We are not obsessed with our competitors as every company has its strengths and we respect that. But we try to identify what is important for customers in terms of price and availability, service, technology and account management," he adds.

“We face many difficulties in business, but we try to identify the requirements of the market and create solutions accordingly”

In 2018, the company is trying to focus on strengthening partnership with customers in India, increasing brand awareness by attending events, roadshows, exhibitions, sales objectives, client acquisition and launching cruises online.

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1st Haj Expo in Hyderabad

India is set to host a first-of-its-kind—Indian Hajj and Umrah Expo (IHUE) from March 24-26, 2018, at the KLCC Convention, Shamshabad Hyderabad.

TT Bureau

As many as 38 leading Umrah companies and hoteliers of Saudi Arabia, and over 68 Indian companies will come together to showcase their products and services targeted towards this religious travel segment, informs **Mohd Aamir**, Branding Partner, Passage International. The expo is being organised by Sheikh Taqi

explains, "Passage International is the branding partner for the event, a company that prides itself on delivering the best hospitality services. The event will also be a great opportunity for companies looking for B2B opportunities and expanding their network."

According to Aamir, India is home to 172 million Muslims, making it the third larg-



Mohd Aamir
Branding Partner
Passage International

“Passage International is the branding partner for the event, a company that prides itself on delivering the best hospitality services. The event will also be a great opportunity for companies looking for B2B opportunities and expanding their network”

est Muslim populated country in the world, where most of the population practises their faith wholeheartedly. He feels that, Hajj and Umrah are one of the most important pillars of Islam which drive them to the holiest journey of their life. "Since ancient times, the

from Trip of Life with official sponsor Al Hussam Group. The other co-sponsors include Trip of life, Arabian Tours and Travels, Almamoniah, Anjum Hotels, Qasswa for Hajj and Umrah, Al Mukhtara Hotels, Compare Hajj and Umrah, Islamic Pilgrimages, etc. Aamir

pilgrims have been travelling to the holiest cities on foot, horses, ships and now do so by air. As time progresses and the world evolves in all spheres of human life, travelling for the holiest journey is also ever evolving. IHUE 2018 is in the interest of providing better and efficient journey to visitors of the holy land understands that providers of various services play an important role. Hence, we have pioneered this first, one-of-its-kind events in the country where all kinds of service providers will converge," he adds

Paradise has a new address

Nestled in a serene apple orchard in Srinagar, The Orchard Retreat & Spa is paradise reimagined, and is all set to open to the public on March 27.

TT Bureau

Located just 40 minutes away from Srinagar International Airport, overlooking the breath-taking Zabarwan Hills and Mount Mahadev, this stunning property offers design with luxury and exclusive comfort. Enjoy features such as private villas, butler service, swimming pool, massage, spa, jacuzzi and steam showers.

The Orchard Retreat & Spa, Srinagar is scheduled to open on March 27, 2018, and will be first of its kind in the valley to its admired guests. The resort is designed in an apple orchard enveloped in lush greenery. From a dedicated entry, guests will be greeted and their luggage will be delivered to their booked luxury villas by an express battery car, designed to create a pollution free environment. All 20 luxury, single and double bedroom villas are garden-facing and one-third will include private balconies.



Faheem Qureshi
General Manager
The Orchard Retreat & Spa

“We are confident that an ultra-luxury brand will create an attractive new hospitality experience in Srinagar”

The Orchard Retreat & Spa, Srinagar offers four food and beverage restaurants: An all-day dining and multi-cuisine restaurant 'Flavours', The Club Lounge, Poolside Nest and a café Little Bites.

Facilities at the hotel include The Orchard Spa, Fitness Centre, Steam, Sauna, Jacuzzi, indoor & outdoor games and a huge meeting space. Also spend the days lounging at the beautiful outdoor swimming pool.

“We are confident that an ultra-luxury brand will create an attractive new hospitality experience in Srinagar, appealing to the most discerning leisure travellers and those travel partners whose business will bring them to this sophisticated resort destination. I feel especially attached & delighted to have been granted this opportunity to become the General Manager of such a wonderful retreat,” says **Faheem Qureshi**, General Manager, The Orchard Retreat & Spa.

Orchard Luxury
Enjoy features like private villas, butler service, swimming pool, massage, spa, jacuzzi and steam showers

Italy gets going on the road again

ENIT, Italian State Tourist Board, celebrated the 17th year of its presence in India by hosting a roadshow titled 'Framing Italy Luxuriously' held across three cities of New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. **Salvatore Ianniello**, Representative, ENIT, highlighted the tourism board's activities in India in the last few years and discussed plans for 2018.



STHI highlights Tier-II potential

STHI Group's recent roadshow in Dehradun witnessed a good number of travel agents in attendance from across the region who gathered to learn about the showcased product and create future business prospects.

 Simranjeet Singh Arora



Chetan Ghai
Proprietor, Jewels Tours & Travels

“A huge number of travel agents showed great interest in this business opportunity. STHI is known for its business capability in B2B segment of the industry. I am eagerly looking forward to join such enthusiastic roadshows in the near future.”



Vikas Kumar
Director
Travel Paradise Online

“The event lights up the spirit of enthusiasm and keeps travel agents motivated. With the help of such roadshows, smaller travel agencies get to know about the DMC's and how they can be benefitted from the same. In addition to this, Tier-II cities have a lot of potential which will again serve benefit to DMCs in the longer run.”



Vineet Agrawal
Director
Three G Online Services

“This roadshow was a very fruitful one for our business. It was well organised and it gave us an opportunity to meet and greet our fellow colleagues from far and wide. The roadshow was a great success for the fraternity, as it gives immense knowledge about the services a B2B travel agency has to offer to us.”

“It's been a pleasure meeting travel agents based in Dehradun, STHI made a great attempt to gather agents from the industry and acknowledge the potential of the market here. The show was fantastic and the number of gathering was beyond my expectation. It was good to know that some of the agents have great potential even in the luxury segment.”



