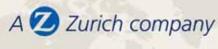


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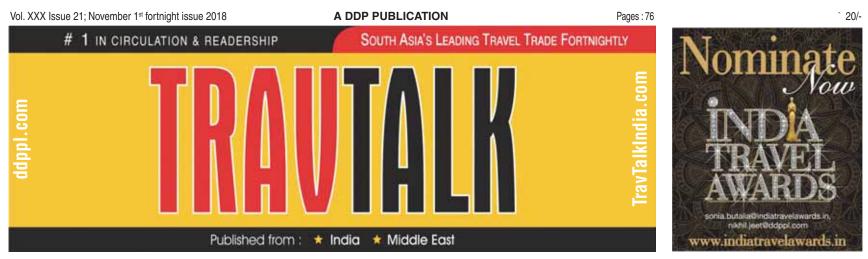
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India rolls out red carpet

KJ Alphons, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism, believes that India has something on offer for every kind of traveller. The country now aims to double its arrival figures to 20 million in the next three years with myriad initiatives.

Nisha Verma

K J Alphons Minister of State (Independent Charge), Tourism, informs that India has seen unprecedented growth in arrivals in the last few years. "We recorded 7 per cent increase in tourist arrivals in 2016, which increased to 14 per cent in 2017. The tourism receipts went up by 19.2 per cent, which means

the earnings of 27.2 billion dollars last year, contributing 7 per cent to the GDP of the country and 12.76 per cent to employment. One of the biggest achievements for our ministry is the creation of 14.67 per cent jobs in the last four years," he said.

He claimed that with 36 **UNESCO World Heritage** sites. 7500 km of coastline. 43 for tresses and some of

the biggest luxury hotels-India offers something for every kind of traveller. Coming to India is a transformational experience, he affirms. "Today, it's very easy to visit India with a simplified e-visa regime that allows tourists to obtain a visa within 24 hours or a maximum period of 36 hours. This facility is extended to 164 countries and makes the easiest country to visit for anyone. In the next

three years, we want to double the tourist arrivals and reach the 20 million mark in arrivals. The aim is to attain the receipts to 15 billion dollars and then take this further to 100 billion dollars in the next five years," he said.

MOT recently organised a 12-day long Paryatan Parv, which coincided with the maiden India Tourism Mart (ITM). For ITM, MOT

partnered with the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH) that witnessed a huge participation of foreign buyers and Indian exhibitors. "Today, India is the fastest growing tourism economy. Since Paryatan Parv was held alongside the first India Tourism Mart, it gave us an opportunity to the foreign buyers to get a taste of India," Alphons shared. 🚽



KJ Alphons Minister of State (Independent Charge), Tourism

Rupee fall sees hike in inbound

While the outbound tour industry is still trying to cope with the fall in rupee against the dollar, the inbound operators are making sure that they make hay while the sun shines. Hotel rates may be an issue, but agents are optimistic.

)SH



TT Bureau

G The inbound traffic will not be much affected by the falling rupee. Travelling to India will become slightly cheaper as compared to the outbound, which would bear the brunt for the decline in the value of rupee. We have bigger concerns and are more affected due to the constant increase in fuel prices in tourist transport, increase in monument fee and rise in visa fee. These are some of the issues which are affecting the inbound business. Hence, whatever gain we might have got owing to the rupee fall has been negated. 55



Debjit Dutta Chairman, IATO West Bengal Chapter

G The fall in rupee has always been profitable either to inbound tour operators or to foreign tour operators (FTO), depending on which currency they quote in. If a package has been quoted in dollars at a previous exchange rate, an inbound operator would benefit and would make some profit due to conversion rates. On the other hand, a package quoted in INR would become cheaper for the FTO. However, how much of this benefit is passed on to the final customer still remains unknown. In case of outbound, the industry is facing severe hurdles due to the falling rupee against the dollar. Contd. on page 8 ►



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BULLETIN

TAFI re-elects Chugh as Prez

Praveen Chugh has been re-elected unopposed as the President of Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) for the term 2018-20.

TT Bureau

Electing its new Managing Committee for the 2018-20 term, TAFI has chosen **Praveen Chugh** of Business Travels as the President unopposed. **Pradip Lulla** from Cupid Travels & Tours is the new Vice President; **Aditi Bhende** of Aarohan Tours & Travel is the new National General Secretary; while **Jayesh Tharani** of Hopco Travels has of Shrishti Tours & Travels, Urvashi D Mohan of Delfly Travels, Bharat Shah of Sunbeams Travels (Baroda) and Teddy M Thomas of Oasis Xpress Travel & Tours. Zakkir Ahmed of Trust Travel & Tours remains a part of the MC as Immediate Vice President. The MC further appointed Rajat Bagaria as Joint Secretary and Teddy Thomas as Joint Treasurer. It also selected four members representing different

When I was elected in the last term, my focus was to resolve the service tax and GST concerns and introduction of Joint Bank Guarantee (JBG) programme

been elected as the Treasurer. All the new office bearers and Managing Committee members have been elected unopposed. The Returning Officer for the election was **Ashish Gupta**, Founder, StrategyPluto & Consulting CEO, FAITH.

