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- Pattaya Hotel to Bangkok Hotel Transfer Bangkok Hotel to Suvarnabhumi International Airport Transfer
- Two 500 ml water bottles daily, per guest
- All Tours and Transfer in a shared vehicle

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 - Two nights accommodation in Macau
- Full Day Disneyland Tour
- Hong Kong by Night Tour with Symphony of Lights
- Indian Tea & Samosa during Night Tour Hong Kong to Macau Ferry Ticket One way
- Hong Kong Airport to Hong Kong Hotel Transfer Hong Kong Hotel to Hong Kong Ferry Pier Transfer
- Macau City Tour with Indian Tea & Samosa r
- Lunch at Cafe Deco Restaurant, Venetian Macau
- Macau to Hong Kong Airport Ferry Ticket One-way
- · Two 500 ml water bottles daily, per guest

Hong Kong & Macau Delight - 5N/6D

PACKAGE INCLUSIONS:

- Three nights accommodation in Hong Kong
- Two nights accommodation in Macau

- Full Day Ocean Park Tour
 Hong Kong by Night Tour with Symphony of Lights
 Indian Tea & Samosa during Night Tour present tour
- Hong Kong to Macau Ferry Ticket One way
- Hong Kong Airport to Hong Kong Hotel Transfer
- Hong Kong Hotel to Hong Kong Ferry Pier Transfer
 Macau City Tour with Indian Tea & Samosa menalus
- Lunch at Cafe Deco Restaurant, Venetian Macau
- Macau to Hong Kong Airport Ferry Ticket One way
- Two 500 ml water bottles daily, per guest

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Emerging markets on MOT radar

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is undertaking aggressive marketing and promotional campaigns under a restructured scheme. With a thematic and market specific Incredible India 2.0 campaign, the ministry is targeting emerging markets like Japan, Spain, China and Russia.



This year at ITB Berlin, the delegation from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, will be led by the Tourism Minister along with the Joint Secretary and two officials from the department. Officials from the local offices of MOT in Europe will also be joining them at the show, informs Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

Verma informs that India was the partner country with FITUR this year and received a very warm response. Apart from the already established markets like the US and Europe, MOT is aggressively targeting the new emerging source markets like Japan. China and Russia. Dedicated campaigns are being planned for these markets. She states that a new integrated marketing plan is underway for the next year whereby a centralised campaign will be run by MOT and will have a detailed plan for the overseas offices.

"It was encouraging to see a lot of interest being generated for India. Aggressive branding was undertaken and was very well received. Spain has emerged as one of our key source markets and we feel that we need to focus more on the South American continent, one which is showing a lot of interest for heritage and ecotourism products in India. We need to have dedicated campaigns in Portugal and other Spanish speaking countries," Verma adds.

The Ministry of Tourism has completely changed its overseas marketing plan. Verma explains that under the restructured scheme, a hub-and-spoke model is being adopted whereby MOT will hold eight tourist offices abroad which will act as tourism hubs. "Public Relations agencies will be employed for dissemination of information. The Missions and Embassies have shown keen interest in this strategy and will be instrumental in identifying the marketing agencies soon," she adds.

66 Spain has emerged as one of our key source markets and we feel that we need to focus more on the South American continent which is showing a lot of interest for heritage and ecotourism products in India. We need to have dedicated campaigns in Portugal and other Spanish speaking countries.

Rashmi Verma

Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Verma believes that the Incredible India 2.0 campaign is market and product specific unlike the previous, generic campaign. She explains, "It is more thematic in nature and to support the same we have made new films for every product. We have done our research and market analysis to identify the products in demand in specific markets and will run the campaigns accordingly. We are focusing on promoting niche tourism products like golf tourism. cruise tourism, adventure tourism, wellness and cuisine, etc. For example, one

of our films on wellness and Yoga is up and running in the European market since the demand for these products is high there."

To incentivise foreign tour operators to promote India and generate demand, MOT will begin giving brochure support to key foreign tour operators again. "It is important that India features in the itineraries of the FTOs and for that we are going to give them this support. We will also conduct Fam trips to give first-hand experience of the destination."

When asked about the launch date of the new website which has been long awaited, Verma points out that MOT has completed the exercise of content curation and will now be testing the same in a pilot phase with limited users to fine-tune it further. "The website is more personalised and interactive and I am sure that there will be a marked difference in the user experience."

Updating on the progress made under the Adopt a Heritage scheme, Verma explains that NBCC and

Yatra.com have submitted their detailed plans for the adopted monuments and have already received the clearance from ASI. "Since ASI is involved with devising the plans for the scheme from the beginning, getting approvals for the same is fast track and easy. We have also signed MoUs with two state governments—Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir for maintenance and upgrading of trekking routes."

Addressing the tout menace at major tourist sites, the Tourism Secretary assures that the Ministry is in dialogue with various state governments and has received assurances that there will be concrete steps taken to handle this issue. "We are working on developing 10 iconic sites as announced by the Finance Minister. We have conducted a preliminary gap analysis and are waiting to finish the stakeholder consultation by mid-April. After the research is complete, we will execute the plans already in place," she adds.

Incredible India 2.0 at ITB

Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, MOT shares the details of the ministry's plans for ITB, where they will also unveil the first film under the Incredible India 2.0 campaign.



The Ministry of Tourism is doing a big pitch at ITB this year, says Suman Billa. "We crossed 10 million FTAs in 2017 and we've also done a record 15.8 per cent growth in FTAs in 2017. Thus, all the cues are looking good for tourism. We have a strong delegation as always, which will be led by the minister. Apart form the inaugural of



Suman Billa Joint Secretary, MOT

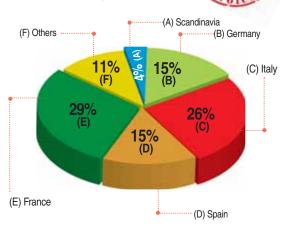
the India pavilion, we'll also be doing a press briefing. Besides that, we will be doing an Indian evening on the second day as well as a breakfast meeting with the tour operators."

Publicity & marketing

Claiming that there will be an increased focus on the Incredible India 2.0 campaign this year, Billa says, "In this year's Budget, we've got a 50 per cent increase for Contd. on page 13 **India's French affair**

France is the most important European source market for Indian inbound, according to RAVALK readers. As per a poll, while France tops the list

with 29 per cent, Italy closely follows suit at 26 per cent, followed by Germany and Spain at 15 per cent. The upcoming Scandinavian destinations are still catching up.







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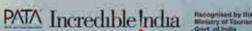














ITB to set a new trend in Berlin

ITB is organising an opening event which, for the first time, is set to leave a zero-carbon footprint, thereby setting an important trend.



'he show's management expects around 10,000 exhibitors and organisations from over 180 countries and some 110,000 trade visitors to attend the 26 halls on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds. The focus is on Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the partner region of the show. The Baltic Sea coast is one of Germany's leading holiday destinations and is the first federal state to occupy the role as partner region of ITB Berlin. Over the five days of the show, the German federal state will be exhibiting its wide range of tourism products.

There is a boom in topical segments like luxury travel, adventure tourism, medical tourism, and sustainable travel. For the same, ITB Berlin has created a new platform for networking exclusively with a selected group of

exhibitors at Orania Berlin, a new Boutique Hotel. Exhibitors will be able to meet leading buyers from the global luxury travel market.

"The outstanding number of bookings this year once again underlines ITB Berlin's role as a driving force and the event mirroring the global tourism industry. Particularly in an age of political unrest, overtourism and the ongoing digital transformation, the industry faces new challenges. Against this backdrop, the world's leading travel trade show has become important for exhibitors and trade visitors as a networking platform and reliable indicator of the economy", said David Ruetz, Head of ITB Berlin.

ITB Berlin will collaborate with Loop, a unique trade show for luxury products. Together with a network of exclusive exhibitors, Loop will be the place to head for buy-

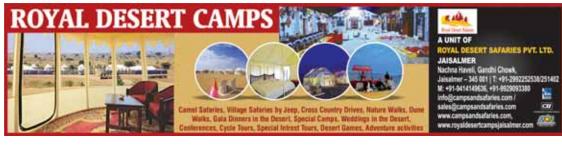


David Ruetz Head of ITB Berlin

The outstanding number of bookings this year underlines ITB Berlin's role as a driving force in global tourism industry

ers of luxury products. The eTravel Start-up Day will provide newly formed companies with a platform, as well as the Special Hospitality Tech Forum as a new feature at the eTravel Lab. Focus are revolutionary ways of travelling in the future, among them driverless cabs and hyperloops which soon will completely change the face of transport. In addition, a close look at digitalisation and artificial intelligence and their potential impact on travel in the future will be taken. Another topic which the convention will focus on is Overtourism. In recent times, rapid growth in tourism has begun to stretch accommodation and hospitality limits, particularly in major cities. As a result, the industry needs to find solutions for the future and minimise the effects on the environment.

ITB Berlin 2018 will take place from March 7-11, whose opening event is set to leave a zero carbon footprint for the first time, thereby, setting an important trend. The ITB Berlin Convention will be held from March 7-10.







TRAUTALK

VIEWPOINT

All set for Berlin 2018

India inbound is all set to put its best foot forward for ITB Berlin 2018, with a huge delegation of Indian service providers, led by Tourism Minister K Alphons himself. The German market has always been looking up for India and inbound agents have been planning for the big event for quite some time. Not only would ITB see new packages and destinations coming up, a lot of thrust is being given to experiences as well. Operators are putting together itineraries to offer quintessential Indian experiences for clients. While the GST issue still lingers over inbound operators, they are leaving no stone unturned to lure foreign tour operators. Many hotels, from every part of the country are participating at ITB Berlin, to showcase their offerings to the big German market. MOT, which is riding high after a great response at FITUR, is hopeful of a great response from ITB Berlin, not only for the leisure segment but in the MiCE segment as well, which can really boost the arrival numbers to India.

New destinations bask in Indian summer sun

ome summers, and the big outbound Ctravel will start from India. With bookings already on, outbound operators and agents are prepping up itineraries for both new and old favourite destinations. Thailand, Singapore, Dubai remain top choices for short haul travel, despite the hot and humid climate. On the other hand, May-June are the months that see the maximum long-haul travel from India. While Europe has been an all-time favourite, new destinations like the Philippines, Israel, Eastern Europe, Korea, Japan and South American countries are seeing Indians travelling in big numbers. Destinations are wooing Indian travellers with interesting packages, airlines are not far behind. In fact, they are quite early for those who want to book in advance, and at much lower rates through major discounts offered on their websites. While some travellers are booking direct or via OTAs to get the price advantage, others are opting for tailor-made experiences designed especially for them by specialised itinerary crafters. In any case, Indians, whether with big budget or not, are travelling big this summer, and the industry is certainly smiling.

E-commerce in the B2B space

Hiren Vakhariya, MD and CEO, Innovator, discusses how agencies and operators can benefit from being present in the online realm.

ore, the merrier' is the ore, the ment. Business (B2B) model. But more the operational stages, longer are the communication cycles and delayed deliveries. Undoubtedly, reinventing operating models is the need of the hour. It is the combination of updated technologies along with quality products. Whether you are operating in the B2B space or the B2C space, there are some things that will always delight your customers - ontime delivery in lesser time and lower costs, over-communication and transparency in products.

Despite being the thirdlargest user base in world, India's penetration of Internet is low compared to markets like the United States. United Kingdom or France. Nevertheless, it is growing at a much faster rate than the other countries, adding around six million new entrants every month. As a result, e-commerce in the travel industry is increasing every year. The industry therefore requires frequent product upgradation through technology. Electronic data exchange, sales and marketing to financial transfers, technology aids in simplifying and streamlining a lot of processes.

E-commerce offers a company an opportunity to grow. Many have started investing in mobile applications since mobile commerce is also playing a big role in e-commerce. But my question is, is that only applicable in the B2C segment or can we also apply technical solutions to the B2B companies as well? Here are a few specific ideas on the B2B side for e-commerce.

There are DMCs and there are B2B companies. Both are different and so both should have different technological platform to manage their operations effectively. Unlike in the past, it is no longer advisable nor affordable for B2B companies to work offline. For example, their clients - B2C travel agencies - used to send them an email for quotations. B2B agents have to work out a quote and reply to them. There are lots of chances that some key data is missed, or an entire

enquiry is missed, or not replied in time. Due to this lack of complete communication on time, the B2C agent might lose the booking and the client may directly book online.

How can technology play a major role here? If a B2B player has an online platform, it makes life easy for them as well as their customer (B2C agent). There is no need for back and forth of enquiries. B2C agents can just enter the portal of B2B agents and create their own quotation 24X7. See how life can become easy for even B2C agents? Plus, all MIS reports, accounts, destination effectiveness. effectiveness, hotel can be measured easily. Technology can help automate operations as well as accounts.

Capturing content

Another idea for B2B e-commerce is aggregation of user-generated contents. Content is king and this is particularly true in the travel space. This is a big challenge for new start-ups in the travel and leisure space as amassing a treasure trove of reviews

and content is non-trivial and companies like Yelp, TripAdvisor, Foursquare and Gogobot have already established a strong foothold. Methods of aggregating this data for new up-starts to process and capture across publishers is powerful for both consumers and publishers alike and would be great to have a robust solution to process and aggregate this data for distribution across new and existing publishers.

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

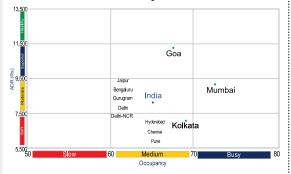


MD and CEO Innovator

Goa for tipple and entertainment

With the western cluster having good demand throughout the year, Goa has improved rate premiums for the Upscale-UpperMid and Lux-UpperUp segments.

Lux-UpperUp Performance India and Key Markets



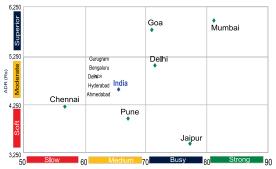
Luxury - UpperUp

- The Busy-Superior zone remains empty. Nobody is Strong & Healthy.
- Mumbai is busy but with moderate rates; Goa rates are way ahead of other markets and very close to a Healthy classification.
- Kolkata moved out of the Busy zone into the medium zone not unexpected with new supply in this segment. The city has gained rate, though it still remains in the Soft bracket.
- The Medium-Moderate zone remains tenanted by Delhi, Bengaluru, Gurugram, residual Delhi NCR and Jaipur (representing nearly a third of segmental supply) and about 12 per cent of total supply; no wonder national numbers remain moderate.

Upscale - Upper Mic

- This is the segment where Strong Occ zone comes into play, for Mumbai.
- Jaipur joins Delhi and Goa in the Busy zone. These markets are in three
 distinct rate zones Goa due to strong domestic demand; Delhi with
 moderate rate due to rate pressure at the top, and Jaipur hurting from
 supply surge and heavily discounted group, wedding and MiCE business.
- Chennai remains a Soft rate under-performer.
- Pune remains in the soft rate zone but has moved to the right within the Medium Occ zone.

Upscale-UpperMid Performance India and Key Markets



Source: Hotel Review Report 2017- India, Horwath HTL and STR

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Adventure and Ayurveda in Kerala

Kadakampally Surendran, Minister for Co-Operation, Tourism and Devaswom, Government of Kerala, reveals their plans to develop new tourism products in Kerala and the way forward to bring in more tourists.

Nisha Verma

What kind of growth did Kerala tourism witness in the last year?

Kerala hosted 14,673,520 domestic tourist arrivals in 2017 with an increase of 11.39 per cent as compared to previous year. In 2017, the state has registered the highest percentage of growth in domestic tourist arrivals since last nine years. Kerala Tourism has witnessed positive signs of attaining the set goal in the domestic tourism circuit with an increase of 15 lakh new tourists, as per the latest statistics.

Also, Kerala has witnessed a growth of 5.15 per cent in foreign tourist arrivals, while attracting 1,091,870 FTAs in 2017. The State Tourism Department has recorded `33,383.68 crore in total revenue generated from the sector as compared to 29,658.56 crore last year.

What targets have you set for 2018?

Every year, the Tourism Department of Kerala aims

to increase domestic tourists' arrival by over 8 per cent and international tourists' arrival by 13 per cent. The state has been following a comprehensive tourism development plan to double the number of foreign tourist arrivals and increase domestic tourist arrivals by 50 per cent, by 2021.

What kind of steps are you taking to promote adventure sports in the state?

Kerala offers a wide range of adventure activities, including tracking, paragliding, river rafting, kayaking, wildlife sanctuaries, etc. The latest development in this segment is Adventure Rock Hill at the Jatayu Earth Centre, which is now operational for public in groups.

The State Government has planned to develop 10 ecotourism circuits to connect various forests to promote green tourism. The Government of Kerala also envisioned has 300-crore project nine rivers in Kannur and

Kasaragod to promote river tourism and is all set to launch a host of adventure and activity-based tourism projects in Alappuzha. Malabar region, Wayanad, etc. such as paragliding, paddling and kayaking.

geographical spread of tourist arrivals to the state, Kerala Tourism plans to promote its Malabar region aggressively through a `325 crore project, which includes unexplored destinations such as Kozhikode, Wayanand, Bekal spending tourists, Kerala Tourism has envisaged a 'River Cruise Tourism' project on the model of the Nile Cruise, developing the 450km inland waterways from Hozdurg to Kovalam. Further, Kerala Tourism has planned

Kerala Tourism has already geared up for a threemonth long international campaign to lure foreign tourists. The tourism department has listed out as many as 12 trade fairs and 24 roadshows under this triumphant promotional campaign for the FY 2017-18 with an enhanced budget allocation of `11.5 crore. We are looking forward to participate in ITB Berlin (March 7-11) followed by a road show in France at Marseille (March 13).

How has been the response to Ayurbodha programme launched recently?

Ayurbodha is a unique tourism product with the aim of blending tourism and the knowledge of Ayurveda. The focus was on basic home remedies and diet regimes. Avurvedic practices for rejuvenation of the body and soul, secrets of pressure points, basics of Panchakarma treatment and the use of medicinal plants. Kerala is also popular for this initiative in enriching every visitor's experience.