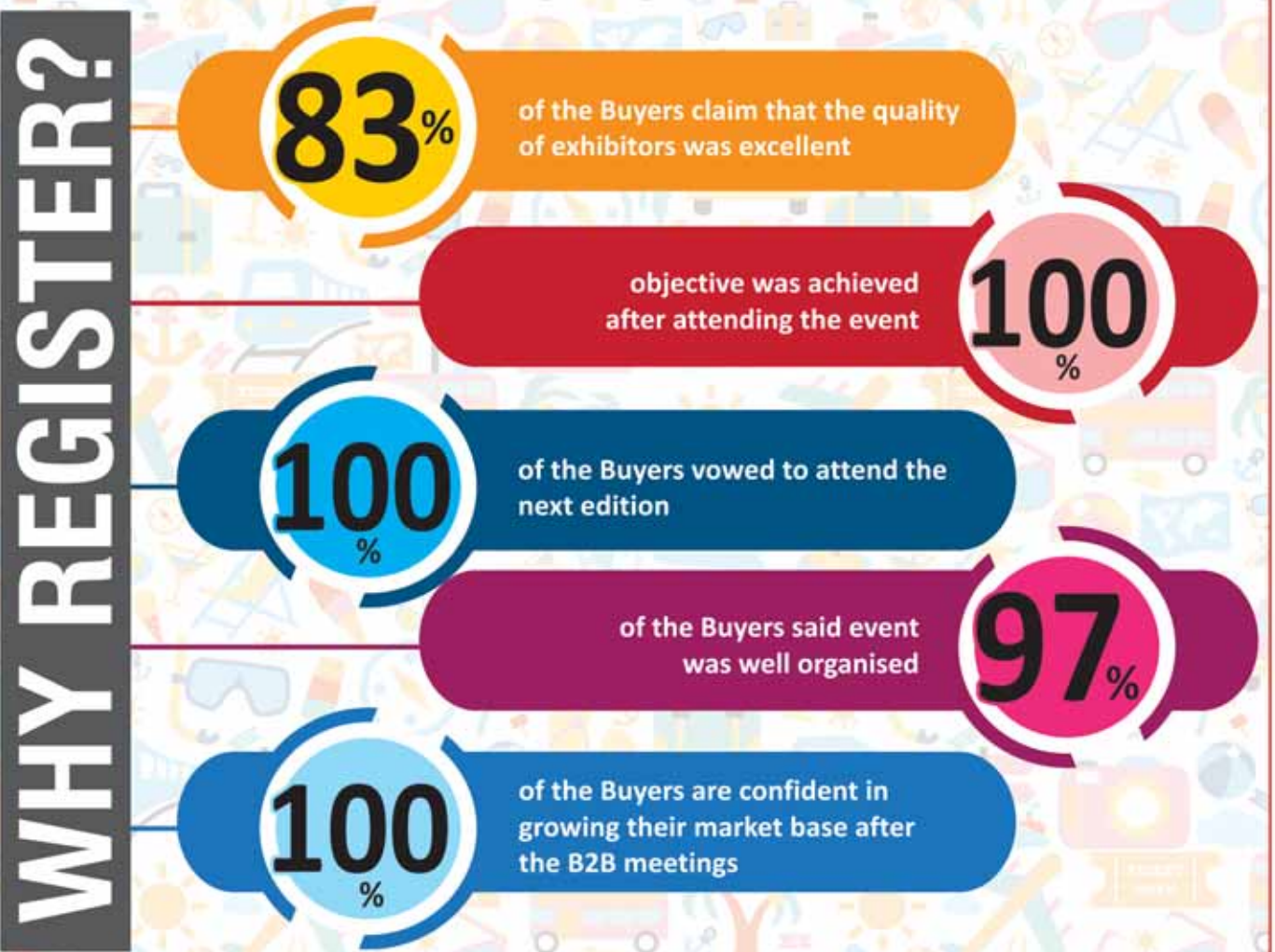
Sandeep Raghav
Complex Account Director
Marriott

“We got the chance to introduce ourselves to various people from the fraternity. The event was very informative and we got an opportunity to gain knowledge about a company along with the work they have been doing to promote tourism in Tier-II cities. It is a great opportunity for travel agents to redeem the hassle-free process of business with good incentives. Overall it was a good experience.”



Rishabh Kathuria
Visa Consultant, Fair Deal
Visa Services

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SriLankan salutes its Ironman

As part of its CSR activity, SriLankan Airlines steadfastly supported the sporting career of its employee and visually-impaired athlete **Khalid Oshman**.

TT Bureau

The entire staff of SriLankan Airlines salutes its colleague, **Khalid Oshman**, the visually-impaired athlete who took on the tremendous challenge of the Ironman 70.3 Triathlon World Championship Qualifying Race that was held in Colombo on February 25. It is a supreme test of endurance in three sports consisting of a 1.9 km swim, 90 km bike ride, and 21.1 km run.

Oshman joined SriLankan Airlines a year ago as a Customer Service Officer at the SriLankan Aviation College in Katunayake. Expressing his gratitude to Sri Lanka's national carrier for the support it has extending to him, he says, "I had applied for jobs at about 40 other companies, but most didn't want to hire a person who is blind, although I had all the qualifications. But SriLankan Airlines was marvellous – the interview panel treated me as any other person.



Komal Seth
Director
Outbound Connections

The Chairman, CEO and Head of Human Resources were especially supportive."

The Ironman 70.3 consists of a number of qualifying half-triathlons held across the globe, from which the best qualify for the final World Championships, to be held this year in Nelson Mandela Bay in South Africa. The '70.3' refers to the total distance in miles (113.0 km) covered in the race which typically takes up to 7 hours to complete.

Komal Seth, Director, Outbound Connections, PR Representation for SriLankan Airlines, says, "SriLankan is a very employee-centric airline and highly values its human resource. The airline has maintained its core values and ethics which have not been forgotten despite it being one of the fastest-growing airlines in Asia. Employees are proud of working with

“Employees are proud of working with the airline and carry the same happy attitude as that of the island nation”

the airline and carry the same happy attitude as that of the island nation. As a result, the attrition rate is very low.”

Globus: 90 and still strong

With an array of cruising choices on offer, the Globus family of brands is celebrating its 90 years of operation in the travel business.

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Today, the Globus family of brands is a global company reaching every corner of the world, yet remains family-owned and steeped in the values of its founder **Antonio Mantegazza**, when he set out across Lake Lugano to enlighten travellers by showing them the very best of the destinations they know so well.

The company is celebrating its 90 years of operation in the travel industry in 2018. "While the 90th anniversary is the milestone, Globus' nine decades of

“While the 90th anniversary is the milestone, Globus' nine decades of success stems from its ability to adapt and evolve its offering to the ever-changing market”

success stems from its ability to adapt and evolve its offering to the ever-changing market. Nowadays, Globus is all about

crafting more adventurous, tailored and engaging itineraries," says **Varesh Chopra**, Regional Director-South Asia and Middle East. "We want to celebrate this landmark anniversary with everyone and hopefully toast to another 90 years," he adds. Globus has revamped its corporate website to showcase its journey through the years.

In 1960, Cosmos, featuring affordable, value-priced European touring was introduced for the cost-conscious traveller. Cosmos offers coach vacations from just \$100 a day and Globus provides a richer vacation

experience with 4-star or higher category hotels and more including sightseeing. Cosmos has since become the world



Varesh Chopra
Regional Director-South Asia and Middle East, Globus

leader in escorted budget touring. The 2000s saw the launch of Avalon Waterways offering river cruising among European rivers and small-ship cruising to South America and Asia. Around the same time, in response to booming demand for more independent travel, Globus launched monograms. Monograms offers independent vacations allowing travellers to personalise their vacation experience without the hassles faced while travelling without a group.

Adding 'bling' to Bengaluru

The LaLit Ashok Bangalore is planning to undertake soft refurbishment to upgrade the property for its guests, and also add bling to the city's nightlife.

TT Bureau

In 2017, The LaLit Ashok Bangalore clocked excellent business, informs **Bhaskaran T Menon**, General Manager of the hotel. He points out that the hotel boasts of the largest convention facility in Bengaluru which works in the favour of business for the hotel along with a good contribution of the F&B segment towards its growth.