The Managing Committee (MC) members include **A Basheer** Ahmed of Chennai Metro Travels, **Rajat Bagaria** regions of the association— Abbas Moiz of Shoiz International Travel Services, Mumbai, Hitank Shah of Alka Airlink, Ahmedabad; S H Mohideen of Aero Travel Services, Chennai and Vijay Gupta of Golden Phoenix Travels, New Delhi.

Speaking about his vision for TAFI, Chugh said, "I have always envisioned about ways to bring value to our member-



Praveen Chugh President TAFI

ship. When I was elected in the last term, my chief focus was to resolve the service tax and GST concerns, acceptance of credit cards of travel agents to issue tickets, introduction of Joint Bank Guarantee (JBG) programme to reduce the financial burden of travel agencies and ways to help them increase their revenue and make them more professional. Most of the matters were addressed fully. Some that were pending will continue to be taken forward by the current team."

He further claimed that the major agenda is to strengthen JBG. "JBG is a success story

we started with 135 members and increased it to 165. From July onwards, we have 192 members and today they are producing a turnover of about `400 crores on airline BSP sales of 20-day average and apart from that their own credit card sales of approximately `400 crores."

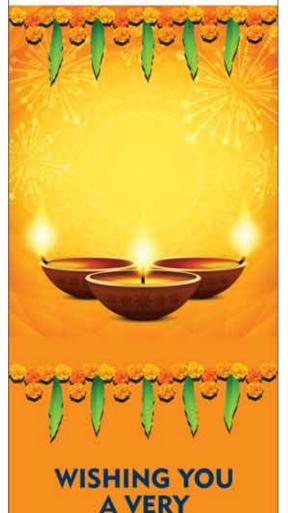
The second agenda, according to Chugh, is, to focus on ways to increase this income, be it from commission, remuneration, transaction fee or convenience. "The challenge for travel agents lies in attracting the younger generation of the country to the industry. We are working to make the travel industry a healthy place to attract more people to join this industry."

Agenda: Tech

✓ With a majority of business being controlled by e-commerce operators, TAFI is constantly making efforts to create and make use of technology platforms for its membership







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GUESTCOLUMN

1 in circulation & readership VIEWPOIN

London calling!

The prestigious World Travel Market (WTM) is once again ready to welcome delegates from around the world with the Indian inbound operators, hotels and service providers all set to head to London for their annual meetings with partners, both old and new. A lot of focus at this year's WTM will be on digital content and technology. The Indian delegation will be led by K J Alphons, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism, who would be representing India at the global stage. In tune with the digital focus, India is well equipped with its digital marketing strategy with a revamped Incredible India campaign, a stateof-the-art website and even an app. In fact, with the infrastructural developments in tourism taking place around the country under MOT's various schemes, India packs the right punch for global tourists. Apart from a strong digital campaign and infrastructural boost, India will also be riding high on experiences, which tour operators and itinerary designers are curating for tourists coming from across the world.

Meet the new-age traveller

Sabina Chopra, Managing Director, RCI India, attributes the changing dynamics of the Indian travel space to the consistently growing middle class and increasing disposable income.

one are the days when Generation and booking a holiday was strictly the work of a travel agent, when fixed itineraries and sightseeing were considered the best ways to see a new place. Increased internet connectivity has led to easy availability of information, more awareness among people and simplified travel research. Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that travelling has now become priority for people. More people are travelling than ever before, they are not only doing annual vacations, but also short vacations such as long weekends.

Travellers today are spoilt for choices and are seeking more customised and 'local' experiences and not just purchasing souvenirs. Now, they want interesting, exciting and unique travelling experiences to share with family and friends and want to get the most out of their trips.

The new-age travellers are wildly different from older generations and has different expectations for their vacation. They are looking for experiences, whether natural, culinary or artistic. Their demand for memorable moments and

F Travellers today are spoilt for choices and are seeking more 'local' experiences and not just purchasing souvenirs ""

activities has shaped one of the biggest shifts in travel trend, personalisation

With changing dynamics of the travel industry. Timeshare is showing encouraging signs of growth as it offers travellers a personalised, immersive holiday experience where everything is taken care by the resort in the most cost-effective way. The visible increase in the number of membership sign-ups in Timeshare market is a strong

indication of shifting trends. The younger generation is realising the value of owning a Timeshare.