What new tourism products will you

Kerala Tourism has been extensively focusing on pro-Northern Kerala, which has immense untapped tourism potential. With the aim to increase the

focus on this year?

and Kannur. Under the new tourism policy, the tourism department has proposed to establish 1000 new classified homestavs in the state at destinations like Malabar region.

Emphasising on cruise tourism and targeting highto develop 'Malanadu cruise', a river cruise project.

Minister for Co-Operation

Tourism and Devaswom, Government of Kerala

ITB Berlin is around the corner and you are heavily focusing on the Europe market. What initiatives have you taken in this regard?



TRAVTALK MARCH 1⁵¹ FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018

STATES

When Paradise on Earth summons

Priya Sethi, Minister of State for Tourism, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, is all geared up to take tourism to the next level in the state which is often dubbed 'Paradise on Earth' by encouraging travel agents and associations to hold events and conventions in the state.

KANCHAN NATH

Buoyed by the various tourism events lined up in the Valley in the coming months, **Priya Sethi**, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, invites discerning travellers, tourism stakehold-

ways to break down cultural barriers and provide guests with the most pleasant experiences. My state has had its share of hardships, but I'm sure the worst is over. We are on our way to expand the tourism sector and are looking towards positive exchanges of concrete ideas

ous tourism facets. If you want to judge our hospitality, just crawl though the visitors' books of any of our houseboats, the reviews are genuine and not cooked up," Sethi said.

Noting that for the state government, tourism is not

According to Sethi, the state government is immensely concerned about the safety and security of tourists. "Law and order and safety is a state subject and I'd like to inform you that our Ministry has formulated a set of guidelines for the safety and security of tourists. We are working on setting up a 24x7 line as well. We are going through trial runs with our new interactive website and mobile Apps which will enable tourists to access information on J&K at the click of a button. Our endeavour is to make Jammu & Kashmir a preferred destination," Sethi said.

The Jammu & Kashmir Government has recently come up with a film showcasing the various tourism offerings in the state and feedback from tourists. "Kashmir has it all - heritage, culture and natural beauty with myriad trekking sites. It's truly a paradise on earth. We had recently gone to Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad

and it was sad to know that people did not know about the real Jammu and Kash-

mir," Sethi rued.

Enlisting the various tourist activities that the state has to offer, Sethi said, "If you talk of religious tourism, Jammu offers many an opportunity. If you talk about MiCE, Kashmir has numerous golf courses. There are beautiful trekking routes, difficult as well as easy, we want to explore the same. Our target is to get more tourists into the state and for the same we have been meeting people, attend-

ing roadshows, seminars and interactions with the media." The tourism department is in talks with travel trade and other state tourism boards to generate awareness and sign MoUs to attract more tourists.

Talking about new tour-ism products, Sethi added, "In terms of horticulture, we have the best of apple orchards, we are encouraging tourists to 'pick their own apples'. We are coming up with a Sound and Light show at the Dal Lake. There is also talk of developing border tourism in certain areas."



ers and travel agents to experience the state at its best.

"Industry stakeholders are constantly looking for

in promotion of tourism and cultural ties between Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the world. I would like to invite you all to visit its varimerely a means of generating revenue but a way to ensure development and sustainability pivoted on Kashmiri culture and creative art.



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AP working on six marquee projects

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Department is now working on six marquee projects which offer tremendous growth and potential for investments. Mukesh Kumar Meena, Secretary-Tourism & Culture, Andhra Pradesh said that the Special Tourism Zone at Madhurawada and INS Virat aircraft carrier museum in Visakhapatnam, Havelock Bridge in Rajahmundry, Bhavani Island in the middle of Krishna river in Vijayawada, Kakinada Hope Island under Swadesh Darshan scheme in East Godavari district, and Gandikota Fort in Guntur district would be developed with private participation. The major challenge identified is availability of infrastructure.

In terms of domestic tourism, Andhra Pradesh is number three in the country after Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. "It would not contribute to the economy unless and until we increase the length of stay of tourists which can be done by creating the infrastructure and make their stay enjoyable," Meena observed.

Adventure tourism on the anvil

Goutam Deb, Minister-In-Charge—Department of Tourism, West Bengal, shares details about a flurry of developmental activities the state is undertaking to boost tourist numbers.

AMRITA GHOSH FROM SILIGURI

of visitor arrivals to West aking pride in the number Bengal from across the country and the world, Goutam Deb, MIC-Department of Tourism, West Bengal states, "As far as foreign tourist arrivals are concerned, Bengal is now placed sixth in the country and eighth in terms of domestic arrivals, as per data prepared by central agencies. Footfalls have been raised considerably and people are indeed visiting the state to 'experience the sweetest part of India'."

The West Bengal tourism department has been laying special emphasis on homestay tourism policy and has started promoting adventure tourism in different destinations of the state. In an effort to keep tourists' adrenaline levels intact. Bengal is set to develop trek routes and introduce activities like biking, kayaking, rafting and rowing in destinations such as Mandarmani, Digha and Tajpur. Integrated tourism policy



Goutam Deh Minister-In-Charge—Department of Tourism, West Bengal

We are working on a 200-acre land to introduce recreational activities at 'Bhorer Alo,' the mega tourism hub at Gajoldoba, 20 km away from Siliguri

along with homestay policy and regulations on adventure tourism are in the pipeline.

Talking about different tourism projects, Deb mentioned that the state is particularly looking to promote

Delo in Kalimpong and Tiger Hill in Darjeeling so as to restore their century-old bungalows. New destinations in the Doars like Chalsa, Jhalong, Tilabari, Batabari and Damdim are already operational. "We are planning to establish a Parvatan Bhawan in Calcutta. Besides, we are

black bears, birds, deer and elephants," Deb said.

The state is currently focusing on Southeast Asian countries, namely Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand and Myanmar. In FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017, Bengal seized the opporpomp and grandeur of the festivity," Deb shared.

Deb also pointed out that Bagdogra airport's instrument landing system (ILS) will start operating from March 29, as per an AAI notification. He was happy to inform that in the previous year, the passenger growth at the airport touched 22 lakh. Upcoming small airports are also in the offing at Coochbehar, Burnpur and Bondal. "It is not the duty of the government to run the tourism industry. The private enterprises are the big players in this segment. We are only the facilitators in creating the ambience," asserted Deb.

Talking about the development of MiCE in the state, the minister informed that the Digha-Sankarpur Development Authority have already started construction of conference facilities and hotel accommodation. Besides, the state prides itself in owning the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, one of the largest MiCE destinations in the country.



working on a PPP mode on a 200-acre land to introduce eco-friendly recreational activities at 'Bhorer Alo,' the mega tourism hub coming up at Gajoldoba near the Teesta Barrage, just 20 km away from Siliguri. We are also creating a jungle track from Gaioldoba to Bengal Safari Park, a 297-hectares of land in Siliguri housing tigers,

tunity to showcase before foreign delegates its rich heritage and culture along with the state's eternal love for football. "The Calcutta Carnival was also held during the same period in which many foreign countries participated. We intend to get more foreign tourists to the state, especially during Durga Puja to showcase the

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Gujarat drives heritage & culture circuit

Gujarat Tourism has undertaken projects to enhance its heritage and cultural resources. With new circuits like Dandi Heritage Circuit, Buddhist Circuit and initiatives like border tourism underway, the state is striving hard to become the most favourable tourist destination in the country.

Ankita Saxena

In the year 2017, Gujarat received 4.5 crore tourists, registering a growth of 17 per cent over the previous year, according to figures shared by the Ministry of Tourism. Out of the total number of tourists, 98 per cent were domestic while two per cent were international, informs Jenu Deven, Managing Director, Gujarat Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) and Commissioner of Tourism, Government of Gujarat.

Deven points out that the state tourism department has made investments in almost every sector to offer world-class tourism infrastructure, upgrade existing facilities and enhance the visitor experience. The major source markets for the state are the US, UK and Canada and the state is also targeting the source markets from where tourists are visiting other states in India.

"The state tourism department has been making investments to the tune of 200-250 crore per year for tourism. We are focusing on heritage and culture of the state. The Rann of Kutch this year was a grand success which received a large number of tourists both domestic and international. Various circuits under the Prasad and Swadesh Darshan Scheme have also been boosted," says Deven.

In order to offer the world a glimpse into the life and teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, a Dandi Heritage circuit is underway. "We want to enhance this circuit and extend it to the Dandi beach at Navsari. Apart from the basic infrastructure available at destinations like Rajkot, Ahmedabad and Sabarmati Ashram, a Dandi Museum will be made to showcase the philosophy and teaching of the Mahatma, Guiarat is also home to Buddhism and to enhance this segment, we



Jenu Deven Managing Director, Gujarat Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC)

We are planning to turn Modhera into a sustainable unit based on solar energy and make it a world-class tourist attraction

have identified some places like Junagarh, Gir, Somnath and Bhavnagar under the Buddhist Circuit and notified the same under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. We plan to offer a Buddhist complex to



showcase important spiritual sites and traditions." Deven believes that this circuit will be a popular attraction for tourists from East Asia.

The initiative of border tourism at Nadabet in Banas Kantha district in Gujarat has also picked up well, opines Deven. He points out that the remains of Indus Valley Civilisation in Gujarat are also of tourist interest. "A museum is being upgraded to showcase Indus Valley culture and in collaboration

with the Ministry of Shipping, a National Maritime Heritage Complex is also underway. The Modhera village, which houses the famed Sun Temple, is being upgraded. We are planning to turn Modhera into a sustainable unit based on solar energy and into a world-class tourist attraction." The state is also considering developing niche tourism products like golf tourism. Gujarat is also promoting film tourism. "For this, we already have a film board in place which works as a facilitator

to various film makers and attempts to make the procedures simpler to shoot in the state," adds Deven.

The state of Gujarat is proactively participating in all major travel trade shows at domestic and international platforms like ITM, ITB Berlin, WTM, etc. "We are going out to meet the tour operators and travel agents both Indian and international, and are devising strategies to improve tourist numbers to the state," adds Deven.



India's products and offerings at ITB

► Contd. from page 3

publicity. From `300 crore, it has jumped to `450 crores. which is basically for Incredible India 2.0 campaign. The first of the creatives is ready and it is going to be launched internationally. We are doing a soft launch on that. It's a set of six films, which are being made now, and we will be doing a big India launch shortly as we are expecting the films to be ready by March. We will only launch one film, which is ready, at ITB. The campaign has changed fundamentally. Earlier it was a collage, and now we are doing six films which are thematically different and are based on Yoga, Ayurveda, culinary, luxury, adventure and heritage. We are taking up all these things differently and we are changing the way we are doing publicity abroad. Hence, we need to push the product which sells in the market, making sure that it is market specific and product specific."

New Markets

While Europe has been a strong market traditionally for India, there will be focus on new markets as well. "We will be focusing on Latin

We will be focusing on Latin American countries. ASEAN is going to be big as 2019 will be the year of cooperation between India and ASEAN. Europe is a key market for us. Middle East is also yielding well for us

American countries. ASEAN is going to be big as 2019 will be the year of cooperation between India and ASEAN. Engagement with the US is going strong, while Europe is a key market for us. Middle East is also yielding well, but I think high growth markets will be China and Russia," adds Billa.

Infrastructure focus

This year's Budget focused primarily on infra-

Iconic Sites

Khajuraho; Fatehpur Sikri and Taj Mahal; Hampi; Kaziranga; Humayun's Tomb, Outub Minar and Red Fort; Mahabalipuram; Dholavira and Somnath in Gujarat; as well as Ajanta, Ellora in Maharashtra

structure. "We have already invested a lot in infrastructure development. Over the past three years, the sanctioned projects are worth `6000 crores, out of which we have 30 projects which will come on stream this year. That's about `3000 crores worth of projects, which is going to be a lot of tourism and public infrastructure this year. Secondly, in the last budget, special tourism zones were announced, which is going to be upstream because we

Five special tourism zones across the country are going to be called for. These zones are expected to be about 300 acres with 3000 hotel rooms, as the focus is specially on tourism development and public infrastructure

have already presented it to the Ministry of Finance. Once we get the clearance, we are going to be calling for five special tourism zones across the country. These zones are expected to be about 300 acres with 3000 hotel rooms and are going to be large magnets which will

Incredible India

come up across the country and would also enable the supply side," reveals Billa.

He adds that that this year the focus will be on 10 iconic sites and converting them into world class facilities. "We have identified these sites and at least the first level of work on tourism in these iconic sites will be finished by

the end of this year or early next year. We will have a three-pronged push on infrastructure. These iconic sites include Khajuraho; Fatehpur Sikri and Taj Mahal; Hampi; Kaziranga; Humayun's Tomb, Qutub Minar and Red Fort; Mahabalipuram; Dholavira and Somnath in Gujarat; as well as Ajanta, Ellora in Maharashtra."

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No storm in this tea cup

After the 104-day strike in Darjeeling, the region is gradually springing back to life with agents and tour operators receiving a good number of bookings till June. informs trade at Bengal Travel Mart 2018, held in Siliguri.

AMRITA GHOSH FROM SILIGURI

Buvers



General Director, Clubtoui

The event is a great opportunity to establish partnerships with companies selling products of West Bengal. We'd like to extend thanks to all the partners who made the exhibition successful. We have been introduced to new areas and services to which we previously did not have access to. I have been particularly intrigued by the myriad tourism products that Bhutan has to offer. BTM was a great forum to expand the geography of sales of the exhibition's participants.

The mart was organised well. I was looking forward to having more hoteliers rather than having so many of ground operators. Everybody here is selling the same destinations, so there's nothing new and different. The organisers could have got somebody from the attractions segment, like the Darjeeling zoo or someone from the tea garden. Even if we don't directly deal with them, our interaction with them could have helped us better sell



CEO, Dream Vacations

the destination. The products and offerings at the mart were quite repetitive.



Founder Trishant Tourism Activities

We were expecting a good number of hotel participants at the event but it turned out quite the contrary. There was almost no hotel from Kalimpong, except that of Mavfair Hotels & Resorts. We want to book all categories of hotels, ranging from budget stay to that of luxury. Nearly 70 per cent of the exhibitors at BTM were travel agents and tour operators. With Siliguri being a stopover destination, more hotels were expected to partici-

pate as tourists mostly spend a night here and then proceed further to nearby destinations like Darjeeling, Gangtok and other places.



Director Incentive Vacations

The regional mart was a great opportunity for us to know the taste and preferences of the local people here in Bengal. Having a base in Delhi, it is important for us to get an idea of what type of services are being provided in the region to identify the local suppliers. I found some interesting products in inbound, some trekking routes, hiking places and some homestay which will help me to promote my adventure market.



through a travel agent who has previously been contacted. We, therefore, need a right person to contact and inform us about the rates.



CEO, Skywalk Travels

to meet agents from across the country and be aware of the best rates. The agents who are sharing B2B prices are good as the main aim of my visit here is to find out the best prices in the industry. This is my first time at BTM and I am keen on visiting the event again next year. Gathering information from agents is important as without the B2B rates, we cannot afford to run our business.

Manager, International Tours

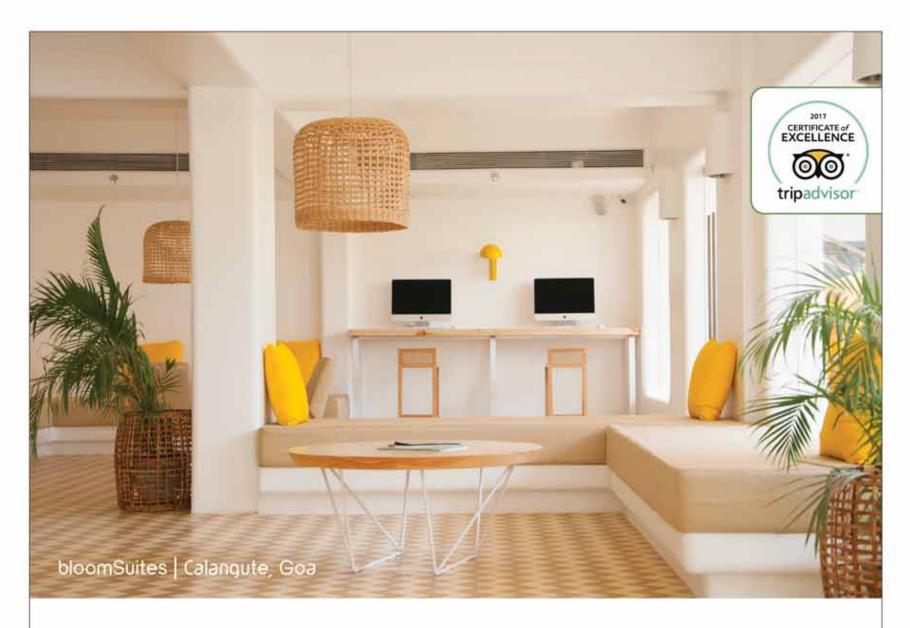
BTM is a great platform

Sellers

This is a perfect networking platform for buyers and sellers of the industry to come, meet and experience other properties, see what the exhibition has to offer and get a first-hand view of the experiences of how the people are of a particular property. All of this will certainly contribute to a significant amount of growth in business - with so many buyers and sellers under one roof, you have your chalk cut out; so grab how much you can! If you are a group like us at Sterling, what happens is that our property gets showcased and buyers realise that there are other similar properties to opt for. Therefore, they have a panoramic business experience when they visit us.



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Udaan plans expansion in 2018

■ Udaan India has forayed into education and is launching a brand—Study with Udaan. Apart from this, the company is planning to expand its operations in various Tier-II and Tier-III cities very soon.