“Kitty KO is an amalgamation of the philosophy of the flagship and most awarded night club—Kitty Su and the award-winning food of OKO, the Pan Asian destination at The LaLit”



Bhaskaran T Menon
General Manager
LaLit Ashok Bangalore

Out of the total guests in 2017, 60 per cent were domestic travellers while the remaining 40 per cent were international guests. The largest source markets for inbound guests are the UK, Australia and the US.

The LaLit Ashok Bangalore is planning to undertake soft refurbishments from a property improvement perspective in 2018. Menon says, "We recently launched the most sought-after lounge and night club in Bangalore—Kitty KO. It is an

amalgamation of the philosophy of the flagship and most awarded night club—Kitty Su and the award-winning food of OKO, the Pan Asian destination at The LaLit Ashok Bangalore."

Discussing the further growth plans for the brand, Menon explains, "The vision of The LaLit as a brand as envisaged by our Executive Director for the year 2018 is 'Pure Love', where we celebrate inclusivity. We intend to become a gender neutral organisation. While this is not to be considered as a marketing opportunity, our future events and campaigns will revolve around these initiatives. With 13 hotels across the country, we are able to offer the travel trade with a wide array of destinations."

Guest List

➔ The largest source markets for inbound guests at LaLit Ashok Bangalore are the UK, Australia & the US

Iris Reps ventures into China

Iris Reps is set to boost its business and have started the year with individual projects for Henan Tourism, China in India.

TT Bureau

Representing some of the most esteemed hospitality and tourism brands in the country, Iris Reps is aiming for growth in the near future. **Alefiya Singh**, Director, Iris Reps, informs, "We would like to add new products in our existing portfolio and started the year with individual projects for Henan Tourism—China where we begin handling their media campaign and mall activation campaign, which Iris Reps is certainly excited about."

Starting from one product, to now representing 10 products, Singh says that Iris Reps has come a long way and this is what they greatly value. Iris Reps now wants to create awareness through one-on-one interaction as well as through social media to boost business. "For the products which are already known in the India market, we are planning on networking sessions and



Alefiya Singh
Director
Iris Reps

targeting consumers through social media campaigns. For products, which are new for India market we are focusing on awareness creation to the trade through personal visit, training sessions and Fam trips," shares Singh.

She adds that currently, they are focusing on servicing their existing partners and have not set any targets for the year, saying, "Iris Reps does not believe in limiting ourselves with targets.

We are keen on having new accounts on board."

Talking about how the industry has changed over the years, Singh says, "Travel industry has been very dynamic as always, but one thing I love about the India market is that even af-

“For products, which are new for India market we are focusing on awareness creation to the trade through personal visit, training sessions and Fam trips”

ter seeing so many downsides, the market always boomerangs with an upward trend. In short, there are always avenues to have your market share, you should just keep a sharp eye to position your product.”

Seychelles targets Tier-II cities

This year, Seychelles plans to replicate its last year's success of the three-city roadshow, apart from conducting workshops in Tier-II cities.



Seychelles Tourism Board is set to replicate the success of its 2017 roadshow that travelled to three cities in India. It was where it had introduced the new pre-fixed meetings format which saw the highest-ever participation of its private sector partners from Seychelles. Speaking about this is Sherin Francis, CEO, Seychelles Tourism Board, who says, "The roadshow allowed top agents to meet all partners in a quick pre-fixed meeting of 15 minutes each in a round-robin flow. This no-frills format

ism board expects a similar percentage growth.

New hotel chains

Interestingly, with growing interest in Seychelles as an offbeat destination, many new hotel chains have invested in the islands. French group Club Med took over Beachcomber Seychelles Sainte Anne Resort &

“ We plan to support tour operators with incentive-based trainings to encourage bigger numbers to Seychelles ”

Spa to upgrade it to a five-star property and giving it additional 208 rooms. Four Seasons brought into operations a second property in Desroches Island af-

ter being a highly desired brand in the main island of Mahe. Constance Lemuria and Coco De Mer and Black Parrot suites in Praslin recently renovated their

hotels to enhance their best features and room sizes.

The tourism is promoting Seychelles as a year-long tourist destination targeted across segments including families, adventure, celebrations, etc and not limited to honeymoons which are restricted to few months in a year. "We will continue to run

campaigns throughout the year to promote Seychelles as an ideal long-weekend destination, ideal for small weddings and celebrations and small MICE groups. We have seen positive results in terms of massive increase in tourist arrivals from India during non-honeymoon months as well, which is encouraging," Francis adds.



Sherin Francis
CEO
Seychelles Tourism Board

focused on serious business generation and ensured that every agent invited could spend quality time with every partner from Seychelles." This year will see the show travel to Kolkata, Pune and Bengaluru.

For 2018, the tourism board plans to conduct workshops with its key B2B partners in Raipur, Indore, Kochi, Coimbatore, Baroda, Surat and Rajkot. "We will also continue to meet and educate agents in major cities that will include Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune and Kolkata. We plan to support tour operators with incentive-based trainings to encourage bigger numbers to Seychelles," Francis adds. Seychelles Tourism Boards recently hosted an appreciation evening in Mumbai to acknowledge high performers from the travel trade in association with Air Seychelles.

India emerged as the seventh-largest source market for Seychelles with an arrival of 13,518 tourists from India in 2017 which indicated a 23 per cent growth compared to 2016. In 2018, the tour-

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With a new brand image, **Navjot Bhasin**, Director, JustClickKaro.com, is sure the company will create the right buzz in people's minds.

TT Bureau

Just Click Travels is now JustClickKaro.com and is all set to change the B2B marketplace, claims **Navjot Bhasin**, Director, JustClickKaro.com. "From July,



Navjot Bhasin
Director
JustClickKaro.com

we rebranded our company. Since we were diversified into many operations, we created a new brand different from our company name. From what we saw in the market, there was no one who was a one-stop travel

shop. After conducting a market survey, we thought of creating a platform which will be a mixture of remittances, travel, entertainment and everything related to the same. We want to become the Paytm of B2B industry."

Bhasin is confident that they will emerge as the single largest aggregator of B2B industry, a segment nobody is trying to venture into, he says. "Big OTAs have withdrawn commission for

“We are expanding into remittance, travel, and moving ahead to the entertainment consumers”

agents, so there is a vacuum in the market. Hence, we are trying to fill in the gaps in small towns and cities since everybody else is into specialisation. It's a future innovation I have in mind. We are expanding into remittance, travel, and moving ahead to the entertainment consumers. We plan to have 14-15 verticals on

our website." Talking about the branding, he stresses that the new name is catchy and has a higher retention factor with customers. "We received an overwhelming response for the name, and clients are interested in doing business with us. It's good for customers as well as social platforms," he shares.

Sharing some statistics, Bhasin says, "Last year, we did ₹284 crores, and closed 2017-

18 at ₹1500 crores. Next year, we are targeting roughly about ₹3600 crores and expanding in all the verticals, as our business is coming from everywhere. We had around 7000-8000 agents on board last year, and 25,000 this year. I have given a benchmark of one lakh agents to my team by March 2019." ↴

Guided tours with TravelBullz

Having launched its series departures to destinations in their portfolio, TravelBullz will now focus on driving traffic to Thailand, Hong Kong and Macau.