Under the new initiative of 'Study with Udaan', the company plans to send students to various countries where the company has strategic tie-ups and will soon divulge its plans to the industry, informs Rajan Dua, Managing Director, Udaan India. He further adds that Udaan India has been catering to the B2B segment for the visa services for the last 25 years and is now planning to tie-up with the online travel agents. "We are planning to expand our business to some Tier-II and Tier-III cities in the coming months keeping in mind the high potential of the cities."

Dua points out that though the Southeast Asian countries have always been in high demand among Indian travellers, he is amazed to see the



Rajan Dua Managing Director Udaan India

increased traffic being generated for the CIS countries recently. He explains, "Destinations like Almaty, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, etc. have picked up really well and with FIFA World Cup 2018 coming up in Russia, I feel this is the year for the CIS region."

In terms of easing the visa processes for outbound travel, Dua notes that the there is a shift in the industry as the embassies have started eying Indians as important tourists. "Along with this as Indian travellers travel more often, they have become more organised and planned and thus visas are no longer a hassle to travel," he adds.

Tapping India's luxury market

Hospitality major, AccorHotels will continue to expand heavily in the luxury and lifestyle space in India by bringing in three new brands – Raffles, Fairmont and Banyan Tree.

HAZEL JAIN

AccorHotels expects an increasing opportunity in the upper-upscale, luxury and leisure space in India, and it is putting its money where its mouth is. Gaurav Bhushan, Global Chief Development Officer, AccorHotels, reveals the company's line-up for 2018 which includes bringing in three brands into India. He says, "We have a very interesting pipeline for 2018 for our luxury and leisure hotel brands. Raffles, Fairmont and Banyan Tree are the three brands that we are bringing into India. We are very excited about the opportunity. We see big potential for the luxury, the lifestyle and the leisure space in India. We have already expanded quite heavily in this space in India over the last few years with our brand portfolio going from 15-16 brands to 26 brands now. So, this space is going to be our big focus area this year."

AccorHotels expects to add over five ho-



Gaurav Bhushan Global Chief Development Officer AccorHotels

We have a very interesting pipeline for 2018 for our luxury and leisure hotel brands.
Raffles, Fairmont and Banyan Tree are the three brands that we are bringing into India.
We are very excited about the opportunity

tels to its network in 2018 which will translate to 1,000-plus rooms. It already has

45 operating hotels in India and is also actively signing up new hotels.

Mid-segment market

Speaking about the mid-segment market in India, Bhushan adds, "Of course the middle-income group is increasing as well. The leisure travel is also increasing radically across the country and we want to capitalize and leverage that opportunity. So the midsegment hotels will continue to grow. We have been doing mid-segment hotels in India for the last 10 years. But speaking in terms of the next large opportunity that we see in the market, it will be the luxury space."

India market is growing

AccorHotels sees a lot of potential in this market. "India is a major focus for us in the Asia Pacific region. We expect our growth to be very strong and very robust here in the next few years. As India grows and develops as a

market and as an economy, and people get more affluent. There is an increasing opportunity in the upper-upscale and leisure space and in the luxury space that was much smaller before. Whilst the mid-scale segment is increasing steadily and doing well, there is also a huge opportunity in the luxury space and the lifestyle space and the leisure space. That is the new frontier from our perspective," he says.

Challenges in India

For the company and the industry at large to grow, Bhushan feels that the political stability must continue fueled by the right economic policies. "The hotel business, specially the leisure side, depends heavily on disposable income while corporate travel is based on the health of the economy. So, we need the economy to be stable and strong and when that happens you see great benefits of that in the travel and hospitality sector," he adds.



The Blue City beckons Radisson

With 96 rooms and suites, Radisson Jodhpur has recently entered the hospitality spectrum in Rajasthan. The hotel plans to cater to all segments of travellers from inbound to domestic and is also offering various MiCE facilities for the corporates to make Jodhpur their next meeting venue.



ocated in the heart of the royal city of Jodhpur, Radisson Jodhpur is at a short driving proximity of two kilometres from the airport and the railway station. Surrounded by the ecstatic views of the Mehrangarh Fort and the Umaid Bhawan Palace, the hotel is reminiscent of an

erty plans to offer segment wise rates. Gupta says, "For the inbound DMCs, inbound contracted rates will be offered for coming seasons for their brochure programmes; for the domestic travel agencies commissionable packages are available while for the MiCE/PCO segment, special negotiated conference rates are up on offer."

Elaborating on the MiCE facilities and services on offer at the hotel, Gupta points out, "With a 24-hour business centre, two board rooms and a full secretarial service, Radisson Jodhpur offers diverse meeting spaces from theatre style to classroom style settings. Whether it is a board meeting or a conference, we are equipped

to cater to all your business needs. With a capacity to accommodate 1500 guests, we also make sure all your meals are tailor-made for any event." The promotional plan for the hotel includes aggressive media campaigns through various platforms as well as participation at major travel trade fairs like GITB 2018.





General Manager Radisson Jodhpur

Whether it is a board meeting or a conference, we are equipped to cater to all your business needs. With a capacity to accommodate 1500 guests, we also make sure all your meals are tailormade for any event

erstwhile Rajasthan adorned with advanced features amenities, informs Subhasish Gupta, General Manager, Radisson Jodhpur.

Gupta says, "Radisson Jodhpur is a new heritage creation and will offer extensive F&B options as well as a luxury stay experience to its guests." The hotel features 96 rooms and suites designed to experience heritage, multiple dining and drinking outlets, a state-ofthe-art fitness centre as well as a spa. There are five room categories-Superior Room, Business Class Boom. Studio Suite, Double Bedroom Suites and the Presidential Suite.

Gupta further informs that the target source market for the hotel ranges from international quests. domestic leisure travellers to corporates, MiCE and leisure groups. The prop-



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U&I creates buzz for Bali in India

A journey that started six years ago for U&I Holidays with a handful of travellers has resulted in them handling 22,000 Indian passengers to Bali, Indonesia, alone in 2017.

TT BUREAU

Mumbai Buyers Speak



Jitendra Kejriwal Arika Tour & Travels

U&I roadshows always get good suppliers. We promote a lot of offerings from Bali to our clients. The destination is perfect for events because it provides planners a lot of freedom. This includes taking along an Indian chef, so there is no problem with Indian or vegetarian food, alcohol, or entertainment, and the suppliers are flexible. We have already organised two huge events in Bali this year and closed a few more deals. Everyone knows the popular parts of Bali, but this is the best way to educate them about the other parts as well.



Travel Forte

The collection of products here is excellent. U&I Holidays has a great team in place. They have held roadshows in key cities all over India. Most hotels that were a part of this event showcased good packages with competitive rates. Bali offers good value for money and some of the attractions are very interesting. I am keen on meeting all-inclusive hotels with villas that have attached pools.



Senior Manager, Product & Contracting - FIT. Cox & Kings

This roadshow had great hotels and more importantly good attractions, which made for a fruitful event for us. For instance, I had heard about the Devdan show but after meeting them here, I know more about it now. This ensures better recall value for the sellers and buyers. While hotels can be found online, it is majorly the attractions that Indian travellers ask for Overall, it was a successful show.



Assistant Manager – Product

I am attending U&I Holidays' roadshow for the first time and looking to meet many properties and attractions. We had already used Devdan with clients but when I met them here, I understood the product better. Beach and water activities are popular in Bali, which I'm looking to add to our itineraries. I would like to meet good restaurants for groups that offer Indian meals. We recently organised shoot for a Marathi TV show to cover Bali.



Director - Sales & Operations Holxo Holidays

As soon as a new product launches in Bali, U&I Holidays updates us immediately. We get very strong support from them. This time, I saw a new product called Sun Island Hotel & Spa Kuta, which interested me since I only buy four-star and above for my clients. Now I would want U&I Holidays to do something beyond Bali, like a combination of Bali with Yogyakarta, Badung, etc.

Bali Buyers Speak

The roadshow was very successful and the India market is always on fire. Even when we were struggling for business post the eruption of Mt. Agung, we continued to get clients from India. We are very happy with all the cities that we visited because every city has its own demands and clients. This year we tried a new city-Pune-and we were very happy to meet travel agents there as it is a new and potential market for us. We would like to include Pune next year as well besides trying other cities.



Angie Ratna Juwita Cluster Senior Business Development Manager, Holiday Inn Resort Baruna Bali



Sales Manager Samabe Bali Suites & Villas and Grand Mirage



Corporate Director of Sales

This is my third time with U&I. I see the market grow positively for Bali. Such a roadshow is one of the best tools for us to promote our products to this market and encourage them to visit Bali specially because we come from Ubud which is a conservative area in Bali.



Theresia Elena GM, Corporate, Ox Woods Bali Managemen

This was my third time with U&I and the feedback from travel agent has been very good. We went to Pune for the first time this year and we met many buyers. Next year, we'd like to try another part of India because the big cities may already know about Bali but smaller cities like Jaipur may not. 55



I Made Pradnyana Account Manager

We made direct contacts with buyers from key cities in India. For me, Kolkata was good as we met a lot of buyers. I plan to return next year for the U&I rodshow as they conduct it well. Food is the number one priority for Indians with vegetarian and Jain food. We would love to explore new cities like Chennai.

This is my first time to India and meeting the trade. So, it has been quite an experience. All the six cities were good, but Kolkata was especially interesting. I get a lot of queries from there. Surprisingly, each city that we visited I always get agents who sell high-end property, which is what I'm selling. Traffic from India has been increasing over the years. I expected a little more interest from Delhi though. We get a lot of demand from the honeymoon segment.

Explore the unexplored in Rajasthan

The state tourism department's marketing strategy is to promote offerings that are beyond what is already known in the international and domestic markets so that visitors can explore the lesser-known destinations, experiences and festivals.



The Rajasthan Government has recently increased Budgets for its tourism department with the aim to promote

travellers, the government has recently increased our tourism budgets. This will be allocated for both the international as well as the domestic markets."

experiences that Rajasthan has to offer from the eyes of various travellers and explorers enchanted by Rajasthan. Around 10 per cent of the overall budget under tourism

66Our coordinated efforts will bring to life different and new experiences that Rajasthan has to offer from the eyes of various travel-lers and explorers enchanted by Rajasthan. Around 10 per cent of the overall budget under tour-ism is being allocated towards social media and B2C travel marts while the rest will be spent on B2B travel marts and advertising.

Pradeep Kumar Borar Special Secretary & Director (Tourism)

lesser-known destinations in the international and domestic markets. **Pradeep Kumar Borar**, Special Secretary & Director (Tourism), Government of Rajasthan, confirms this. "In our bid to make Rajasthan a favoured destination for domestic and international

Borar adds that the department's marketing strategy is to promote Rajasthan's offerings beyond what is already known through the media, social influencers and on-ground activation. "Our coordinated efforts will bring to life different and new

Government of Rajasthan

is being allocated towards social media and B2C travel marts and the rest will be spent on B2B travel marts and advertising," he adds.

This includes taking part in all the major national and international travel marts such as



IFTM Top Resa (Paris), Mountain Echoes literary festival in Bhutan, ITB Asia Singapore, WTM London, FITUR Madrid and ITB Berlin. "With the launch of our new media campaign titled 'Jane Kya Dikh Jaye' which means, 'You never know what you may see' we expect many more tourists to visit Rajasthan to explore the lesser-known destinations and experiences. These include the Garadia Mahadev Temple in Kota, the Kumbhalgarh fortress on the Aravalli Hills near Udaipur, and Raisamand. We've seen an

increase in numbers already and this is also visible at our music and cultural festivals like the Pushkar Fair, Magnetic Fields Music Fest, Jaipur Lit Fest, Jodhpur Riff Festival, and Udaipur World Music Festival," Borar adds.

The other new destinations that are being promoted and highlighted are Neelkanth in Alwar, the Wax Museum and the Naval Mahal in Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur Shilpgram, Harsha Mata Temple, Chand Baori (stepwell), Abhan-

eri in Dausa, Jwahar Kala Kendra in Jaipur, Wax Museum in Jaipur, Rajmandir Cinema Hall in Jaipur and lesser known destinations in Rajasthan circuits like the Shekhawati (Jhunjunu-Churu-Sikar) as well as Hadoti (Bundi-Kota-Jhalawar).

When asked if Rajasthan Tourism is looking to tie-up with Airbnb to promote heritage properties that have now been certified by the department, he said that the department is open to tie-ups.



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NTO

Philippines targets MiCE & weddings

After crossing the 100,000 mark in Indian arrivals to the Philippines, **Daks Fernandez Gonzales**, Head, Office of Product and Market Development–India and Middle East, Department of Tourism, Philippines, believes that the numbers would only grow, owing to interest and increased infrastructural development.



he year 2017 proved to be a landmark for the Philippines, as the number of arrivals from India to the archipelago crossed 100,000. Ecstatic about the achievement, Daks Fernandez Gonzales said, "It was a tremendous year and we surpassed the mark of 100,000 arrivals from India. We are expecting further growth of the Indian market or inbound Philippines from India of about 25 per cent more. India is the 12th largest source market for inbound in the Philippines and continues to have the second most significant growth rate of inbound arrivals for the country. The projections of growth become stronger with the efforts of our team in India, which is continuously educating the agents. In fact, once connectivity issue is resolved, our projected growth will be even more."

Connectivity

Since there is no direct connectivity between Philip-

pines and India, Gonzales believes that once this is sorted and direct connectivity is established between the two countries, the arrivals will only improve. "We are continuously fighting to connections from India to the Philippines will be fulfilled," he added.

Focal point

The Philippines is presently focusing on MiCE,

segment, which is really growing in the Philippines, is family segment. In fact, there is a very strong interest for Golf travel as well as diving. Besides, weddings is a very big segment and

the Philippines stands out because of its people, said Gonzales. "Apart from the fabulous beaches, it is the warmth and friendliness of the Filipino people which adds to the attraction. Another advantage is that the population speaks English,"

he added.

Trade connection

Association with the travel trade is vital, and Gonzales believes that a constant networking with them is important. "We continuously engage with the travel trade and educate our partners of new products and better access into the Philippines. We conduct roadshows, not just in the big metros, but also in Tier-II and III cities. Our Indian partners are very happy, and business continues to be very strong for the Indian inbound to the Philippines," he said.

Destinations in focus

Insisting that the Philippines continues to be a strong destination for Indians,

in terms of beach holidays, shopping, as well as wellness. Gonzales said. "These are some components chosen by the MiCE groups and leisure travellers. The islands of Boracay, Cebu, Bohol and the city of Manila are very strong in terms of interest. The best part is that once Indians have experienced the Philippines through MiCE travel, they will come back and bring their families to see and experience what they did in their previous trip."

Infrastructure

Gonzales revealed that Boracay is continuously increasing its capacity. "There are new developments in Western Coast of the island, adding inventory of around 3000 pax. Infrastructure is being worked on, domestic connectivity is improving, and we are ready for the growth. Additionally, the cruising infrastructure in the Philippines is being improved," he shared.

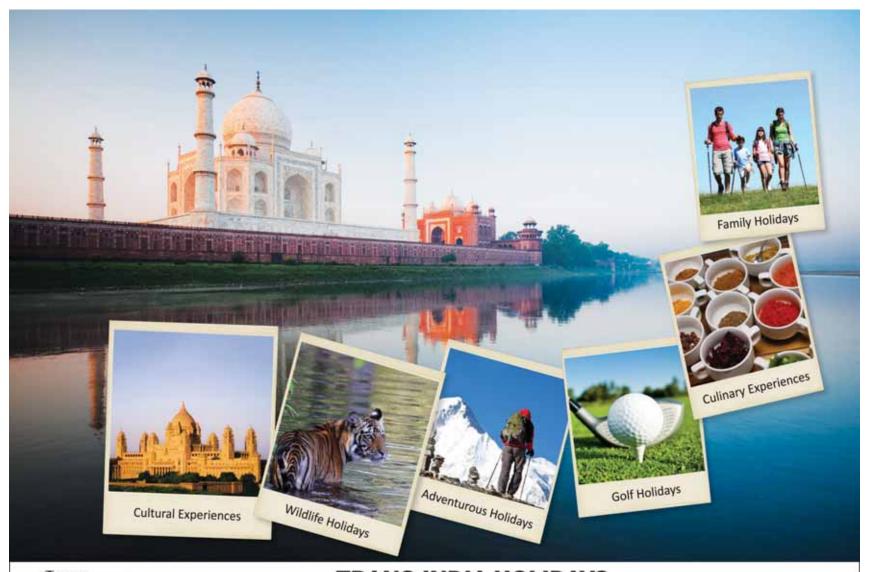


get a chance to have direct connectivity between India and the Philippines and we are very happy that a lot of interest is coming in from our partners both the countries. We are very confident that very soon this vision of direct as it is one of the booming segments from India. "Currently, the strongest market segment is MiCE and we will continue to put our efforts on that and while strengthening the market. Leisure market is also very strong. A new

we are making efforts to further boost this segment," said Gonzales.

Competition

While there are many beach destinations with abundant natural beauty,





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India to see more of IHG properties

InterContinental Hotels Group's I-Grad programme aims at preparing students for professional competition and enriching the hospitality industry with skilled individuals. **Pascal Gauvin**, COO, IHG—India, Middle East and Africa, tells **TAVTALK** about their plans for India and more.

ANUPRIYA BISHNOI

QTell us about the I-Grad programme.

I-Grad is a programme to develop our future leaders in the company. We select them in the university in India and we bring them after 18 months to managerial jobs. It's a part of our strategy; we are growing our business in India and we have 38 hotels to open, out of which 31 are already open. We need to have more talent. We have many programmes like this to develop people's skills at different levels: it's part of our DNA. When people learn, they deliver what is needed to succeed in this business. If students want to come and work abroad, they can do that; if they want to change a brand, they can do that. We are the enablers of their career. That said, these students need to acquire the skills, the right leadership, and the right experience to make sure they can continue evolving.

66We have opened many hotels, we have signed a new deal with SAMHI where we are going to open 14 Holiday Inn Express properties next year. That's important for us; that's the way we want to grow.

COO, IHG, India, Middle East and Africa



How has 2017 fared for IHG?

The previous year was great for IHG and the business is still growing. We have opened many hotels, we have signed a new deal with SAMHI where we are going to open 14 Holiday Inn Express properties next year. That's important for us; that's the way we want to grow. It is a big reward for IHG to be chosen by such a great group like SAMHI to represent their hotel in our brand,

Holiday Inn Express. We are really excited about this opportunity.

Which brand of IHG is the biggest revenue generator?

In India, Holiday Inn and Holiday Inn Express are our core brands. We also have Crowne Plaza and InterContinental Hotels. We don't really look at it from revenue per se, but ensure that we can deliver it to our guests. Also, we want to make sure that each of our

brands is delivering specific needs of our guests.

Als there any new IHG brand that India will see soon? Will you consider tertiary markets for your new brand?

We hope to bring our lifestyle brand, Hotel Indigo, in the coming years. Each time we launch a brand, we look at mega cities, but with time, it can go to multiple locations. It depends on what our owners want to do with the brand. I am very hopeful about our Indigo brand for this market. This brand features unique design at every turn without compromising guest comfort. A vibrant modern colour palette, complemented by natural light and locally influenced design and décor, make for an inviting, stylish and refreshing atmosphere for everyone.

How different is India as a market from the Middle East or Africa?

Every region is different, every country is different. In India, IHG has been investing for many years because we believe it's a fastgrowing market. It's a unique market; all our employees are Indian. It's very important to have an Indian team to run a property in the Indian market. We are learning every day. I come to India on a regular basis and I discover a lot. I help the team to grow the brand, making sure we are responding to the guest's needs and that our owners are happy with their

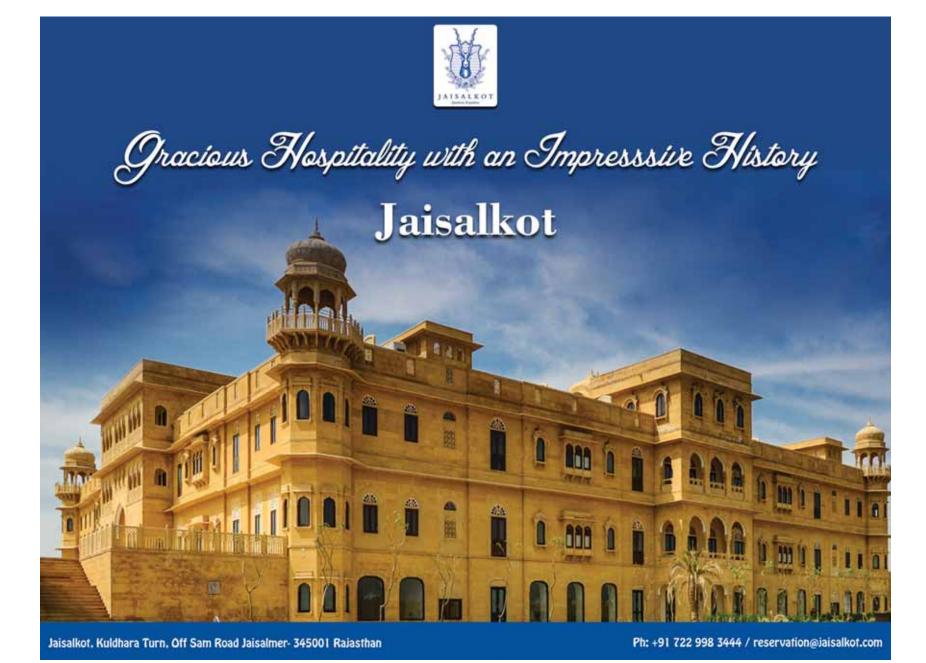
investment and the return on their investment.

Are there any challenges specific to the Indian market that you face?

There is no challenge specific to the Indian market; it is a beautiful market. The growth in the Indian market has been consistent in the last few years and is continuing. It gives us a lot of hope for developing our brand here uninterruptedly. India is diverse from North to South and from East to West. We want to make sure that we develop relevant brands for guests who want to stay with us.

New Movements

IHG has appointed Vivek Bhalla as Regional Vice President, South West Asia (SWA). Bhalla succeeds Shantha de Silva, who will now be the Senior Director, New Hotels - Australasia and Japan for IHG



Ayubowan! says Amari to Indians

Immersed in Dutch colonial history and culture, the UNESCO World Heritage Site and historic city of Galle has a strong hospitality market. The recently-opened Amari Galle is a traveller's delight, offering products and services like no other in the city, asserts **Puneet Dutta**, Hotel Manager of Amari Galle.

SHIVANI KAUL FROM GALLE

he five-star beachfront resort in Galle, with 172 sea-facing questrooms, is just a 2 hours 30 minutes-drive by car from Bandaranaike International Airport and two hour-drive from Ratmalana International Airport. With Amari Galle, discerning travellers can experience the local flavours,

concepts and other facilities such as Kids Club and Kids pool. For MiCE, we offer a state-of-art ballroom, meeting rooms and outdoor venues. For the experiential guests we have Bommu Rooftop Bar and private dinner on the beach. Our location is also ideal as a base for guests to experience the destination. Amari Galle is

also perfect weddings with a variety of locations to host different events."

The India market has a huge potential and Amari Galle has created experiences that cater to the Indian traveller, says Dutta. "We understand food is a key factor and hence we have an Indian Chef and an Indian section at Ahara Gourmet

highlights which vegetarian meals. Weddings are very special to Indian families. We have put together a team that can conceptualise, prepare and execute events that will be memorable for the couples and their families," he asserts.

Despite witnessing mass destruction post the devastating Tsunami of 2004, Galle has rebuilt itself with tremendous character. Dutta savs. "Galle has traditionally been small boutique properties run by the locals. Amari Galle has come in with years of international experience in hospitality and has completed a missing link. Since our opening in 2017, we've seen huge demands. We closed January 2018 with 85 per cent occupancy and ADR more than \$180. The rest of year is also looking very positive." In terms of interacting with the travel trade, Dutta adds, "We have a very uncomplicated pricing strategy for the travel trade. We have recently come up with an offer of \$275 net including all taxes on a full board basis."

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Puneet Dutta Hotel Manager Amari Galle

Weddings are very special to Indian families. We have put together a team that can conceptualise, prepare and execute events that will be memorable for the couples and their families

the charm, the sea, sights and sounds, all at the luxury property. The hotel is also near many tourist attractions like Galle Fort (5 km), Unawatuna Beach (10 km), Japanese Peace Pagoda (10 km), and the unexplored Jungle Beach.

Talking about the USP of Amari Galle, Puneet Dutta, Hotel Manager, says, all rooms and venues at the resort enjoy sunset views, are ocean facing and have a balcony with a sit out area. The A ha ra Gourmet Gallery, Shoreline Beach Club. outdoor swimming pool. Breeze Spa and Voyager Lounge, allow guests to have a complete holiday without having to step out. The Voyager Lounge features excellent facilities including complimentary use of showers, lockers to store hand luggage and free Wi-Fi. One can even try the one of Amari's signature Mood massages at the Breeze Spa.

Noting that the main source markets for the hotel are the UK, Germany and India. Dutta savs Amari caters to all segments of tourists. "Families enjoy our resort through the Better Together



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TRAVTALK MARCH 15T FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018

SpiceJet eyes foreign skies | **Saudia to up Delhi frequency**

Responding to the need for low-cost carriers flying more international routes, SpiceJet will begin long-haul flights soon, reveals Ajay Singh, Chairman, SpiceJet.



is effort in turning around the airline is acknowledged by everyone in the aviation industry, but Ajay Singh, India Travel Award winner, and Chairman, SpiceJet, is not resting on his laurels. He has plans to take the low-cost carrier on long-haul international routes soon. Speaking at the CAPA India Aviation Summit in Mumbai, he said, "Our longhaul operations will start relatively soon. There is this entire low-cost long haul market to look at and some of the airlines like Vistara and AirAsia will look to fly international. SpiceJet will certainly expand its international footprint. The new neo and MAX family of fuel-efficient aircrafts have more range and they open several new destinations in neighbouring countries which perhaps were not as accessible with the next generation singleaisle aircrafts. The narrow body aircraft that has come in will have larger range. So the



Ajay Singh India Travel Award winner, and Chairman, SpiceJet

The new neo and MAX family of fuelefficient aircrafts have more range, opening several new destinations in neighbouring countries

way we define 'long haul' will start soon enough. When we will start with wide body aircraft is another issue."

SpiceJet already flies to a few international destinations including Dubai and Singapore. Singh revealed that SpiceJet will look at the wide body as well as narrow body aircraft for this. "We need to look at the cost structures. We need to look at how the wide bodies will work with the new engines. So we are evaluating that. From our perspective, it's the question of aetting the lowest costs that we can manage. For this, we are talking to the manufacturers and trying to figure out what is the best option. All of us, including Vistara, IndiGo and SpiceJet, will need to look at what we do for our passengers on the long-haul sector." Singh added.

Not in for Al stake

SpiceJet will not bid for any stake in the process of privatisation of Air India. Singh said, "We are too small to bid for Air India. We may not be the appropriate candidate for this. Vistara and Singapore Airlines will probably do it. Conceptually, we are too small for this. Nevertheless, it's a great asset and a fantastic brand."

Saudia, or Saudi Arabian Airlines, is all set to up its Delhi-Jeddah frequency from 12 to 14 per week. starting from its winter schedule in March.

TT BUREAU

audia opened a new of-Ofice in Delhi, from where the airline would offer ticketing and back-end services. Ibrahim Mohammed Alqubbi, Manager. Saudia—India along with Dr Saud Mohammed Alsati, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to India, inaugurated the new facility of the airline.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Alqubbi informed, "The new office is to give a new brand image of Saudi Arabia Airlines in India and offer more space as well as greater support to our customers in India. We commenced operations to a new destination in India from October 1, 2017. Now, we have eight destinations online. We have one offline destination which is Calicut. We are planning to open more destinations in 2018 depending on the bilateral. As estimated, the passenger load factor from India is around 76 per cent."



Ibrahim Mohammed Algubbi Manager Saudia—India

Most of our traffic from India is religious or business.We are sixth freedom carriers, and can transfer passengers to any other destination

The airline has also increased its frequency from 12 to 14 flights a week to Delhi and will also be having a new aircraft to serve the Indian skies. The new flights will be operational from the monsoon schedule of the airline which starts from end of March. "We are flying the A-330, our new regional aircraft, which is very good with flatbeds on its business class. We are very proud to send the Indian passengers to Saudi Arabia. Most of our traffic from India is religious or business. Also, to send this message to all the Indian people that we are sixth freedom carriers, and can transfer passengers to any other destination around the world. We are also member of the Skv Team, which makes us partner with more than 18 airlines. From our hub in Jeddah, we can smoothly take the passengers and transfer them to Europe, United States and Africa," he added.

Calling travel agencies as their partners, he said, "We support the airlines as they support us because we are one field, one business and they are sharing the success with us. There are many travel agencies here and we have good relations with them. We have many programmes for the travel agents starting from incentive to commission."



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'Off season' is off India's list

The trade feels that the so-called 'off season' has become a thing of the past. Has India been successful during the 'off season'? TAVTALK spoke to industry leaders to find out more and the verdict is unanimous.



Business is as usual round-the-year in the state. Kerala Tourism's effort in the domestic sector of conducting around 35 roadshows has paid off. Therefore, tourist traffic to the state has come during the periods when the foreign inbound traffic had decreased. The other contributory factor has been the increase in tourist inflow from new markets and the increase of foreign 'adventure tourism' clients. For instance, tourists from the Gulf countries are fill-



Principal Secretary Kerala Tourism

ing up hotel rooms during the 'off season'. The body plans to increase its annual foreign adventure tourists to 5,000.

We need to dovetail our marketing strategy based on the demand, focusing on placing India as a holiday destination for all 'reasons' and all 'seasons'. Thanks to the fact that India has myriad products such as 'sunny India', 'cool hill resorts', beaches, 'wellness' and festivals with something to offer all year around. The growing popularity of adventure and ecotourism is also helping to spread the season. The summer months are well spent in the mountains; IATO the monsoons have their own attrac-



President

tion; while the winter months have always been the main season. While the tourism seasons have expanded, overloaded taxes and confusion on the GST are hindering the industry.

The industry used to suffer because of 'off seasons', mainly during summers in the plains and winter in the hills. However, the industry's innovative methodology of selling specific destinations with special 'off season' packages and tapping corporates and families for 'off season' vacations has paid off. States like Goa and Kerala have been very successful in attracting tourists during their lean period. In the same vein, winter traffic to the ADTOI hills has increased because of special activities and packages.





President

Owing to its geographical diversity, India has now become a 'year-round' tourist destination. The 'off-season' of the plains are offset by the attractions of destinations like Ladakh and Uttarakhand, which provide both foreign and domestic tourists trekking and soft adventure pursuits. A great boost to the 'offseasons' has come by way of adventure tourism, especially trekking and mountaineering, which are mostly done during the lean months. With

adventure tourism having emerged as one of the industry's fastest growing segments, the 'off-seasons' is expected to see even further tourist growth.



General Manager Marketing & Business Development, WelcomHeritage

India's strength lies in its numerous seasonal destinations. For instance, while Rajasthan witnesses off season during summers and peak season during the winters, Himachal Pradesh works with the contrary. It is important that the Ministry of Tourism and other tourism boards come out with certain incentives during these off-seasons so as to push sales. The business exists but special hotel rates, discounted airline fares and rentals can be offered to travellers during this period to promote tourism.

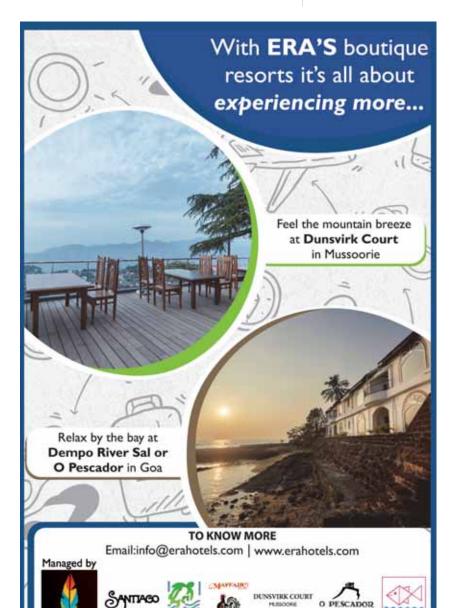
The need of the hour is to engage in a collective job to harness full business potential in all seasons.



Chief Executive Officer, Nidra Hospitality India Travel Award winner

The old norms of tourism are changing and 'off season' business in India is steadily increasing. This is a welcome development as it has resulted in good occupancies in hotels, thanks to sustained international marketing and promotional campaigns. India as a destination is now much better known and more visible worldwide. Various tourist attractions and offerings of the country are now better appreciated. The other factor that has boosted 'off season' tourism is an impressive increase in domestic tourism

which has resulted in an increase in revenues of hotels, agents, tour operators and transporters.





Managing Director Gainwell Travel & Leisure.

The inbound tourist season for India has now extended far beyond the winter months, once considered as the traditional peak period. This means that there is no 'off season', as such. This is undoubtedly a very positive factor for the industry, and one that has increased overall earnings across the board. A significant factor behind this development is the impressive growth of the domestic tourism sector. MiCE operators have also generated good business in the monsoon months, thereby helping fill up hotel rooms throughout the year. Like airline seats, hotels also have become more flexible with their rates.

India isn't upbeat about the business levels in the 'off season', and the country isn't promoted at all as an 'all-weather' tourist destination. The truth is that the country's branding has not been done on these lines. The result is that unfortunately, in spite of having all the right tourist products, India has not been able to attract International tourism to its shores from April to September, for the leisure markets. There's been an increase in business, but it isn't significant. So the seasonality of our business remains one of the industry's biggest problems. This can be overcome by a constant industry push from all the stakeholders.



Homa Mistry India Travel Award winner and CFO Trail Blazer Tours

Itineraries with Indian meals onboard

■ Europamundo Vacaciones has announced new inclusions especially for the Indian travellers on 14 of their programmes across the globe. Aparna C Basumalik, Country Head-India, Europamundo Vacaciones, says, "The feedback we received from our travel partners was availability of Indian meal options in most of our programmes."

The company is a pure B2B provider wherein Europamundo sells various products to distributors in India and no customer can make direct bookings with them. The commission offered to the trade partners is higher than the average market standard, she says. The company witnessed a lot of interest for the Indian programmes to desti-

nations like Switzerland, Italy, France and Spain. These standard itineraries are now available with Indian meals onboard. "Some of the destinations we cover are Scandinavia, Ireland, Scotland, Croatia, Greece and Turkey. It is very encouraging to see an increase in duration of the programmes opted by the Indian travellers."



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The sunny side of Kashmir



ammu and Kashmir is a combination of everything one wants from snow clad mountains, meandering streams, flora and fauna, to lakes and a cold dessert. With three regions, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, the state is a key spiritual and religious hub, catering to all age groups, old and young. J&K is aspiring to be not only an adventure tourism hub but also a destination that offers Rafting niche products and is soon emerging as a MiCE hotspot.

Tulip Garden

Tulip Garden in Kashmir is the Asia's largest and the state hosts a festival around the month of April to showcase the charming beauty of the garden. The tulip garden in Srinagar is commonly known as Siraj Bagh and is located on the banks of the famous Dal Lake. When viewing the garden, you are able to see the large variety of colours of the flowers. There are over 60 varieties of early, mid and late blooming tulips.

Golfing

Kashmir offers a unique opportunity to play golf in invigorating surroundings, where the wind whispers through enormous trees of chinar and stately pine. The golf course at Gulmarg, situated at an altitude of 2,650 m, is the highest green golf course in the world. The Kashmir Golf Club has all the luxuries fitted that make playing golf a memorable experience while the Royal Spring Golf Course has been voted as India's best golf course.