TT Bureau

In 2018, TravelBullz is going to revolutionise the way FIT business is sold in India by travel agents, believes **KD Singh**, Founder and President, TravelBullz. He says, "We have very recently launched our new series tours. While travel agents book SIC tours, these

“While travel agents book SIC tours, these series tours will have escorted tour departures throughout the trips”

series tours will have escorted tour departures and guided tours throughout the trips. We will stick to the basics in terms of marketing where we will aim at keeping our travel agents happy and their customers on ground satisfied. We believe that happy customers bring back more customers."

TravelBullz recorded a splendid year in business in

2017 where the company saw humungous growth in traffic to Thailand from India, points out Singh. He explains, "We achieved results beyond our target. We clocked over 75,000 passengers from India to Thailand and grew by 55 per cent in 2017 over the previous year. Though Thailand has been an evergreen market for



KD Singh
India Travel Award winner and
Founder and President, TravelBullz

Indian travellers, the destination too is surprised by the booming growth."

For the company, Tier-II cities displayed great potential for growth of outbound travel. Singh adds, "Some notable markets include Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Guwahati, Lucknow, Punjab, etc. We did face some challenges from the markets in Punjab and Kolkata for travel to Hong Kong

but otherwise the pan-Indian performance for Hong Kong was also very encouraging. The trouble is mostly related to flight connectivity but overall, the growth has been positive."

According to Singh, the FIT segment is doing well for the destinations represented by the company while series departures and MICE business has begun to pick up into Hong Kong, especially in the last quarter. ↴

Heritage sojourn in Jordan

History and religion are major attractions in Jordan for the India market, besides activities like adventure, eco-tourism, sports events and MiCE.

TT Bureau

Jordan attracts a lot of Indian travellers—families for leisure, and cultural trips, youth for adventure and sport activities, business and corporate for meetings and incentive travel, ecotourism is also a major attraction in Jordan. Honey-mooners love to visit Jordan to enjoy favourable diversified climates, distinguished hotels and state-of-the-art spa facilities, sport activities namely in Dead Sea and Aqaba.

"In June 2018, we are working to have a roadshow to cover major Indian cities so that we can interact with our counterparts on the ground and find the best product that will serve the Indian Market clientele. Hope by November 2018, we will be able to host a Fam trip to Jordan for a selection of major Indian travel agents. In the same time, we are lucky to find a good marketing partners in TravTalk India. Our presence in their publications will result in the best outcome for our endeavours," says



Ismail Al Haj
CEO
Jordan VIP Travel & Tourism

Ismail Al Haj, CEO, Jordan VIP Travel and Tourism.

VIP Travel & Tourism offer a wide range of service to clients, such as Classic Tours of Jordan (5 itineraries of 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 days are available to the Indian market with special prices and service), Eco Jordan is a seven-day tour of Jordan where tourists can experience ecological tourism in the country and visit three major reserve areas under the management of The Royal Society of the Conservation of Nature and Wadi

Rum "The Valley of the Moon." Another tour will take tourists to the biggest reserve area in Jordan, where prince Faisal Bin Hussain and T. E. Laurence were headquartered during the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans in World War I. For those who travel with distinction, it offers top royal suites in elite hotels of Jordan, chauffer-driven cars from Ghost, Phantom of Rolls Royce, to Bentleys, Mercedes and other distinctive cars and services.

"In my search for major tourism events in India, I came across TAAI's 64th Convention. Immediately, I contacted Sunil Kumar, President, TAAI, and he was so kind to encourage me to participate and extended all the assistance that I needed. I will be attending the convention to create awareness about what Jordan can offer to the India market, and request all TAAI members to discuss our cooperation to forge new partnerships. We love India to see Jordan," says Haj. ↴

Incredibly flexible US tours

Sans Incredible Vacations offers its agent partners something not many tour operators in the industry offer - flexible fixed departures to the US.

TT Bureau

Sans Incredible Vacations has designed multiple fixed departures ex-USA. **Nalin Kapadia**, Vice Chairman, Sans Incredible Vacations, says, "Our fixed departures for the US are immensely flexible allowing passengers to join in even for a part of the tour. Unlike other agencies, our passengers have the option of doing only the East Coast or the West Coast. They can join in from New York for the East Coast and Las Vegas for the West. Also, unlike other travel agents, our itineraries are full board and are inclusive of all inter-city land travel."

He adds that clients may avail of additional nights and sight-seeing either at the point of joining or departing. "All this at competitive rates. We also recommend to our agent partners that they advise their clients to remit the payment directly to us in the US thereby saving on GST. To ensure a good rate for remittance, we have tied up with Weizmann

Forex. The agent can advise us on the billing amount and we can issue a credit note for the difference to the agent as their commission. This is an option we offer to our partners who in turn are able to of-

“We also recommend to our agent partners that they advise their clients to remit the payment directly to us in the US thereby saving on GST”

fer competitively-priced tours to their customers," Kapadia adds. Agents may also sell these fixed departures as their own after adding cost of air tickets, visa fees, mediclaim, etc. These tours have guaranteed departures and will not be



Nalin Kapadia
Vice Chairman
Sans Incredible Vacations

cancelled. The company offers incentives for booking more than 10 or more clients on one departure. The company has also created educational programmes for children. These include space programmes at Kennedy Space Center near Orlando and Johnson Space Center near Houston, as well as the robotics educational programs in Toronto, Canada. "We like to include these activities because we want the children to have a wholesome experience in the US," Kapadia says. ↴

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The outbound star to shine bright

With the onset of the outbound tourism season in India, the tourism industry is gearing up for a positive year ahead. India Travel Award winners discuss the trends shaping the outbound travel segment.

Ankita Saxena

► Most Enterprising Business Couple—**Pankaj Nagpal & Sucheta Nagpal** With GST settled, outbound will be better in 2018

The outbound travel segment is expected to perform much better in 2018 than the previous year since the uncertainties regarding GST have now settled to a large extent and many more countries have relaxed the visa norms for Indian travellers, believes **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group. He says, "There are many new destinations now available for Indians to explore. The trends are positive so far and with major economic factors settling down, the travel industry will fare better this year. A major boost has been the CENVAT Credit allowed for B2B operators which will end the cascading effect of taxes, thereby making travel cheaper."

“A major boost has been the CENVAT Credit allowed for B2B operators which will end the cascading effect of taxes, thereby making travel cheaper.”



“Indians prefer to spend weekends overseas. Solo women travellers, senior citizens and women business travellers are the new segments that have emerged.”

► Best Representation Company—**Nijhawan Group** New segments of outbound travellers on the rise

With more than 20 million Indian nationals now living throughout the world, the volume of outbound travel is set to increase by about 25 per cent a year, informs **Priyanka Nijhawan**, Director—Representations, Nijhawan Group. She says, "Indians prefer to spend their extended weekends overseas. Short-haul direct international flights are seeing the biggest growth. Solo women travellers, senior citizens and women business travellers are the new segments that have emerged. Food is also becoming very important, especially for the high-end clients." She further adds that when travelling abroad, the spending power of Indians has been estimated to be four times that of the Chinese and Japanese.

► Best Educational Tour Operator—**My Travel Box** Regulation of travel agents necessary to grow tourism

The outbound tourism segment is expected to grow at more than 15 per cent, feels **Rishi Kapoor**, Director, My Travel Box. He says, "Good connectivity from Tier-II and Tier-III airports will give boost to outbound travel. Easy access of global inventory through technology has definitely made it easier for newer players to establish their set-ups." According to Kapoor, the associations of the industry are doing well in growing tourism but a major challenge remains to identify the credentials of agencies. "There is a need to have control over frauds. This brings a bad name to offline agents and becomes one of the reasons for consumers to move over to online travel agency," he adds.

“Frauds bring a bad name to offline agents and becomes one of the reasons for consumers to move over to online travel agency.”



“We are capitalising by educating our preferred partners with the requirements wherein we can springboard our strengths to gain business perspective.”

► Best destination management Company—**STHI Holidays India** Training partners to gain more business

STHI Holidays India is focusing on doubling its targets vis-a-vis last year from this outbound season, informs **Gagan Kumar**, Director, STHI Holidays India. He says, "Trends are changing and we are capitalising by educating our preferred partners with the requirements in more specific terms wherein we can springboard our strengths to gain business perspective." Kumar further points out that technological breakthroughs are presenting strong opportunities as well as fair share of challenges. He adds, "The demand shift is driven by generation and demographic pattern across the globe. Our destination showcase presentations at various events at domestic as well as international level have given lots of leads."

► Best Experiential Travel App—**Travelexic Technologies** Technology to pave way for travel

Technological advancements will define the years ahead for travel, believes **VS Chauhan**, Co-founder, Travelexic. He elaborates that technologies like Artificial Intelligence will bridge the gap between the choices of a destination to the booking stage by predicting data based the customer profile and past bookings. "Blockchain will bring more transparency in hotel bookings and will allow more benefits to be given to customers. Other emerging trends are the use of chatbots, virtual reality and augmented reality. We are working on enhancing the experience of customers during the journey and providing them with an enriching travel experience," says Chauhan.

“Blockchain will bring more transparency in hotel bookings and will allow more benefits to be given to customers.”



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EVENT TALK

MARCH 2018

Marriott International Sales Mission	Delhi	15
Hyatt Fair 2018	Delhi	15
Hyatt Fair 2018	Mumbai	16
Marriott International Sales Mission	Bengaluru	16
IHG Showcase	Mumbai	16
ITM	Goa	16-18
Routes Asia	Brisbane, Australia	18-20
Preferred Hotels 50 years celebration	Delhi	20
IT&CM & CTW	Shanghai, China	20-22
AccorHotels Showcase	Mumbai	21
FICCI Digital Travel Hospitality & Innovation Summit	Delhi	21-22
Dhaka Travel Mart	Dhaka, Bangladesh	22-24
AccorHotels Showcase	Delhi	23
Jharkhand Travel Mart	Jharkhand	23-25
TAAI Annual Convention	Srinagar, J&K	27-29
UITT	Kieve, Ukraine	28-30
RARE Showcase	Delhi	31

APRIL 2018

HICSA	Mumbai	4-5
AITF	Baka, Azerbaijan	5-7
Travel Luxury Show	Jaipur	7-8
Kailash Shankhala Memorial Lecture	Delhi	11
SITT	Novosibirsk, Russia	12-14
COTTM	Beijing, China	16-18
ILTM Africa	Cape Town, South Africa	15-17
Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)	Adelaide, Australia	15-19
Digital Travel Summit	Singapore	17-19
WTTC Global Summit	Buenos Aires, Argentina	18-19
KITF	Almaty, Kazakhstan	18-20
ILTM Arabia	Dubai	22-23
Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB)	Jaipur	22-24
Arabian Travel Mart	Dubai	22-25
Amazing Thailand Wedding Roadshow	Mumbai	27
IATO Election	Delhi	28

MAY 2018

Annual Meetings & Events Industry Conference	Adelaide, Australia	6-8
Germany Travel Mart (GTM)	Dresden, Germany	6-8
TRENZ	Dunedin, NZ	7-10
INDABA	Durban South Africa	8-10
ILTM Latin America	Sao Paulo, Brazil	8-11
South India Travel Awards	Bengaluru	9
IMEX	Frankfurt, Germany	15-17
ITB China	Shanghai, China	16-18
PATA Annual Summit 2018	Gangneung, Korea	17-20
ILTM Asia Pacific	Singapore	21-24

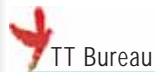
JUNE 2018

IATA AGM 2018	Sydney, Australia	3-5
BITE	Beijing, China	15-17
Telangana Tourism Conclave-2018	Hyderabad	28-30

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

Bhopal to host Adventure NEXT

In a joint initiative taken by ATOAI and Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Adventure NEXT will be held in Bhopal from December 10-12, 2018.



Adventure NEXT is going to be a gathering of international and Indian travel business professionals, and government officials interested in the domain of adventure travel, informs **Shannon Stowell**, Chief Executive Officer, Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA). He believes that India has very high potential for growth of adventure travel business. Stowell points out, "India has all the characteristics that we are looking for in a perfect destination for adventure travel with deep nature assets clubbed with cultural heritage and operators who offer physical activities. Thus, clearly the potential for growth of adven-



Hari Ranjan Rao
Principle Secretary Tourism
Government of Madhya Pradesh

ture travel is very high in India."

Madhya Pradesh is the host state for the event. Hari Ranjan Rao, Principle Secretary Tourism, Government of Madhya Pradesh, opines

"This is ATTA's first event to be hosted in Asia, and Madhya Pradesh is honoured to have the opportunity to host this event in India in Dec"

that ATTA has been a front running association which hosts spectacular events and brings together the experts in the adventure tourism space worldwide. He says, "Adventure NEXT is one of the most important events of ATTA. This is the association's first event

to be hosted in Asia, and Madhya Pradesh is honoured to have the opportunity to be the host for this event in India in December. We will showcase various adventure tourism opportunities in the state and also conduct pre and post familiarisation trips to various destinations in the state."

Swadesh Kumar, President, Adventure Tour Operators Associations of India, adds, "We wanted to bring the ATTA Annual Summit to India but were advised to first host a smaller event like Adventure NEXT. We are very happy that ATTA is finally coming to India for us to help showcase numerous adventure activities that can be done in India."

A field day for cricket-loving travel agents



Leading travel trade organisations got together to organise Tourism Cricket Premier League 2018 powered by Akquasun Group on February 16-17 at Sports Complex, Aes Ground, University area in Ahmedabad. TBO Group, Nijhawan Group, Ark Travels, Dream Cruises, Aadesh Travels, Europa D'Tours along with leading travel trade associations wholeheartedly took part in the event. A total of 112 players participated among which Neo Earth Travels (Neo Ninja's) emerged as clear winners.