With the intricate network of Mountain Rivers flowing through myriad rocky gorges, forests, flowers and high mountain villages, the Lidder River, Pahalgam provides ideal locales for the perfect water adventure. The suitable period for river running depends on the adequacy of water volume. Thus, the period between April and September is most appro-

Skiing is one of the prime attractions in Kashmir and is apt for adventure seekers. Gulmarg is considered to be the best ski resort in the Himalayas and is accredited as the highest cable car enabled ski

Jammu and Kashmir is renowned worldwide for its natural beauty, high altitude lakes and breathtaking landscapes. The state is now encashing on its natural assets and warm hospitality, to showcase itself in a new light to tourists all over the world.







resort in the world mainly due to a Gondola Cable Car Lift. For skiers visiting Gulmarg, accommodation is available at the JKTDC Huts situated at Patnitop, Sanasar and Kud apart from the several private hotels available for booking at Patnitop and Kud

Mountaineering

Climbing in the Himalayas can be very stimulating. Rich in flora and fauna, the summits of most peaks are an exhilarating experience. More recently, peaks in the restricted area of the Nubra Valley in the Inaian Karakorams have also been opened to foreign and Indian tourists. The popular peaks of Ladakh and Kashmir where mountaineering expeditions are organised on a regular basis are Apsarasas, Chong Kumdan, Teram Kangri Group. Tughmo Zarpo and Saser Kangri. Places like Pahalgam, Gulmarg and Sonamarg serve as base camps for trekking tours to mountain peaks.



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800-plus rooms by 2021

K Raheja Corp's hospitality company has ambitious growth plans through both greenfield and brownfield acquisitions apart from adding about 800-odd rooms by 2021.

TT BUREAU

Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director & CEO, Chalet Hotels, is back with Chalet Hotels in Mumbai after just a six-month stint at ITC Hotels. Picking up from where he left off, Sethi sounds extremely upbeat about the coming year. "We have about four hotels under development right now. These will add roughly about 800 more rooms to our

run. "The industry is likely to do extremely well, given the macro-dynamics of the business. The demand-supply situation is looking favourable for a healthy growth. I think we have a good five to six-year run, not taking into consideration the healthy growth that we predict on account of the recent economic activities. We still think we will grow at about eight to nine per cent. And if things go positive on that side, we might even touch low teens," he predicts. For the year ended March 2017, Chalet Hotels' turnover for its total seven hotels stood at `950 crore with earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation (EBIDTA) of `350 crore, After including the performance of the company's co-owned hotel in Juhu, the turnover stood at `1,100 crore and EBIDTA at `400 crore.

3rd Leaf Hotel in Pune on the cards

■ A strategic business unit of Dabur Group of Companies. Jetwavs Travels is a full-service travel management company headquartered in New Delhi, India with offices in Gurgaon, Pune and Mumbai. Started as an airline ticketing agency in 1990, the company has grown over the years to become one of the leading full-service Travel Management Companies in India. "The USP of Jetways Travels is its dedicated team and a 24x7 flawless service. Our local presence in over 80 countries gives us the lever-

age to source the best rates locally and providing our clients with hands-on support in their endeavours to manage their travel experiences for optimal results. We opened our first hotel, New Leaf at Pune in 2010 and added another property in the city in 2014. Now, we are looking at opening our third property in Lonavala," says J.K. Budhraja, Managing Director, Jetways Travels. He further informs that the company has been growing at 15-20 per cent year-onyear both in terms of sales and revenue. The company



Managing Director Jetways Travels

caters to major pharmaceutical and telecom clients besides Dabur. Budhraja also believes that except WTM London, none of the other international trade exhibitions are relevant for the trade now.



Managing Director & CEO Chalet Hotels

These will add roughly about 800 more rooms to our current portfolio of 2800-odd rooms. These will take about two to three years to build

current portfolio of 2800-odd rooms. These will take about two to three years to build," Sethi reveals.

Chalet Hotels currently has about eight hotels, of which seven are owned by Chalet Hotels 100 per cent and operated by Marriott. One out of the eight is run by Chalet Hotels. Speaking about the route that the hotel company will take for growth, Sethi says, "We have ambitious plans. We are looking at acquisition opportunities in the market and we want to grow through both greenfield and brownfield acquisitions."

While charting these plans, Chalet Hotels will stay true to its portfolio which is largely upper, upscale and luxury segments. "We also looking at upscale assets. We are doing a couple of developments in that segment. We will stay in the upscale and upper upscale because that's a sweet spot for us. We might do select luxury, or mid-segment hotels as well," Sethi adds.

Sethi feels that the hotel company is in for a good



Hills get back to normal | Training tourism aspirants

Contd. from page 14



Executive President, Eastern Himalaya Travel & Tour Operators Association

After the three-month long strike in the hills, we are gradually picking up on our business and ensuring that visitors are safe and secure to travel. We are hoping that the coming season will fare well as we have already received a couple of bookings till June 20 and expect a few more. Now in its third edition, BTM is only getting better as arrangements have been made in terms of participation, accommodation, transport, etc are very good as compared to last season. There has been increasing importance of outbound and potential in the East and Southeast Asia.

The mart has only evolved and improved with every passing year in terms of management of the process flow, branding of the event, quality of buyers and sellers and the way in which we are showcasing our product offerings. Today, you will find Darjeeling, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh here under one common ground. Within North Bengal, you will find trekking teams, transporters and hoteliers; so it is a complete package and a bouquet



Proprietor, Suvidhaa Aapki

of services a person requires for a tour here.



Director, En route Tour & Travels

At this year's BTM, we have had a very good response from buyers all over India and sellers primarily from the eastern himalayan region, namely, Bhutan. Nepal, Sikkim and Darjeeling. The so-called three Ts of our region - tea, timber, tourism are now flourishing after the 104-day shutdown in Darjeeling. The travel mart provides opportunities for the buyers and sellers from across the country to showcase their latest offerings and build long term business ties.



Assistant Manager—Sales Lemon Tree Hotels

This is our first time in BTM and we are receiving a wonderful response. Last year, the 104-day strike in the hills has affected the entire tourism business in the east, and we are still bearing the brunt of it. The market has not yet flourished like last year, but we are hoping to overcome the situation very soon. BTM is the base to promote our products and services while marketing our business here. The mart is a good platform to interact with both B2B and B2C customers.

Nijhawan Group has joined hands with Delhi University's Ram Lal Anand College to launch a Certificate Course in Heritage and Tourism Management.

TT BUREAU

Nijhawan Group has entered into a Joint Venture with Ram Lal Anand College, University of Delhi, to launch a new Certificate Course in Heritage and Tourism Management. The Certificate course is a unique programme, founded on two key pillars: heritage studies and tourism management approach and aims to promote the conservation and management of the invaluable heritage of India.

"This is an historical occasion for Nijhawan Group. The course will give students the possibility to advance to the levels of excellence required by the travel and tourism industry. This certificate course will bring key industry partners together to promote tourism as a rewarding and exciting career opportunity and encourage more youngsters to explore the options and career paths in travel and tourism sector. It's a long-term vision wherein we will convert this Certificate course into Diplo-



Ankush Nijhawan Managing Director Nijhawan Group

The course will give students the possibility to advance to the levels of excellence required by the travel and tourism industry

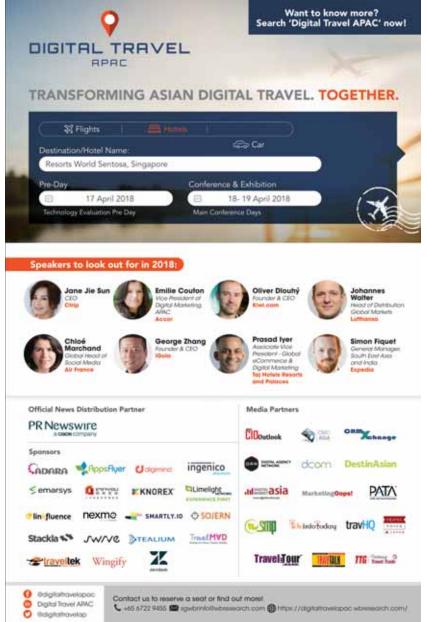
ma Course to further encourage more and more youth to embrace a career in this sector," said Ankush Nijhawan, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group.

"The certificate course on Heritage and Tourism Man-

agement offered by Ram Lal Anand College is first course of its kind in Delhi University. It has been framed in the spirit of Government of India's emphasis on skilling the youth for better employability. Signing an MoU with Nijhawan Group is in sync with present Prime Minister's insistence on Public- Private partnership in the process of skilling our youth. We hope that in collaboration with Nijhawan Group we would not only be able to successfully run but also expand the scope of this course to benefit the youth of India as well as the tourism industry," said Dr. Rakesh Kumar Gupta, Principal, Ram Lal Anand College.

The Certificate Course in Heritage and Tourism Management is a new six months certificate programme, where professionals of College faculty will conduct weekend classes on Heritage Management. The college will organise heritage walks within Delhi in the first year. Nijhawan Group will aid in organising training and placements within travel trade in India. 🦫







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34 travtalk march 151 fortnight issue 2018 AGENTS

Agents let their hair down in Barcelona



Cruise Carrot conducted its biggest familiarisation trip for Indian travel agents on Pullmantur Cruise from Barcelona for seven nights.

New markets for inbound

Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels, believes that the Tourism Ministry needs to focus on promoting India in the emerging source markets to boost inbound tourism.

TT BUREAU

Reporting stupendous growth in the year 2017 compared to the previous 2-3 years, Erco Travels is expecting a fair rise in inbound business in 2018. Last year, Erco Travels added South Africa to the inbound business division where it appointed a local representative to conduct marketing and PB activities for India

Hospitality Associate

"Inbound is a difficult business because there are more players in the industry than the number of tourists visiting India on an organised trip. Thus, to sustain and remain in business, we have to be different and our approach should be original," says Gosain.

Talking about challenges plaguing the inbound tourism industry in India.

Gosain asserts that direct connectivity to some new emerging source markets remains a challenge. He adds, "There are regular promotions for India in our important source markets which is essential, but the focus should be to reach out to new markets and conduct intensive research for systematic growth. In my view, every market has a potential to generate business. How-



Ravi Gosain Managing Director Erco Travels

Inbound is a difficult business because there are more players in the industry than the number of tourists visiting India on an organised trip. We have to be different and our approach should be original

ever, we need to educate local tour operators, journalists and opinion makers. The expenses which the Ministry of Tourism incurs today in these new markets can be a good investment for our country in the future. Indian embassies in the emerging source markets can be roped in to market tourism to India."

Gosain points out that ITB Berlin is an important platform for the company. "It offers us a networking platform and some serious business opportunities with our counterparts from across the globe. We have high expectations from ITB Berlin but I feel the show organisers should work hard to bring decision makers and quality buyers for the better future of ITB and its participants. ITB still holds its reputation for serious business meetings and I hope it remains like that because other small travel trade exhibitions in Europe are fading away due to less interest from buyers or useful customers." Gosain concludes.



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disha disha & Beaches

The eastern Indian state of Odisha is going all out to promote its Buddhist circuit and beaches along with wildlife sanctuaries, apart from the already popular destinations of Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.



Buddhism in Odisha

Buddhist tourism in Odisha has observed the opening up of some new vistas by recent findings from excavations. Although many Buddhist monuments already exist in the state, these newly identified sites with Buddhist remains have also added to the charm of Odisha.

With the 'Diamond Triange' of Lalitagiri, Udaygiri Ratnagiri and hills, located 90 kilometres Bhubaneshwar and from kilometres northeast of Cuttack, the Diamond Triangle attracts many Buddhist tourists from Asia and beyond every year.

Ratnagiri

Ratnagiri in the Birupa river valley in the district of Jajpur, is a famous Buddhist centre. For lovers of art and architecture, lay tourists as well as special groups, Ratnagiri offers a large brick monastery with beautiful doorways, cellar, sanctum with a colossal Buddha figure and a large number of Buddhist sculptures. There is a smaller monastery at

Mangrove Creeks Bhitarkanika

the place along with a stone temple, brick shrines and a large stupa with numerous smaller stupas around.

Lalitgiri

The majestic ruins of the huge brick monastery, the remains of the chaitya hall, votive stupas and a renovated stone stupa at the apex of a small rugged sandstone hill dominate the rural greenery around. In addition. the museum displays a large number of Mahayana sculptures consisting of colossal Buddha figures, huge Bodhisattva statues, statues of Tara, Jambhala and others. The discovery caskets containing sacred relics, probably of the Tathagata himself, from the stone stupa at the top of the hill, further enhances the sacredness of the stupa as well as of Lalitgiri for Buddhists around the world.

Udayagiri

Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves command a unique position in the field of history, rock-cut architecture, art and religion. The caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri are essentially dwelling retreats of the Jain ascetics. Udayagiri provides visitors a grand sight with its newly excavated monastery complex that must be reached through a long stairway. The unexcavated area poses a mystery to archaeologists, art lovers and lay visitors alike with prospects of the hidden

Into the wild at **Bhitarkanika**

treasures that lie buried.

Bhitarkanika a luxuriant green. rich and pulsating ecosystem. Located the estuarial region of Brahmani-Baitarani, in the north-eastern place Kendrapara district, the sanctuary is home to over 215 species

of birds, including winter migratory birds from

Sun, sea & sand at Gopalpur Located at a mere

distance of 16 kilometres from Berhampur, this seaport can be a real retreat to sea lovers. Ideal for both sailing and surfing, the beach is isolated and remains undisturbed sculptures made by local artists are a feast to the eyes.



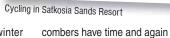
Satkosia gorge a unique feature in the geomorphology in India. Located in the districts of Angul, Cuttack, Nayagarh



Satkosia River Cruise

sanctuary with sylvan beauty and excellent natural features is an attractive destination for scientists and nature lovers. The area supports dry and moist deciduous forests and moist peninsular Sal

forests and is stronghold of tiger, leopard, elephant, sambar, Gharial







38 TRAVTALK MARCH 15T FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018 **STATES**

Madhya Pradesh

Amalgamation of nature, culture and adventure

Madhya Pradesh is home to dense forests resplendent in flora and fauna; where nature is outlined with cultural experiences at various sites. If you are looking for an adventure, visit the heart of India and indulge in a refreshing and holistic holiday.



Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (Cyornis Tickelliae)



rom wildlife, nature, birding to historical and cultural attractions sprawling across the state, Madhya Pradesh is the perfect mix for a complete vacation. Pench, Ocrchaa, Bedhaghat, Tawa Madhai, Bandhavgarh, Mandu are some of those spots where one would want to start their journey into MP.

Panchmarhi

Madhya Pradesh's most verdant jewel-Panchmarhi, is a destination where nature finds exquisite expressions in myriad enchanting ways. The magnificence of nature is complimented by the archeological treasures whereby in cave shelters rich rock paintings can be found.

Most of these have been placed in the period 500-800 AD but the earliest paintings are estimated to be 10,000 years old. Take a walk through nature and imbibe the culture at some of the fascinating sites like Mahadeo, Dhoopgargh, Rajat Pratap, Handi Koh, Chauragarh Temple, Ashtachal, Jalawataran and Satpura National Park, etc.

Hanuwantiya

A drive from Indore through Indore Omkareshwar by-pass leads you to a spot laying snugly by the side of the Indira Sagar dam-Hanuwantiya. A home for adventure enthusiasts, one can boat in the placid water, backpack in the emerald surroundings, admire the flora and fauna, take a fresh water cruise or have a botanical walk. The Boriyamaal Island situated in the Indira Sagar Dam offers a truly fresh water island experience. The undulating terrain of the island is an invite for the trekking enthusiasts and avid cyclists. The higher altitudes offer challenging terrain for cycling. The island is the home to some of the exotic bird species of Central India. A walk in the wilderness will leave you awestruck at the sheer variety of the winged wonders. Peacock, small cormorant, Black Stork and European Ostray are seen frequently.

Parsili is an idyllic place is the Sidhi district which can easily be termed as a paradise for bird watchers and nature lovers. Situated on the banks of the river Banas, this unspoilt destination is 10 km away from Sanjay-Dubri National Park where a passion for wildlife can be complimented with a leisurely break. Birds like Herons, Egrets, White-Necked Stork, White Ibis, Whistling Teal, Kites, Eagles, Harriers, King Fishers and Oriole are part of the rich avifauna. One should take a barefoot trek on the gentle turf of the sand bed of river Banas which leads to Kathbunglow, an old wooden haveli with sprawling gardens. Also take a trip to the Sanjay-Dubri National Park to witness exquisite wildlife nestled in the arms of nature.

Raising tourists' thrill quotient

Madhya Pradesh has been traditionally blessed with nature. When a state is rich in natural resources like hills, forests, water bodies etc, it is but natural that adventure tourism should have been a forte. However, even though we have come on board a little late, we want to change the perception that adventure can be experienced only on snow



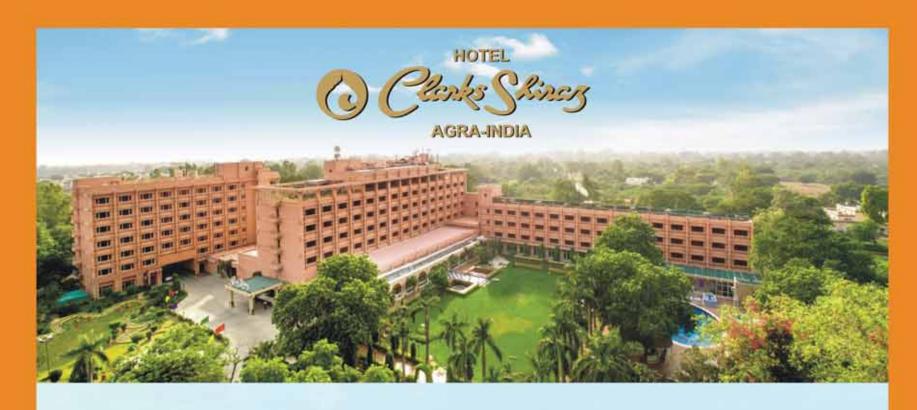
clad mountains. To prove our credentials as an adventure destination, we have been hosting Jal Mahotsav for the last three years, which is a oneof-its-kind water festival in the country.