Form - IV

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper TravTalk to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

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I, SanJeet, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date : 01/03/2018

Sd/
SanJeet
Signature of the Publisher

HRAWI to host 18th regional convention in Sri Lanka

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI) has announced plans of hosting its 18th Regional Convention in Colombo, Sri Lanka. HRAWI, for the first time ever, is going to host the Regional Convention overseas. Scheduled to take place from June 27-30, 2018, the convention will integrate business sessions on specially curated topics for

hospitality professionals with evening gala over cocktails and dinner. With over 300 participants expected to gather at one place, the convention will offer business networking opportunities for industry players. As an added attraction, HRAWI will also organise post-convention tours for delegates to unwind and relax in the paradise beach destination of Sri Lanka.



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Location - Delhi/NCR & Mumbai
Experience - 3 to 7 years

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Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport

Mumbai

Holiday Inn Mumbai International Airport has appointed **Mohammed Shoeb** as General Manager. With over 28 years of experience in hotel operations, marketing and guest relations' management, Shoeb is proficient in devising marketing strategies to accelerate business growth and has been successful in achieving increase in turnover, occupancy and RevPar. Prior to this, he was in the role of a Hotel Opening specialist, where he also spearheaded the management of four upscale hotels as General Manager between 2005 and 2015, including two Novotel hotels in South India.



Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi

Pune

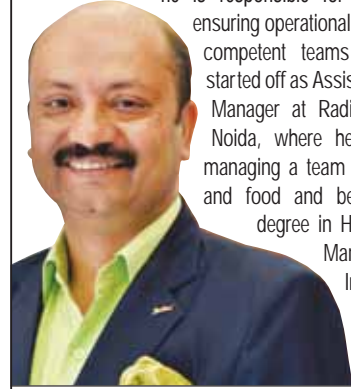
Appointed as the General Manager of Radisson Blu Pune Hinjawadi, **Pankaj Saxena** will be accountable for all aspects of the hotel including operations. Saxena will develop and implement business strategies for the hotel which are aligned with Carlson Hotel and the hotel owner's overall mission, vision, values and strategies. He will work with the Executive Committee to continually improve hotel operations by evaluating guest services provided. With 20 years of hospitality experience, he last held the position of General Manager at Country Inn & Suites by Carlson, Mysore.



Radisson Jodhpur

Jodhpur

Radisson Jodhpur designates **Subhashish Gupta** as General Manager. With 29 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he is responsible for managing profitability, ensuring operational excellence and building competent teams at the hotel. Gupta started off as Assistant Food and Beverage Manager at Radisson Blu MBD Hotel, Noida, where he was responsible for managing a team for banquet operations and food and beverage. Gupta has a degree in Hospitality and Financial Management from the Institute of Business Management and Engineering, Delhi.



Sarovar Hotels

New Delhi

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts designates **Ankush Sharma** as General Manager of Aditya Park Hyderabad. Sharma brings with him a diverse experience of over 16 years in the sphere of hotel operations, sales and marketing, project management and revenue management. In his last international assignment, Sharma spearheaded the pre-opening of Ramee Rose in Bahrain which had been acclaimed for customer standards and procedural benchmarks.



IHCL

Mumbai

Sanjeev Pahwa joins Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) as Vice President—Development, in the Real Estate and Development function. Pahwa joins IHCL from the Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group (now Radisson Hotel Group). He brings with him over three decades of professional experience with expertise in business development, strategic planning & execution and global sales & marketing. He will help in building a robust pipeline of hotels. Pahwa is a post-graduate diploma holder from the Oberoi School of Hotel Management.



Neeraj Joshi has been appointed as Director of Sales at Radisson Jodhpur, Residency Road. With more than 12 years of experience in the hospitality industry, he is responsible for maintaining sales volume, product mix, and selling price by keeping current with supply and demand, changing trends, economic indicators, and competitors for the hotel, ensuring excellence, improving financial acumen and building competent teams to manage the hotels further. Joshi has worked in aviation, domestic hotel groups and international hotel chains such as Taj, Jaypee Hotels and Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group.



Lords Inn, Somnath

Mumbai

Lords Inn, Somnath has appointed **Amit Kumar Sinha** as its Operations Manager. Sinha's key strengths are setting up and maintaining brand standards. He will be responsible for bettering the guest response and recognition processes at the hotel. Prior to joining Lords Hotels & Resorts, Sinha served as General Manager of Hotel Amit Park International in Bhilai. He has previously worked at Lords Plaza, Surat among other known hospitality brands and specialises in Front Office & General Operations. With a Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Sinha has more than 19 years of industry experience.



TravelClick

Bengaluru

Debanjan Kundu has been appointed as Director of Sales—India for TravelClick. He brings with him a cumulative experience of more than 15 years in hotel sales and marketing. In his last role as the Director of Sales & Marketing of The Ritz-Carlton, Bengaluru, Kundu successfully drove revenue of the luxury brand's first and only hotel in the Indian subcontinent which he had joined from Sheraton Grand, Bangalore. He has also worked in different capacities with Westin Hyderabad and The Oberoi Grand.



Grand Hyatt Mumbai

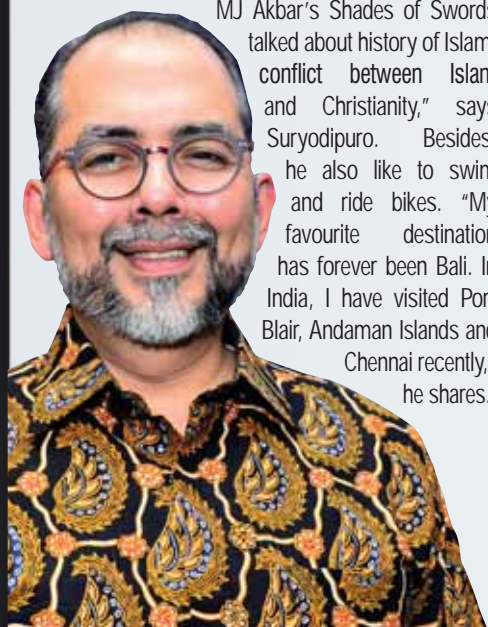
Mumbai

Shalabh Verma joins Grand Hyatt Mumbai as the Director of Sales and Marketing with over 18 years of experience across varied brands like Grand Group of Hotels, Leela Hotels Palaces and Resorts and Fariyas Group of Hotels. Verma's speciality is his unique teambuilding and inclusive management style. Prior to this, he was Director of Sales & Marketing at Park Hyatt Chennai. His Hyatt journey began in 2008 as Director of Sales at Park Hyatt Goa Resorts & Spa, followed by Director of Sales and Marketing at the Hyatt Regency Kolkata.



TALKing People

Sidharto R Suryodipuro, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia likes to read during leisure time, a hobby which he inculcated at a very young age. "My favourite book is War and Peace by Tolstoy. My recent read of MJ Akbar's Shades of Swords talked about history of Islam, conflict between Islam and Christianity," says Suryodipuro. Besides, he also like to swim and ride bikes. "My favourite destination has forever been Bali. In India, I have visited Port Blair, Andaman Islands and Chennai recently," he shares.



Dilpreet Bindra, General Manager, JW Marriott Chandigarh, believes in being humble and helpful. "If you are a traveller and an explorer at heart, all your travels are special for you because each trip gives you an opportunity to dig more into life," he says. Speaking about his favourite travel memories, "The entire journey from New Delhi to London that spanned 55 days covering 18 countries, is a priceless memory which I will cherish all my life," Bindra reminiscences.



Milind Bhide, Founder, Countryside Adventure Holidays, travels to get an insight into the world outside. "The mountains are my inspiration. They remind us of how insignificant we are in the whole scheme of things. I think it is a very humbling experience," he says. His favourite memory is of trekking through Kalindi Khal – a high pass in the Garhwal Himalayas in the northern part of Uttarakhand connecting the holy shrines of Gangotri and Badrinath. He has also journeyed to the white continent Antarctica in 2016.





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Shangri-La to double portfolio

Greg Ward, Vice President Sales—Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts with the responsibility for Europe, Middle East and India market, shares the upswing in the hotel's performance in the past year compared to 2016 and its growth in the MICE segment in the Asia Pacific region and Sri Lanka.



Kanchan Nath

Q What is your surmise of the Indian market?

I think the Indian market has tremendous potential. We have two hotels here - Shangri-La's Eros Hotel, New Delhi and Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru. With a recent opening in Colombo and Hambantota, India is our number one market for Sri Lanka. We are investing heavily in relation to resorts and

engaging with customers on a more regular basis.

We are looking at wherever the opportunities present themselves, in relation to metro cities and primary cities whether it's a management or potential investment opportunity. We have multiple brands to cater to multiple areas - Shangri-La Resorts, Kerry Hotels and Hotel Jen. We also have a strong partnership here with Taj Hotels in relation to our loyalty programme. This is helping us gain more brand awareness in the Indian market.

Our objective now is to double our portfolio. We have always been lucky in all the major gateway cities in Europe - London, Paris and Istanbul. We continue to expand in China, the Asia Pacific region, and down to Australia too.

Q How has the year 2017 fared for you? What are the plans for 2018?

The previous year was fairly good as some hotels performed better than others. Some challenges cropped up due to various economic issues. Collectively in terms of occupancies, we are up to about 75-78 per cent. Delhi has been fantastic; the Food and Beverage operation is doing immensely well. Essentially, Shangri-La Delhi is a brand-new product in many aspects. We have the largest rooms inventory in Bengaluru. The F&B offering in Bengaluru is also great. Thinking out-of-the-box on how we can really exceed customers' expectations is our agenda for the year.

Q How has been the MICE market for you?

We have seen a tremendous upswing in MICE business in the Asia Pacific region and Sri Lanka. If you look at Shangri-La Singapore, we started from the MICE capability there. For the MICE market, we have a programme called the Events Collection,

we move forward, we are going to see how we can refine that more so. The trade to us is extremely important as a company. We are creating a balance in terms of the channels that are already out there. We work very closely with the airlines and tourism boards.

The destination wedding market is also close to our

market. We have also recently launched our Shangri-La App to reach out directly to the consumers.

Q What about Airbnb and the shared economy?

People consider Airbnbs as disruptors, but I think, they are helping the industry to evolve. It's not a revolution but an evolution, thereby allowing us all to look at our

us as many hotel groups have existed in the static world for a very long time. We are now evolving more so to a dynamic platform, but we realise that it cannot be done overnight. That will be a long-term strategy, allowing us to work more closely with our customers, give more parity and control in relation to our pricing in the market place, and allow us to be a little more



heart within the MICE space. We have identified with the hotels what the destination weddings are looking for.

distribution platforms and notice the way we operate. There is still space in this market for Airbnbs of the world and the sharing economy. From the hotel point of view, we focus more on high-end areas. Currently, we are aware of them and developing our strategy to actually work with them. From a distribution point of view, we need to look closely at how we can get closer to build that long term relationship with our customer. The hospitality industry is, eventually, relationship driven.

Q What is new in terms of technology?

The dynamic side of the business is very important to

transparent. That's a key focus for us in 2018.

For the Indian market there is tremendous choice out there. We have entered the market with a great deal of commitment as well as investment. The leisure market we are breaking it down, so we work with the high net worth individuals (HNIs), traditional tour operators and travel agents. In the corporate side likewise, we have global relationships across the world with a presence in India. Looking at the outbound business from India, we are looking to support that though our existing destinations. 🇮🇳

“ Our objective now is to double our portfolio. We have always been lucky in all the major gateway cities in Europe - London, Paris and Istanbul. We continue to expand in China, the Asia Pacific region, and down to Australia too ”

dedicated to the travel trade to encourage them to come and work with us. We recognise the relationship and work with a commissionable model. As

We also have drilled down the details of increased 'safe capacity' in the room, steam irons and ways to engage with customers from the wedding



Greg Ward
Vice President Sales—
Shangri-La Hotels
and Resorts




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Creating the Buzz in the Travel Industry

- Adventure Sports Expo Asia 2018 marks sustainable route to adventure 3
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New shades, new experiences

‘Open to the New Shades’ is the latest campaign launched by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), offering discerning travellers new destinations and activities to explore in the country.



TT Bureau

With 18 per cent growth in the tourism industry, India stands sixth compared to other countries in terms of tourist arrivals in Thailand. **Santi Chudintra**, Deputy Governor for International Marketing-Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand, talked about the growth of Thailand tourism.

‘Hidden Gems,’ one of the many campaigns of TAT, encourages visitors to discover new experiences in emerging destinations around the Kingdom of Thailand. The new campaign ‘Open to the New Shades’ showcases new destinations and activities to explore in Thailand for an amazing experience.

“Thailand is one of the most favourite destinations for Indian weddings. More than 400 couples visited Thailand in 2017 for weddings. Not just that, we have seen a surge in family gatherings, celebrations, birthdays, anniversaries and bachelorette parties since the last two years. We are also working closely with WeddingSutra.com to organise seminar for Thai suppliers to organise weddings,” said Chudintra. TAT will organise roadshows in Jaipur, Kolkata, Chennai and Indore in June as they plan to enter Tier-II and III markets, he added.

With tremendous potential for golf tourism, Thailand has developed 250 golf courses around the country and for the same, TAT has made golfer Vani Kapoor as its brand ambassador.



“TAT will organise roadshows in Jaipur, Kolkata, Chennai and Indore in June as they plan to enter Tier-II and III markets”

Santi Chudintra

Deputy Governor for International Marketing-Asia and South Pacific, Tourism Authority of Thailand

Thailand Golf Travel Mart, a B2B golf activity, is also lined up in July which will take place at Phuket. Suppliers, hotels and DMCs from around the world will be invited to attend the event. About two to three second tier cities like Trar and Rayong will be introduced for the Indian market to promote the provinces from 55 Tier-II cities in Thailand. ↴

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More choices for Thai trip

Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand, headed the Thai tourism team at the launch event of its new marketing concept 'Open to the New Shades' held at JW Marriott Aerocity, New Delhi. The event was attended by several senior executives from travel companies, travel media and guests from the business community.