There are multiple opportunities in Madhya Pradesh for adventure like river rafting, rock climbing, jungle camping, etc. Also, MP is the first state in the country to bring out rules to allow recreational and tourism related activities in the forests. These Wildlife Recreational Rules will allow controlled tourism activities like camping, trekking, bicycle tours, etc. in the forests. Till now 70-80 areas have been notified as recreational areas by the forest department. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is also putting together facilities to attract adventure tourism enthusiasts to explore the areas in Madhya Pradesh.

MP's adventure drive

- Madhya Pradesh will host Adventure NEXT from December 10-12, 2018 at Bhopal.
- This is Adventure Travel Trade Asociation's (ATTA) first event in Asia.
- Under Wildlife Recreational Rules, 70-80 areas are notified for tourism related activities in the forest.





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40 TRAVTALK MARCH 151 FORTNICHT ISSUE 2018

UTPA team apprises Uttarakhand CM



Europe tops Kesari list

Central and Eastern Europe have taken a lead, according to Kesari Tours, followed by South and Central America, indicating that India's growing outbound is getting more adventurous.

While 2017 was comparatively slow for Kesari Tours – one of India's leading tour operators – mostly because of the after-effects of demonetisation and GST, 2018 is looking brighter with things settling down a bit. Himanshu Patil, Director, Kesari Tours, says, "We have started getting a lot of inquiries. Our main aim is to promote Central Europe and Eastern Europe along with South and Central America this

PATA OTOU A TAIL O

year. These are already showing growing popularity in India. We are already selling Antarctica tours as well as South America tours and we want to increase our numbers for these destinations."

He explains that Indians today are looking for varied and extraordinary destinations. "More and more people are looking for experiential travel. They want to experi-

ence different things, want to stay in pods, explore the Northern Lights, stay in an ice hotel, go on a luxury cruise. Therefore, I think South and Central America as well as Eastern Europe will gain more popularity in 2018. People are going to Croatia, Montenegro, and Lake Bled in Slovenia. These are a few destinations people are exploring. Russia is also becoming very popular for us," Patil adds.



Himanshu Patil Director Kesari Tours

Our main aim is to promote Central and Eastern Europe. We are already selling Antarctica tours as well as South America tours to increase numbers

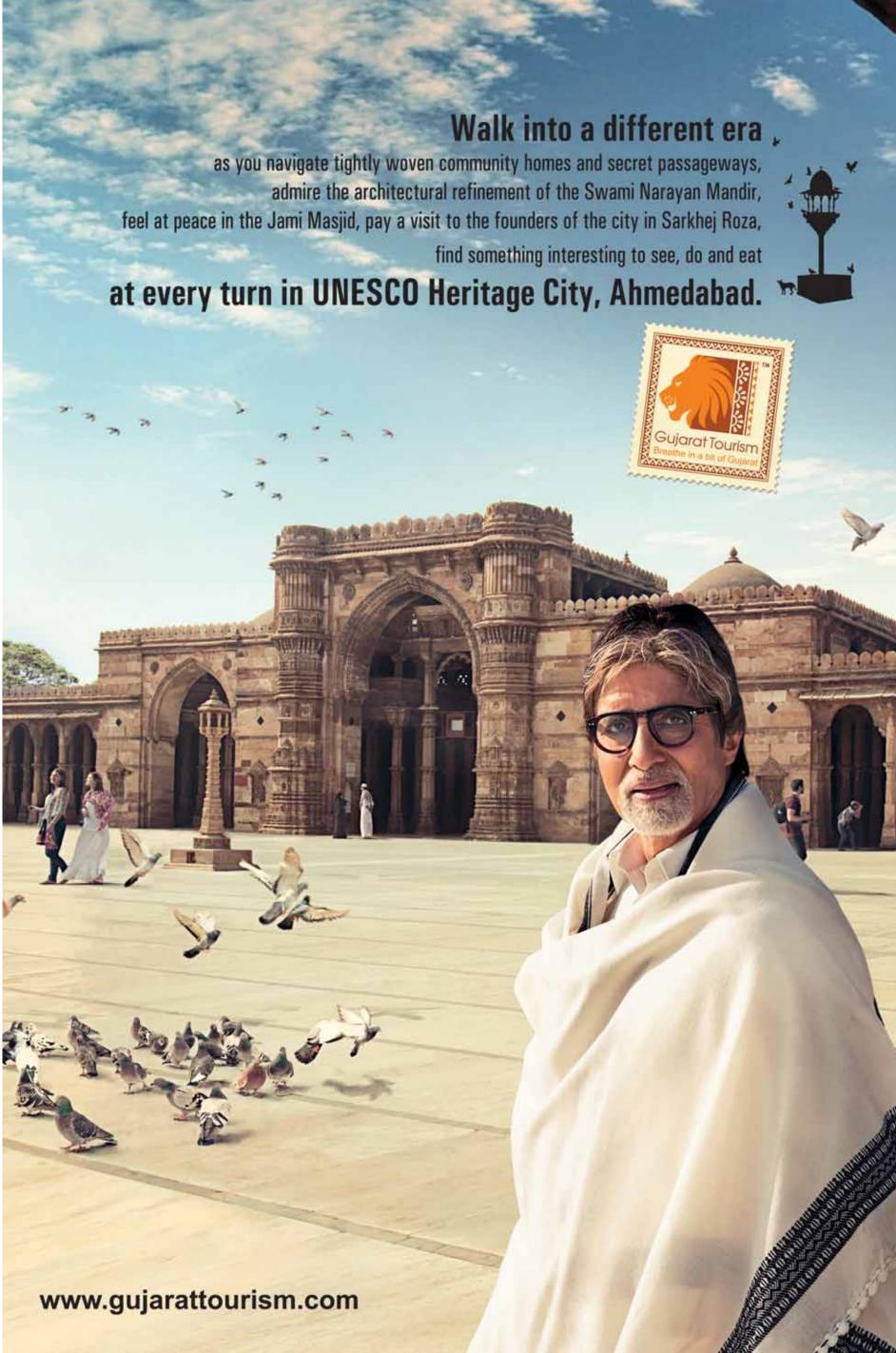
Domestic and inbound

India's domestic market is

also growing rapidly. Patil says, "In spite of a lot of issues in Kashmir right now, Indians still want to enjoy Kashmir. It is one of the most beautiful places on earth as is Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Nainital. These are all very popular destinations during the summer." Other popular Indian destinations according to Kesari Tours are Kerala, Kodai Kanal and a lot of new spots in the North East. Travellers - both domestic and foreigners - are visiting the region in big numbers, Patil says. The tour operator specialises in group tours, MiCE as well as FIT. "We are coming with a lot of new group tours. We have already started groups tours for niche and special-interest groups such as Only Women, Senior Citizens, and Children's Special where we organise NASA camps, apart from family tours. We are already touching 100,000 tourists every year and are looking at almost 20 per cent growth in 2018," Patil reveals. Apart from print, TV and digital marketing. Kesari Tours is also active on social media platforms. It also works closely with a lot of tourism boards and airlines.



Incredible Jodia | IIIIII | III



Himachal Pradesh is endowed with a plethora of natural resources from rivers in deep gorges and placid mountain lakes, thick forests to mountainsides draped in snow. The array of terrain in the state present ample possibilities for a wide range of outdoor activities, sports and adventure.



Himachal Pradesh Haven for adventure lovers

quipped with the right reasonable level of fitness and a ■ burning desire to be adventurous is all one needs to enjoy Himachal Pradesh. Sedentary or strenuous, for the expert or beginner, the state offers a niche of sport and adventure for everyone.

Water sports

The state has become a focal point of water sports with a variety of river rafting possibilities available. For a torrent of adrenalin to gush through every vein and surge over every muscle you can race over the state's river rapids in an inflatable rubber dinghy. The sport is now being held on the Sutlej at Tattapani near Shimla on the Beas near Kullu, the Ravi near Chamba and Chandra in Lahaul. Possibilities are also being explored on the river Spiti. If river rafting is not your thing, then you can also enjoy still water sports of the likes of water-skiing,

surfing, kayaking, rowing, canoeing and sailing. Water sports activities are also available on the waters of the Gobind Sagar near Bilaspur, the Chamera Lake near Dalhousie and the Pandoh Lake on the Mandi-Manali highway. Boating is also available on the Renuka lake in the district of Sirmaur.

Mountain cycling

The entire state is a playground for those who wish to gear for high adventure

with an expedition on cycles. You can pedal your way past high passes or simply make a day-adventure. The lower regions of the state - Kangra, Una, Hamirpur and Bilaspur offer gentle routes. Or you can stretch your mind, muscle and stamina to reach out to the trans Himalavan tract of Lahaul-Spiti and Kinnaur. Milder but no less interesting excursions can be done out at any holiday station.

Trekking

With well over 200 defined trails, the variation in terrain is enormous in the state for an active adventure like trekking. The main trekking areas in Himachal are the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges, routes over the passes between the Shimla region and the Kullu valley, the numerous treks out of Kullu and select treks in

the trans-Himalayan regions of Kinnaur, Lahaul and Spiti. Most trekking areas are between 1,500 metres and 6.000 metres.

Ice Skating and Skiing

The Shimla ice-skating rink has the largest open-air area with natural ice in this part of the world. Ice skating under clear skies, Shimla's temperature provides a series

of uninterrupted sessions. Ice-skating normally begins in early December and goes on till February. Kufri, near Shimla is one of the oldest places in India to be associated with skiing and the slopes are still in use during winter. Above Kufri, the Mahasu ridge also has exciting slopes.

Paragliding

Sail the skies as a free bird while admiring the changing landscape in myriad ways. Almost at will, you dip and wheel high over the hills and valleys. Bir-Billing in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh is one of the best paragliding sites. The activities on offer at other places like Bundla Dhar near Bilaspur. Solang vallev near Manali in the Kullu district.

Camping

Considered as one of the best ways to enjoy the natural landscapes of the state, camping is a popular activity. You can carry your

own gear along or opt for any one of the several organised camps such as the Boparais Camping Site at Barog, that are pitched in various parts of the state. These camps offer accommodation, catering and variety of activities like hiking, fishing, naturetours and rafting. Most of these offer quality facilities and services.







MARCH 1ST FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018 TRAVTALK

IHCL: Treasure trove of heritage

Puneet Chhatwal returns to India after 30 years, to join IHCL as its new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. Here are excerpts from his speech at the Global Hospitality Conclave held at The Leela. Gurugram, where he talks about his journey and the expectations he has from the Indian market.

Anupriya Bishnoi

How does it feel to come back? What changes have you observed in the country in the last few years?

I would say not much has changed because we still have a rich heritage and culture, and our values have become stronger. From an 'everything

tertiary markets. The opportunity is huge not only in India but the Indian subcontinent as well, more so because domestic demand is very strong in India. I don't think the Indian market is dependent on the 10 million foreign arrivals. Though that is nice to have, domestic demand is very important. I do feel there is a very strong domestic base, a huge

population of youngsters, lot of FMCGs, and automobiles are being sold like never before; I don't think that is going to stop.

What will be your role Quand priority at Taj for the brand?

One thing is clear, IHCL stands for different business and in some of them, we are market leaders. Talking about Taj SATS, our in-flight kitchen operation, we have 38 per cent of the market share of the total flight kitchen business. We must take that to the next level. We have a very good opportunity with Roots Corporation, a joint venture between us and Tata Capital. With the Ginger brand, the opportunity in the Indian subcontinent is huge. If we get approval from

the Board, we will take this forward very strongly.

Are you positive about global expansion?

We are not short of resources, we have access to a lot of capital. It's just about putting the right dots in the right spots and taking calculative risks, if we are taking risks at all. I don't believe in

the philosophy of being asset-light only. Growth must be defined as 'SMART', where 'S' means Strategic, 'M' stands for Margin Enhancing, 'A' stands for Asset Management, 'R' is for Relationship, and 'T' is for Tracking. The opportunity is huge, the engagement is huge, so I don't see a big block coming our way.



Puneet Chhatwal Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, IHCL

I I think there will be phenomenal growth in primary and tertiary markets. The opportunity is huge both in India and the Indian subcontinent, due to strong domestic demand

has changed' perspective, there was no hotel beyond Centaur, there was no Aerocity, and the airport terminal was not like it is now. The same story is relevant for Bengaluru, Mumbai and other places as well. That said, things have changed in the rest of the world as well, so it's not that the world has stayed stationary and only India has changed.

Where do you place the Indian market on the global map? Is there more opportunity here or do we need to catch up?

The money is still made in five to six key markets in India that include Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Chennai, Bengaluru, Goa, and Kolkata. I think there will be phenomenal growth in primary and

SMART Growth

Growth must be defined as 'SMART', where 'S' means Strategic, 'M' stands for Margin Enhancing, 'A' stands for Asset Management, 'R' is for Relationship, and 'T' is for Tracking, with a huge engagement and opportunity



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VisitBritain celebrates with trade

VisitBritain unveiled its new marketing campaign 'Find Your GREAT Britain, I Travel For' for the India market on February 6 in Mumbai. The huge delegation from the UK was led by Sally Balcombe, Chief Executive, VisitBritain, who met members of the travel trade industry during the evening reception attended by more than 200 delegates from across India.











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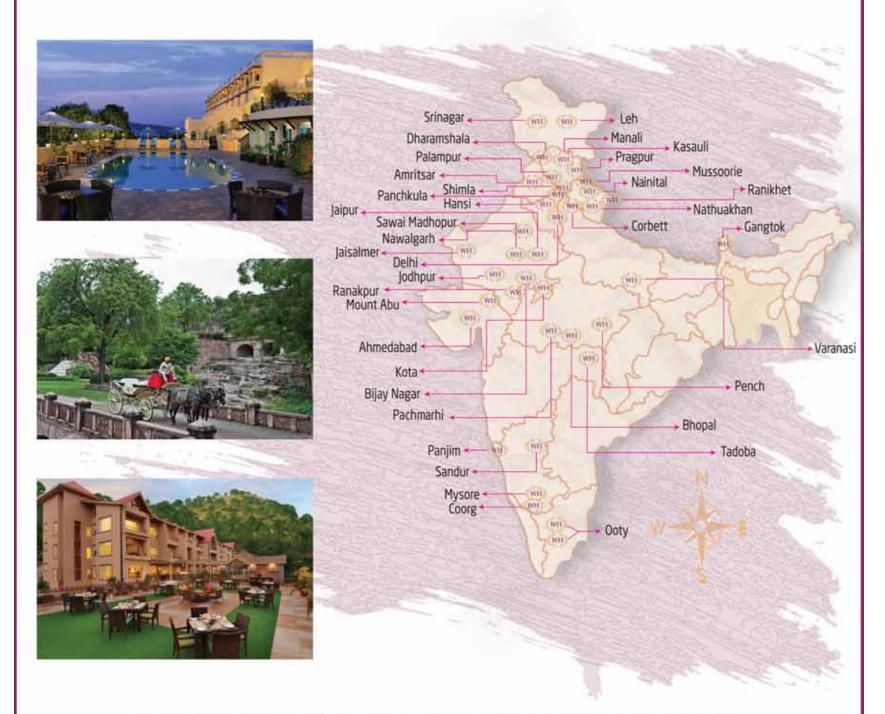
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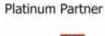














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Keeping customers on top priority, Book My Vacationz always makes sure to give preferences to services instead of margins.

Being the premier luxury travel company and offering individualised vacations worldwide, Book My Vacationz caters to inbound as well as the outbound travel market. With Rajasthan, Kerala and Goa being the most visited inbound travel destinations, the company has every possible thing to offer to different age groups. Whereas outbound, depending on the seasonal visits, Europe, USA, Australia, New Zealand are the most visited destinations in the month

but family. Rather it believes in referral business where prompt action and immediate decisions makes traveller happy which makes the company stand different from the digital market." says Ravi Barua, Co-Founder, Book My Vacationz.

To keep up with the market, the company has a new user friendly and more informatic website in the pipeline which will introduce

new packages, adding new fields like medical tourism, destination weddings, etc. As the company is based in North India, West India is in the radar to expand the travel business in 2018. And for the same, it has exciting offers for customers where free tickets for Tuxedo Illusion Hall and Sri Racha Tiger Zoo in Pattaya, Thailand will be provided for the first few customers from the company's marketing fund.

Realstar places consumers first

Realstar Hospitality lays special emphasis on building top line revenues, maximising efficiencies and minimising operating expenses. Talking about the growth and investment in the Indian market, Eric Barber, Senior Director, National Sales said, "With a 50 per cent ownership with the South Asian franchisee, Realstar Hospitality focuses on developing hotel properties and collaborating with hotel chains. Talking about the initial hiccups of GST and its effects on the market, Barber says, "Canada has always witnessed a decent number of tourists. The impact of GST was seen in the previous year but this year looks promising."

Having 100 per cent guest satisfaction and establishing trust with travel agents, the company has restructures for the travel offerings. Realstar Hospitality has unique products across Canada that caters to every single segment when it comes to competing with other destinations like South Africa and South America. In the time of digitalisation, the company believes in direct consumer relation-



Realstar Hospitality

ship and wants to innovate the digital market by developing digital strategies, restructuring the architecture and spending on organic search.