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Sustainable route to adventure

Adventure Sports Expo Asia 2018, India's first adventure travel extravaganza, was recently held in New Delhi. With an aim to catalyse the growth of adventure sports, the expo brought together key stakeholders of the industry.



Ankita Saxena

Legendary Indian cricketer **Kapil Dev** inaugurated the adventure sports event along with **Shannon Stowell**, CEO, Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) at Hotel Four Points by Sheraton, New Delhi. Dev said, "I encourage all kinds of sports but adventure sports is something which gets you close to nature and into clean fresh places to calm the body and mind. It is heartening to see so many adventure sports enthusiasts assemble here in Delhi from all over India and the world. I am confident that more people will discover the joy of undertaking adventure sports in years to come."

Stowell commented, "India has so much to offer to the world when it comes to adventure sports and adventure tourism. This is my first trip to India and I certainly look forward to taking the message of what India has to offer to the world."

Swadesh Kumar, President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), said, "This is a great initiative by a private enterprise



Kapil Dev



Shannon Stowell



Swadesh Kumar



Ajeet Bajaj

and we are glad that the association could support them. This is the first time such a gathering has taken place among all stakeholders in adventure sports."

The Expo was organised under a joint collaboration between Asian Games Gold Medalist **Rishi Narain**, Founder & MD, RN Sports Marketing, and Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI). The event received strong support from various ministries and forums like Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Air In-

dia, ATTA, International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation, Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), ESOT (Ecotourism Society of India), WAS (World Adventure Society), etc.

Ajeet Bajaj, Senior Vice President, ATOAI, said, "We are elated to see such an amazing beginning of the first edition of ASEA 2018 and are already planning for a bigger ASEA 2019. The show will market

India as an iconic destination for adventure sports to the world with the support of ATOAI. It will also recognise individuals, groups and companies in the field of adventure."

The focus of the Expo was to provide a unified global networking platform to facilitate the growth of adventure sports and responsible tourism vis-à-vis products and services. The show witnessed participation from 90 exhibitors and over 5000 participants over three days. The exhibitor profile ranged from adventure gear manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers along with adventure and ecotourism tour operators from all over Asia. The buyer profile consisted of government bodies such as the army, navy, air force, para-military organisations, travel enthusiast, potential investors from hospitality industry and participants from the US, UK, Australia, South America, Asia and Europe. The free flow of the event offered sessions on burning issues in the adventure travel industry, B2B meetings between exhibitors and buyers and an arena to enjoy activities to make it stand out from other business events. ↘

WelcomHeritage to set foot in Nainital

Currently charting a growth path, **Sanjeev K Nayar**, MIH, General Manager, WelcomHeritage, says they are all set to open new properties in the near future.



TT Bureau

The year 2017 for WelcomHeritage has been very rewarding, says **Sanjeev K Nayar**. "We have not only signed new properties under the aegis of the brand, but also registered a growth of 15 per cent over the last year. This financial year we signed Ranjit Vilas Amritsar, which was our first farm stay property, and a heritage property in the hills of Nainital," he says.

Satisfied with the company's growth, Nayar says, "In 2018, we will continue to expand our footprint and business. We are in conversation with more property owners and very soon we will be making announcements of



Sanjeev K Nayar
MIH, General Manager
WelcomHeritage

new properties on the board. Apart from North, South and North East India, we are looking to tap the burgeoning wedding segment for our properties."

The next property in line for them is WelcomHeritage Ashdale in Nainital. "It is an old Manor from the British Era, owned by the Royalty of Sahaspur. Thereafter, we propose to flag two nature resorts, one in Tadoba, Maharashtra, and the other in Coorg, Karnataka. As all these properties are in advance stage of project, we hope they will be launched in the beginning of the next financial year," he adds.

Nayar says they are quite active on all social media platforms which have generated a lot of interest in the Group's properties as well as among the potential owners for a probable tie up.

Claiming that they enjoy a very special relationship with the travel trade, Nayar says, "Travel trade is an integral part of the industry. We are in the process of promoting all our hotels in prominent geographical regions like US, UK, Scandinavian countries and the Oriental through publishing our destinations in allied brochures and tour itineraries marketed by tour operators in these regions through local DMCs. We also focus on the vast opportunity of domestic tourism by tying up with key wholesale operators specialising in promoting local destinations by offering them incentives and exciting offers. We also participate in the travel marts and roadshows in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities." ↘

260 years of C&K memories

Cox & Kings, a travel company in existence before the birth of the United States of America, is celebrating its 260 years of operations in the travel industry with partners in India and abroad. The company hosted a gala evening where the who's who of the travel fraternity marked their presence to celebrate this achievement.



South Africa hopes to cross 100k

India, particularly the western region, is showing high arrival numbers for South Africa, so much so that it soon hopes to cross the 100,000 mark.

 Hazel Jain

The numbers from India to South Africa have not stopped growing. From January 2017 to November 2017, South Africa records show that 89,882 Indian tourists entered the country. **Alpa Jani**, Acting Hub-Head (Middle East, India & South East Asia), South African Tourism, feels that this number would have gone higher. "We were hoping to

our total arrivals coming from Mumbai alone," she says.

This is followed by New Delhi, which is why these two cities are constants for South African Tourism's annual roadshow. Having just concluded this year's show, Jani says, "It is one of the biggest roadshows in the tourism industry in India currently and it shows our commitment towards the



Hanneli Slabber
Regional General Manager (Asia, Australasia & Middle East), South African Tourism



Alpa Jani
Acting Hub-Head (Middle East, India & South East Asia), South African Tourism

& Middle East), South African Tourism, offers a bigger picture. She says, "It is not enough to just look at the arrival figures in isolation. In

“The western India region is our biggest market with almost 37 per cent of our total arrivals coming from Mumbai alone”

“In India, you need to look at the length of stay as well as the package configuration because we sell so many activities – more than any other market”

Hanneli Slabber

cross the 100,000 mark last year but due to issues like demonetisation and GST, we couldn't. So we are hoping that we will pass this milestone in 2018. The western India region is our biggest market with almost 37 per cent of

India market. We had approximately 60 exhibitors from South Africa with a great mix of DMCs, hotel groups, airlines and local tourism bodies like Cape Town, Oudtshoorn, Durban, along with a lot of activity providers

like bungee jumping, shark-cage diving and hot air ballooning.”

Activities are key for South Africa as one of the constant trends indicate that Indians are not only becoming extremely adventurous, but also love to indulge in a lot of activities when in South Africa. "In fact, we have seen them do as much as 10

activities in a day! Indians are doing a lot of activities in the Garden Route area because there is so much to do in close proximities," Jani reveals. The cities covered this year included Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, New Delhi and Ahmedabad.

Hanneli Slabber, Regional General Manager (Asia, Australasia

Alpa Jani

India, you need to look at the length of stay as well as the package configuration because we sell so many activities – more than any other market. We get a better picture of the market when we analyse all these factors.”



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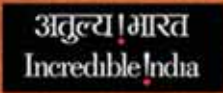


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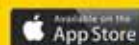
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