Ravi Barua Book My Vacationz

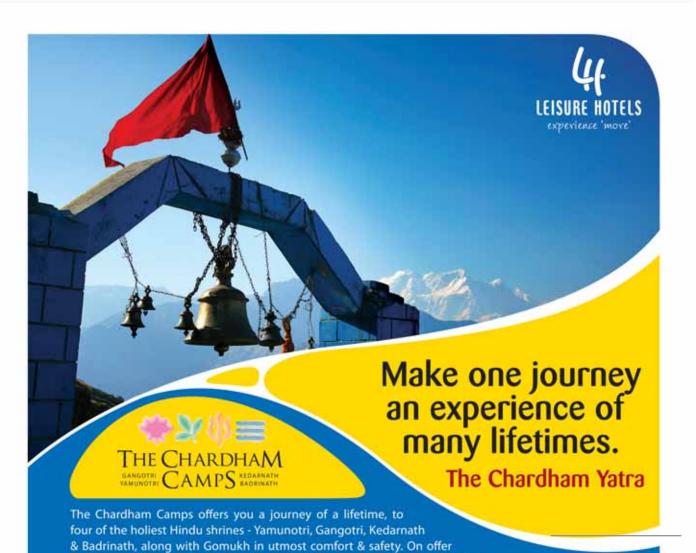
Rather it believes in referral business where prompt action and immediate decisions makes traveller happy which makes the company stand different from the digital market

from April to August. As far as favourite destinations are concerned, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Bali, Dubai, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Maldives, Sri Lanka, etc. always remain on the top list of the travellers. The company believes in giving preferences to the services to the consumer rather than focusing on margins.

"Book My Vacationz do not feel any kind of competition in the digitalised market as it has always believed in making not only customers

TOP Destinations

- Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Bali, Dubai, Mauritius, Maldives, etc. always remain on the top list of the travellers
- Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand are the most visited destinations from April to August
- Raiasthan, Kerala and Goa are the most visited inbound travel destinations



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Dehradun plays host to STHI roadshow

The STHI Group recently hosted a roadshow in Dehradun. The event saw a great number of attendance from travel agents across the region who came together to learn about the showcased product and create future business prospects. The STHI Group also used this opportunity to gets acquainted with the demand of the travel agents from the region.

















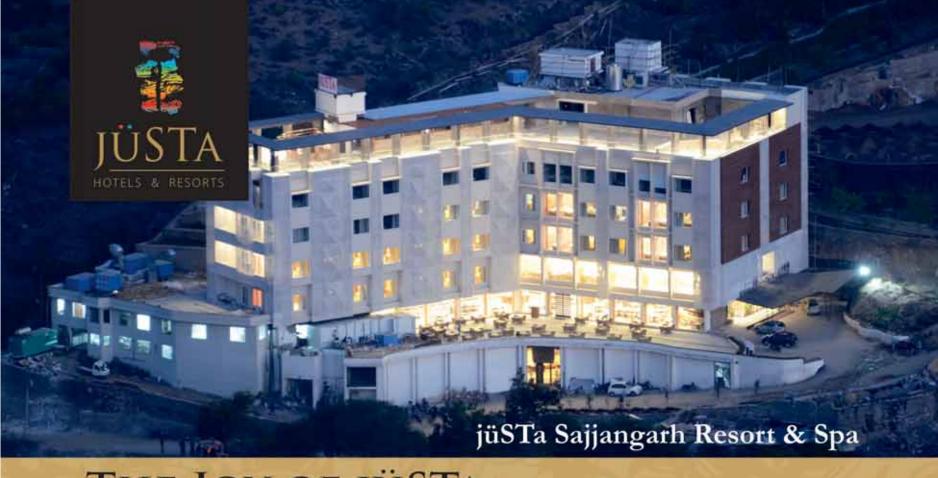












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Philippines brings out more fun in Delhi

The Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines, led a delegation of 10 members comprising DMCs, hotels and DOT personnel from the archipelago for a trade event in New Delhi recently. They met and interacted with the tourism stakeholders, travel trade and public in the city, apprising them about the island nation and its various offerings through B2B meetings.



















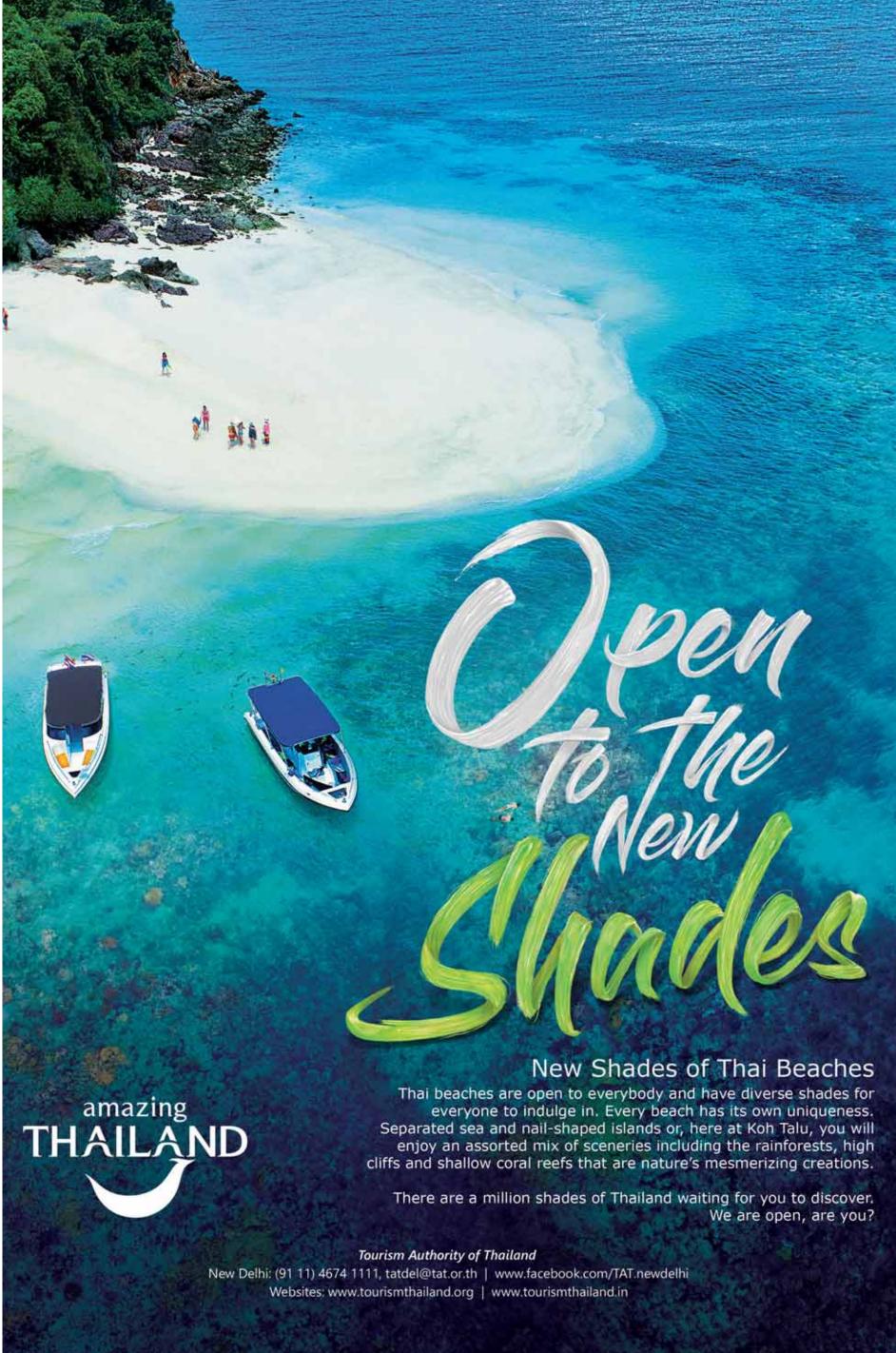












West India rules the tourism roost

West India's contribution to the country's tourism sector has been immense over the past few years, believe stakeholders from the region. India Travel Award winners suggest that with a little help and support from the State and Central Governments the tourism sector will flourish in times to come.



▶ Best Destination Management Company-South East Asia—TravelBullz

Control unregulated agents

TravelBullz recorded growth in outbound numbers from West India, especially Maharashtra and Gujarat. Amit Paul Singh, General Manager-India, TravelBullz, says, "The FIT sales from the western region contributed to an overall average growth of 50 per cent month-on-month as compared to last year to Thailand. 2017 was a very successful year for us as we launched Super Booker's Club and Incentive Scheme. We added over 300 new customers pan India. Groups and MiCE saw a growth of over 150 per cent to Hong Kong last year. We also launched destination Philippines to have a wider presence in South East Asia." Many small players have entered the market referring themselves as DMCs.



2017 was a very successful year for us as we launched Super Booker's Club and Incentive Scheme. We added over 300 new customers pan India.



Maharashtra to have taken our products very positively. Mumbai and Ahmedabad have been our top performing cities in India.

Best Foreign Exchange Aggregator—FxKart.com

Technology on the rise

FxKart has seen an encouraging rise in the number of bookings and adoption of technology in Tier-II and III cities, says Abdul Hadi Shiekh, Co-founder & CEO, FxKart.com. "West India has turned out to be a region of huge potential for our online forex booking products. We have seen the non-metro cities in Gujarat and Maharashtra to have taken our products very positively. Mumbai and Ahmedabad have been our top performing cities in India. Although the adoption of tech-based products is encouraging, educating travel partners on how such tech tools can vastly increase their efficiency and lead to savings is still a challenge," he says.

▶ Best Travel Management Company—Ciclo Tourism

Curb unregulated businesses

According to Jaydeep Patel, Managing Director, Ciclo Tourism, to grow tourism and hospitality industry and make it more competitive, the government has to reconsider the tax structure. He proposes that in the upcoming budget, there is a need for a higher fund allotment to develop infrastructure at major tourist spots and curb unregulated business in the industry to increase attractiveness and sustainability of India as a tourist destination. "The government would need to introduce tax incentives and rebates for hotels and tour operators and provide clarity on eligibility to claim cent per cent capital expenditure in case of substantial renovation of an existing hotel premise," says Patel.



The government would need to introduce tax incentives and rebates for hotels and tour operators, and provide clarity on eligibility to claim cent per cent capital expenditure in case of substantial renovation of an existing



We should promote our infrastructure development on social media platforms to bring in more visibility for the brand.

▶ Best Corporate Hotel—Holiday Inn Express Ahmedabad Ashram Road

Mid-scale brands attract corporate travellers

Anup Pandhare, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express Ahmedabad Ashram Road points out that 2017 demonstrated stability and growth in overall corporate and FIT business. "ADR in the region is expected to grow exponentially as we look at more international events and investments in key cities in the West. International brands are focusing on budget and mid-scale range as they attract more corporate travellers. The biggest factor today is how to integrate technology with our business to make corporate travellers stay smarter." Suggesting the way forward, Pandhare says, "We must focus on building more ecosystems, as this adds up to a traveller's overall experience." We should promote our infrastructure development on social media platforms to bring in more visibility for the brand.

Govt needs to deliver on its promises

Puneet Mahajan, General Manager, Sayaji Hotels Kolhapur, says the new year 2018 looks very promising. Profiling the guests at the hotel, Mahajan informs that 80 per cent of the travellers to the hotel are corporates mostly from Mumbai and Pune. "Sayaji as a brand is growing day by day. By 2020, Sayaji plans to add 12 new hotels into its portfolio, details of which shall be announced soon," he adds. Talking about the upcoming Budget, he says, "In this Budget rather than offering new promises, the government should just heed to the requests made by the industry over so many years."



By 2020, Sayaji plans to add 12 new hotels into its portfolio, details of which shall be announced soon.

Serene Experiences' Italian offering

Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento Italy, has tied up with Serene Experiences for sales, marketing & PR representation for the India market.

T BUREAU

rand Hotel Excelsior Vit-Fiorentino family in 1834 in Sorrento, Italy, and is situated on the Amalfi Coast. A member of the Leading Hotels of the World since 2000, this five-star property boasts authentic interiors and furnishings. Talking about partnering with Serene Experiences, Guido Fiorentino, President & CEO, Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, said, "India is a rapidly growing and important market for us. We are therefore delighted to be partnering with Serene Experiences. Their experience and understanding of the complex Indian market will help us to reach out to the various segments from honeymooners and couples, experiential luxury travellers, family vacationers to weddings and exclusive conferences."

Naresh Chandnani, Founder and CEO, Serene Experiences added, "We would be showcasing this truly unique and amazing hotel to the high net-worth Individuals and the experienced traveller through various marketing activities, tying up with complementing luxury brands and through bespoke campaigns individually crafted to acquaint the Indian luxury traveller with one of the most amazing experiences of the Amalfi Coast, Italy."

As part of this collaboration, Chandnani said, "Direct marketing with consumers can be very effective in the Indian market, as part of which we would e-mail newsletters highlighting the features of the hotels and different yearround activities to our strong database. We have strong links with HNIs of the country to whom we would introduce the property with a very personalised approach. Also, we would initiate tie ups with premium credit card companies as well as with India's largest private banks for their HNI and NRI clients."

The B2B marketing initiatives would include sales calls and product training to all the major outbound tour operators, travel agents, MiCE and incentive group agents, corporates and Travel Management Companies (TMCs) for conference meetings and business travel. "Our focus will remain on Delhi and Mumbai as these two cities account for 60 per cent of the outbound travel from India. After that, we will cover the other major cities of

India like Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Pune. We will also facilitate the contracting process with tour operators. travel agents and corporates for events and meetings. Also, we will assist in industry and trade show participation within India and organise client roadshow should someone from the hotel like to come to India for sales calls. We will also assist in organising

Fam trips of travel agents and tour operators to the different regions and the hotels," added Chandnani.

Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria is surrounded by lush greenery of a unique Mediterranean garden of 20,000 sq metres where guests also find the spa and pool area. In its long history, the property has played host to monarchs, politicians, artists and

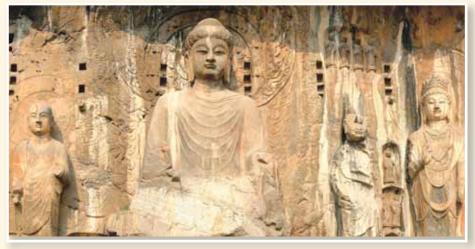


Naresh Chandnani Founder and CEO Serene Experiences

Excelsior Vittoria

celebrities, as it was the part of Grand Tour. The 84 elegantly furnished guestrooms boast antiques collected over the years and no two rooms are same. In fact, some of them have original bathrooms as well. Michelinstarred seafront restaurant, state-of-art fitness room, outdoor pool and spa facilities, make the property a favourite amongst couples and even families.

Henan Province banks on religious tourism



A jewel in central China, Henan Province is going all out to promote its cultural icons and spectacular landscapes include the Shaolin Temple, Longmen Grottoes and the scenic area of the Yellow River to discerning tourists.

ituated at the east part of central China, Henan Province is the cradle of ancient Chinese civilization. It is the birthplace of China's great historic figures, and the origin of the unique Chinese inventions and martial arts. Among 8 ancient capitals in China, four are located in Henan province, namely Zhengzhou, Kaifeng, Luoyang and Anyang. Emperors of 20 dynasties chose to build their capitals there. China's long history and rich culture have bestowed Henan province an array of world-renowned historic and cultural heritage and variety of famous tourist attractions. The historical heritage sites, such as the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng, Longmen Grottoes and Anyang Yinxu are world-famous. To take the

Longmen Grottoes as an example, it embodies the profound mutual influence of cultures between our two countries. It has already attracted many Indians to visit it. The White Horse Temple in Luoyang, the Indian-style Buddhist Hall of which was inaugurated by Indian President Pratibha Patil, is also a key draw for Indian visitors.

With rich historical and cultural heritages and attractive scenery, Henan Province has already become a very popular tourist destination for domestic and foreign tourists. Regularly tourist events, such as the International Mayors Forum on Tourism (IMFT), Luoyang Peony Fair, and International Yellow River Festival in Sanmenxia,



are organised which serves as useful platform to promote cooperation between China and other countries, including India.

Henan's vast history, ethnic and cultural diversity presents the traveler with many possibilities on how to spend your time in the province. For the first-time visitor to this region, the must-see cultural icons and spectacular landscapes include the Shaolin Temple, Longmen. Grottoes and the scenic area of the

Henan Province, China participated in the 25th edition of South Asia's largest travel and tourism exhibition - SATTE 2018. SATTE serves as a platform for Henan Tourism to engage with the biggest and

most influential B2B and B2C partners in India and all over the world. At the recently concluded SATTE 2018, Henan Tourism along with its partners highlighted the destination's growing portfolio of bespoke and affordable experiences, whether travelling for business or leisure.

Hundreds of visitors were entertained centre stage with Taichi performance hosted by Henan Tourism. Henan Tourism's booth saw much traffic as vendors and buyers showed increased interest in learning the history and culture of the "Cradle of Civilization."

"We are very proud to bring Henan to India for all to see," said Tian Xin, Director of New Delhi for China National Tourism Administration.

AWARDTALK

Exhibitions are key to lead generation

Though the footfall at international travel trade exhibitions has reduced over the years, its importance and relevance still hold ground. India Travel Award winners discuss the relevance of such shows in today's digital age.

▶ DDP Trailblazer–Mahendra Vakharia

Business lies in Tier-II & III cities

According to **Mahendra Vakharia**, Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays, international trade exhibitions are an important platform to meet the right partners and network. He says, "However, the number of international shows is increasing day by day and one cannot physically and practically attend all of them. Thus a decision has to be made by the company to identify the relevant markets and the corresponding shows that they would attend for maximum return on investment." Vakharia also points out that these shows are good platforms for the outbound travel agents as well to learn new market trends and interact with the destinations that receive inbound guests from India.



The Tier-II and Tier-III cities in western India are to be targeted. This market has huge potential; it is a cash rich community with aspirations and dreams to travel.



These platforms bridge the gap between India and the world and offer an insight into the popular travel trends.

► Best Tour Operators—Inbound – A-La-Carte Tours

International exhibitions key to lead generation

Travel trade exhibitions are lead generating platforms where participants from India can meet international buyers and exhibitors, feels **Atul Khanna**, General Manager-Sales, A-La-Carte Tours. "I have noticed a reduction in footfall at various international

shows. Though business is done much later, trade shows are networking platforms to get acquainted with new and existing clients. These platforms bridge the gap between India and the world and offer an insight into the popular travel trends," he says. Khanna says they're working with markets in Turkey, Brazil, Romania and Norway. "I think 2018 will be a better year for inbound business. However, there is still ambiguity around GST for hotels, which needs to be ironed out," he adds.

► Best Emerging MiCE Operators-T4 Initiatives

Limit participation based on merit

Munish Sekhri, Managing Director, T4 Initiatives, says it is important that travel exhibitions filter buyers as it dilutes the value proposition of the show when irrelevant participants attend. "It is very important to attend shows like ITB Berlin as they provide an educative platform to learn about the new trends in the market and be informed about the new products. Due to unregulated business practices in the country, many irrelevant people attend the show, which do not have legit business and spread a bad word about the industry. The show should limit the number of people and filter based on merit," Sekhri adds.



as they provide an educative platform to learn about the new trends in the market and be informed about the new products.



When you have to showcase any destination or a product it is important that a recall value is generated.

▶ Best Travel CRM-De Box Global

Recall value is necessary to grow business

Syed A Asim, Director, De Box Global, believes that international travel trade exhibitions are important for two reasons; one they are platforms where one must create brand awareness and the other is to generate business from the international market. "When you have to showcase any destination or a product, it is important that a recall value is generated. If you visit a show once and then disappear from the brand spectrum, gradually business fades and thus it is relevant that you revisit the show to reconnect with old clients and at the same time network to grow business," says Asim.

▶ Best Luxury Farm Stay-Maa Ashapura Farm Stay Ranthambore

Germany & USA are key markets

International travel trade exhibitions like ITB Berlin and WTM London are not only big names in the travel industry but also important platforms to gather business, feels **Vikram Singh Chauhan**, Proprietor, Maa Ashapura Farm Stay Ranthambore. He says, "These platforms are important because we get an opportunity to have a one-to-one interaction with the established or the potential clients. Since Germany is a key source market for us along with the US, the show holds even more relevance for our business." Chauhan points out that the year 2018 has started on a slow note as Indian travellers have reduced their travel budgets due to GST. However, the property aims to clock around 30 per cent growth this year.



Since Germany is a key source market for us along with the US, the show holds even more relevance for our business.



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MARCH 2018

Mysore Travel Mart	Mysore	2-5
ATOUT France	Mumbai	5
Shangri-La Mission India 2018	Mumbai	5
ATOUT France	Ahmedabad	6
ATOUT France	Kolkata	7
ATOUT France	Delhi, NCR	8
ITB Berlin	Germany	7-11
AHAAR	Delhi	13-15
ITM	Goa	16-18
Marriott International Sales Mission	Mumbai	14
MITT	Moscow, Russia	13-15
Hyatt Fair 2018	Bengaluru	14
Marriott International Sales Mission	Delhi	15
Hyatt Fair 2018	Delhi	15
Hyatt Fair 2018	Mumbai	16
Marriott International Sales Mission	Bengaluru	16
Routes Asia	Brisbane, Australia	18-20
IT&CM & CTW	Shanghai, China	20-22
FICCI Digital Travel Hospitality & Innovation Summit	Delhi	21-22
Dhaka Travel Mart	Dhaka, Bangladesh	22-24
Accor Showcase	Delhi	23
Aviation Festival	Singapore	27-28
TAAI Annual Convention	Srinagar, J&K	27-29
UITT	Kieve, Ukraine	28-30

APRIL 2018

HICSA	Mumbai	4-5
AITF	Baka, Azerbaijan	5-7
Travel Luxury Show	Jaipur	7-8
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
Digital Travel Summit WTTC Global Summit	Singapore Buenos Aires, Argentina	17-19 18-19
	Buenos Aires,	
WTTC Global Summit	Buenos Aires, Argentina	18-19
WTTC Global Summit KITF	Buenos Aires, Argentina Almaty, Kazakhstan	18-19 18-20
WTTC Global Summit KITF ILTM Arabia	Buenos Aires, Argentina Almaty, Kazakhstan Dubai	18-19 18-20 22-23

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	Gangnueng, Korea	17-20
ILTM Asia Pacific	Singapore	21-24

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

Renewed adventure calendar

With 2018 being declared the 'Year of Adventure' by the Ministry of Tourism, ATOAI plans to host events throughout the year to support this and boost inbound tourism segment in the country.

TT BUREAU

Adventure Tour Opera-tors Association of India (ATOAI) has got a new push and direction since the announcement of the 'Year of Adventure' and plans to take full advantage of this opportunity, informs the association's President Swadesh Kumar. He says, "The association has planned to host events or workshops every month in different states to bring together the stakeholders of this industry, share best practices and do business. We have a mega event planned for April, called the India Adventure Summit. We are also going to conduct the PATA Adventure Travel Mart at Guwahati in February 2019. The ATOAI Annual Convention is expected



Swadesh Kumar President

to take place in Andhra Pradesh, though the dates are not fixed yet. Through these events we aim to grow the adventure tourism business in India; make tourism responsible, sustainable and also hope to offer employment opportunities to the local communities as well."



Tejbir Singh Anand Vice President ATOAI

Tejbir Singh Anand, Vice President, ATOAI, believes that adventure tourism is the answer to grow inbound tourist numbers to India since adventure travel is not seasonal; one only has to change the destination and the activities and it remains a year-round segment. Elaborating further on

the association's event schedule for the year, Anand informs that they kick-started the year with a workshop aimed at first-aid advanced course and wilderness responder in Delhi where 30 members from various companies conducted the skill set spread over 16 hours in two days. "The association has seven other such workshops planned throughout the year in various cities like Pune, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chandigarh, etc. Along with these workshops we are conducting our threeday adventure roadshows pan-India. ATTA's Adventure NEXT in Madhya Pradesh from December 10-12 will be an inbound show where international buyers will come together to understand India as an adventure travel hub,"

Decoding SEIS for agents

Under the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020, some benefits were announced in the form of Duty Credit Scrips by the Ministry of Commerce for the Services Sector under Services Export from India Scheme (SEIS), which has been increased from 5 per cent to 7 per cent recently. Industry stalwarts explain how inbound agents should go about availing benefits from this.

What is SEIS?



Sarab Jit Singh India Travel Award Winner and Managing Director, Travelite India and KTC India

The government gave exporters status to the tourism industry and tourism organisations which were earning foreign exchange. This led to tour operators and others earning Forex to import duty free under Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG), after which they gave us SFIS license. This was 10 per cent of the Forex earned during the previous year. After that it was converted into SEIS licenses from April 2015. Under SEIS, the incentive was brought down to 5 per cent but the Government allowed tour operators and hoteliers to sell their licenses in the open market. This five per cent incentive came in at a time when the tourism industry was really facing problems. Because of this, the companies are showing some profits. From Nov 1, 2017, this incentive has been increased to seven per cent for tour operators and five per cent for the hotels. Since we can sell it in the open market, it's a good incentive to the tour operators.

Why it is beneficial?



Pronab Sarkar President



How it can be availed?

Rajiv Mehra Vice President

SEIS is a good initiative by the government, where they have acknowledged that tourism is a prime body, which earns a valuable foreign exchange. To encourage the tour operators bringing in foreign exchange, they have given this benefit. It was earlier five per cent, which they used to give in the form of duty credit scrips, which in turn could be sold in the market to the importers. This way the tour operators could make some money and make some profit. Now this benefit has been increased. From 5 per cent, it has increased to 7 per cent, which is a good initiative by the government and this will be applicable from November 1, 2017, and is valid till March 31, 2018. After this it will be reviewed again for the next year. We have asked our members to avail this benefit in large numbers and have even referred consultants who can help them with the same.

The benefits under the SEIS scheme has been available by tour operators for some years now. IATO has circulated this a number of times. In May last year, we had called experts to give details of everything. There is a lot of paperwork for getting these benefits and smaller agents do not want to get into this. This is one of the reasons why many operators are not taking these benefits. While it is a lengthy process, it is worth the effort because the duty drawback which was five per cent, has been increased to seven per cent from Nov 1, 2017, on the net foreign exchange earned. We are also trying to tell our members who are earning foreign exchange that they must go and avail this benefit. There are people who are doing this for operators and charging money for the same, and they can help them in getting the required documents. We have asked our members to get in touch with them and negotiate the rates to smoothly apply for the benefits.





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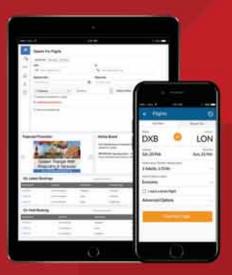
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Ticketing Executive - International / Domestic

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

Executive - IBT / OBT

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

Branch Manager - Mumbai

Location - Mumbai - Andheri East Experience - 8 to 12 years

Product Developer - MICE

Location - Delhi Experience - 5 to 7 years

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Location - Delhi Experience - 5 years

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MOVEMENTS

Sabre

Mumbai

Sabre Corporation has announced the appointment of Sandeep Shastri as Regional Director, South Asia, within the Travel Network team in Asia



Eros Hotel Nehru Place

New Delhi

Davinder Juj has been promoted to General Manager at Eros Hotel Nehru Place. Juj took over as Executive Assistant Manager, then

moved on to become Hotel Manager and taking another step ahead, he is now appointed as GM. Juj's exposure to the hospitality industry and extensive knowledge will contribute to further success of the hotel. Juj brings with him 23 years of operational excellence and complete business development experience. Prior to this, Juj has been associated with several other brands such as InterContinental, Hilton and Hyatt. His last appointment before Eros was with cluster of IHG Hotels in New Delhi.

Aloft New Delhi Aerocity

New Delhi

Suman Gahlot has been appointed as the General Manager of the soon-to-open Aloft New Delhi Aerocity. Gahlot comes from



Novotel Hotels & Resorts

Gos

Sherin Mathew has been appointed as Director of Sales & Marketing at Novotel Hotel & Resorts, Goa. With over 12 years' experience in the

areas of sales, business development, strategic planning and team management, Mathew brings with him a sound understanding and a wealth of expertise in the sales and marketing function. Prior to joining Accor Hotels, Sherin was the Director of Sales and Marketing at Hyatt Place Goa. He has been associated with some of the most renowned hotels including Taj Hotels & Resorts Chennai, Taj Fisherman's Cove Chennai, Hyatt Hotels in Chennai (Hyatt Regency) and Goa.

Four Points by Sheraton

Visakhapatnam

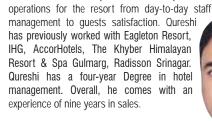
Vijayan Gangadharan joins Four Points by Sheraton, Visakhapatnam in the capacity of General Manager. Gangadharan has over 26 years



The Orchard Retreat and Spa

Srinaga

Faheem Qureshi has been appointed as General Manager of the Orchard Retreat and Spa. He will be responsible for all aspects of



Thomas Cook India

Mumbai

Thomas Cook (India) has appointed Deepesh Varma as Head of Sales and Relationship Management for its Foreign Exchange



Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim

Goa

Sunishchal Parasnis joins Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim as Director of Sales & Marketing. With over 10 years' of experience in Hospitality

Sales and Business Development, Parasnis has joined Hyatt Place Goa/Candolim as the Director of Sales & Marketing. He has vast knowledge of Goa's hospitality business and its trends. Parasnis started his career with Sarovar Hotels & Resorts and then moved to Hyatt Hotels in the year 2007. He holds a Master's of Science degree in Hospitality Administration from Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Mumbai.

AirFrance-KLM

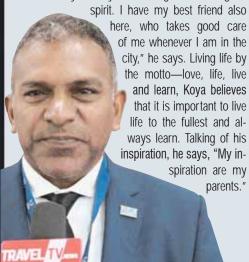
Gurgugram

Chandresh Verma joins AirFrance-KLM as Business Development Executive. He will oversee business development across India in

various business verticals with key emphasis on high-yield business from online and offline destinations in India by utilising codeshare of Jet Airways and Delta. Verma holds a Master's Degree in Tourism Administration from the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management, Agra. Previously he has worked with Etihad Airways. He joins AirFrance-KLM with over eleven years of experience in the industry.



Faiyaz Koya, Minister for Industry & Trade and Tourism, Fiji, loves New Delhi. "Delhi is just a great city, with much to offer. I love the food and the people, who are really friendly, welcoming, and have great



Parag Sawhney, General Manager, Conrad Bengaluru, loves to explore new cultures. "I am an avid traveller and I love experiencing every destination. It motivates me to learn the unanticipated needs of a traveller. In India, I'd



Amrendra Karn, General Manager, Howard Plaza-The Fern Agra, loves travelling to new places as it helps him rejuvenate. "I travelled to Shanghai, Dubai, Frankfurt, Berlin, Interlaken and Paris but Interlaken (Switzerland)

& Paris were the most memorable ones. In India, I extremely enjoyed travelling to Rajasthan for its royal feel, and desert. I am passionate about learning new things in the field of hospitality also. Therefore, I love to cook and experiment new dishes and my hobby is listening to old classical music," he

adds.

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Navi Mumbai airport in 4-5 yrs

Indian aviation seems to be on an upswing bringing with it severe congestion and frustrating capacity crunch at key airports. Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India, enlists what the ministry is doing to combat this while planning for a billion trips.



Addressing a gathering at the annual CAPA Conference in Mumbai via a video link, Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, chose answering questions over giving a speech. Taking a volley of questions, he said that while Mumbai and Delhi both have capacity challenges, improvements at the Delhi airport are already underway.

"We expect it to have the fourth runway and release slots for winter 2018 and onwards. So, Delhi will once again resume its growth. We have airports at Jewar and Hindar near Delhi coming up as well. Mumbai, however, with its single runway and saturation of slots, remains the single-most important bottleneck as far as civil aviation in India is concerned. Until the Navi Mumbai International Airport near Mumbai becomes operational, there is no solution to the congestion at the Mumbai airport. Unfortunately, there is no quick way to get the Navi Mumbai airport done. It will take at least four to five years to bring it up to capacity," he said.

The planning authority-City & Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO)which has undertaken the Navi Mumbai airport project

though we have added capacity, although it is not at the same level as Delhi. Our benchmark as far as immigration is concerned is 20

ritsar to London five or seven days a week at a competitive price point, the market would explode. We need a direct, wide-body, comfortable exaviation system that the ministry is working on to improve productivity and capacity is with the clear view to enable the system to handle a billion

66Until the Navi Mumbai International Airport near Mumbai becomes operational, there is no solution to the congestion at the Mumbai airport. Unfortunately, there is no quick way to get the Navi Mumbai airport done. It will take at least four to five years to bring it up to capacity.

Jayant Sinha

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Government of India

minutes. If anyone must wait more than that, then we are not doing our job well."

International growth

Replying to a question about stifling international growth, the minister said that he did not think that the government policies are responsible for constraining international growth. "In my opinion, the constraints are really to do with airport capacity as well as wide-body acquisitions by the low-cost carrier. These two are in my mind as the most important factors constraining international growth. Moreover, in-

perience from say, Kolkata to London at the right price. Such connections would be able to unlock the market. We lack the direct low-cost alternatives to the major aviation hubs of the world, whether it is in Europe or East Asia or the West. With this the international market will evolve."

Growth trajectory in 4 years

While the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) predicts Indian aviation to grow at about 20 per cent this year, the minister predicted a slightly less ambitious growth pattern. He

trips. "We are planning a billion trips. This means infrastructure capacity need to be upgraded to accommodate this. Jewar near Delhi and Purandar near Pune are new greenfield airports which will help us to that," Sinha added.

Connecting smaller cities

Referring to the government's UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) programme which looks after regional airport development under Regional Connectivity Scheme, the minister said, "The most rewarding and engaging aspect of my job has been to go to India's Tier-III and IV cities like Hubli and Jamshedpur to see how robust the demand is when we start flights from these cities. Take the example of my hometown Ranchi. Two years ago, Ranchi had 11 flights a day. From the summer schedule this year, it will have 27-28 flights a day. This tripling of capacity and the load factors remain very robust."

He estimated that about six to eight helicopters will also be procured for UDAN II, which will open remote destinations such as Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Kashmir.

6 key MoCA initiatives underway

Sinha outlined six key initiatives that India has undertaken. "There is no other country in the world that has undertaken such path-breaking projects in the last four years as we have. Apart from the privatisation of our national carrier, UDAN and country-wide up gradation of airport infrastructure, we are also working on our passenger-centric measures via Air Seva initiative, dramatic breakthrough in the security architecture of our airports and last but not the least, a drone policy that will change the landscape as far as drone services are concerned. This has not been spoken about much but it will make India a world leader in drone services," Sinha pointed out.

has put 2019-end as an estimated time of completion.

20-min immigration

Speaking about the steps taken at the Delhi airport in response to the recent spike in international travel, he said, "We recently saw a dramatic spike of 30 per cent in international travel in the winter schedule, particularly at the IGI Delhi airport. In response to that, we along with the Ministry of Home Affairs acted swiftly by increasing capacity for immigration officers as well as immigration counters. In Mumbai however, we are much more constrained even

ternational slots are an issue for us, not so much the bilateral agreements between countries. But even more important than the slots are low cost direct international flights," he said.

Giving a sneak-peek into what the ministry was considering as a possible solution to this, he said that the industry should look at the Norwegian model or the model used by Scoot and Level (the British Airways LCC), These, he said. could work for a price-sensitive market like India. Giving an example for this, he said, "If an airline could mount a direct flight from, let's say, Am-

ing to see growth in the 15 per cent range rather than 20 per cent, which given the circumstances is still a fantastic growth rate for India. Remember that 15 per cent volume growth means that we are going to double the traffic in five years. So, our planning must be focused on a billion trips a year. That is what we are working towards - enough capacity in air, enough capacity on the ground and enough capacity in our institutions."

said, "I suspect we are go-

Underlining the projected billion trips per year, he said that every element of the

Greenfield Airports

Jewar near Delhi and Purandar near Pune are new greenfield airports which will help handle a billion trips



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