Timeshare companies affiliated with RCI, allows travellers to exchange their Timeshare with Timeshare of a different

resort on a regular basis thus

giving flexibility on travelling to

newer resorts and locations. The

Timeshare owner segment also has significantly less worries

while on holiday as they are less

concerned about the quality of

food, accommodation and facili-

ties because they are guaranteed

good experience. Over the years,

Timeshare has redefined the sat-

isfaction quotient for the Indian

traveller by providing convenient

bookings, planning efficiency

to scenic destinations, five-star

quality accommodation and adventure activities. Therefore, in today's day and age, travel is no longer a planned venture to be prepared and booked well in advance. It is an adventure that can happen anytime, often over the span of a weekend or a few days. 🐓

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



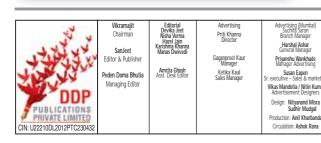
Sabina Chopra Managing Director RCI India

Rupee fall works well for inbound

Ithough the falling value of the rupee against Athe dollar has been a source of discomfort for the outbound industry, the inbound tour operators sure seem like a happy lot. Since most of the tour operators sell their inbound packages well in advance and the rates are usually decided in dollars, it would certainly be beneficial for them with the current exchange rate because they can now record some healthy profit. On the other hand, if it is quoted in rupees, the Foreign Tour Operators (FTOs), with whom Indian operators work, would benefit by shelling out lesser dollars for the same price. Now, whether they pass on this benefit to the tourist or the end customer, still remains debatable. In this scenario, what seems certain is that India as a destination becomes cheaper to travel and might as well attract more international tourists

Czech Republic visits three cities





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STATES NOVEMBER 15¹ FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018 TRAVTALK 7

Uttarakhand on the front foot

Tourism in Uttarakhand continues to witness steady growth, but there is more on the cards. The state's tourism department is taking up several initiatives such as expansion of infrastructure, introduction of new activities, and development of the local community that will support and participate in this growth.

Tripti Mehta

The state of Uttarakhand, home to mighty Himalayan summits and the holy rivers Ganga and Yamuna, has a number of offerings for tourists. While pilgrim tourism in the state has thrived, there still lies more potential that is being identified, developed, and promoted by Government of Uttarakhand.

Vision 2030

Giving an insight into Uttarakhand's tourism department's vision for the state, **Satpal Maharaj**, Minister, Tourism, Government of Uttarakhand, says, "We have set a vision for 2030. We hope to have an international airport near Rishikesh that will have flights from cities like Kuala Lumpur, London, New York, etc, and these flights will be called Yoga flights, Ganga flights or Himalaya flights, improving connectivity with the rest of the world. We require an additional full-fledged airport because



presently, our domestic airport in Dehradun is completely choked as it receives 22 flights a day. Also, there flows a river to the front of the airport so we cannot expand it any further."

A railway line between Rishikesh and Karnaprayag, close to the holy town of Badrinath, is also being constructed, says the Minister. These allweather roads will help make travel to the hills easier, thereby boosting the scope of tourism even further.

Uttarakhand's landscape is quite diverse, offering travellers a taste of different adventure sports, year-round. Leveraging this rich

tourism agenda and for that, building good infrastructure tops the state's to-do list. "We want to promote trekking, especially among the local people. We also want more homestays, maybe pod hotels, too. The state has sulphur springs and water springs, so a hotel around that will also be a good attraction for tourists. Promoting medical and wellness tourism in the state is also a proposition. The spiritual town of Rishikesh, the land of temples and pilgrimage sites, also offers adventure lovers a plethora of exciting opportunities to test their skill. The ashrams and meditation centres in Rishikesh help attract multitudes of domestic and international tourists."

topography is on the state's

Besides adventure tourism, the state is also an ideal destination for those seeking peace and tranquillity, while also experiencing the culture and religions of India. Tourists from all over the world come to the state for trekking, mountaineering, river rafting, paragliding, bungee jumping and skiing. "Currently, we have a lot of domestic tourists because of the char-dham yatra. We want to disperse the crowd of religious travellers a bit and make them visit other places as well. For this, we are actively advertising and introducing new activities. For instance, in Auli, we're introducing new activities such as ropeways for kids. A new convention centre is also being constructed in Dehradun. We will also develop the Buddhist Circuit and have a number of destinations under this unit."

Challenges

One challenge that the state tourism department is looking to overcome is the promotion of tourism amongst the local community, says the Minister. "People do not understand the potential of local tourism. We want to have professionals come over and make them train the local population."

PATA ATRTCM

The PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2019 (ATRTCM), a three-day event that comprises a one-day travel trade mart and a one-day conference, is to be held from February 13-15, 2019, in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

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India becoming cost-effective

► Contd. from page 3

India is increasingly becoming a more cost-effective destination. In terms of variety for a traveller, India has so much to offer. India is not just about the Taj Mahal, Kashmir, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. Every state in the country has unique selling points and is full of wonders. India is perhaps one of the greatest shows in the world. A large number of foreign tourists are visiting India every year and I believe that a stronger currency



Secretary General Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality

will further lead more and more foreign tourists to one of the most beautiful countries in the world. 77

C The falling value of rupee against the dollar makes India cheap and attractive for foreign travellers. There are two segments of inbound tour operators-those who work with FTOs and those who sell directly. Those that work with FTOs do groups; series departures and big tour operators; pass the benefit of exchange rate on to their foreign partners, which in turn is passed IATO Northern Chapter on to the end customer, as travellers are



Sunil C Gupta Chairmar

knowledgeable. There are less chances that the tour operators would be benefitted from it as this makes the destination more attractive to the customer. However, there are several aspects that go in packaging, and make tourists choose the destination apart from the cost like infrastructure development and marketing.



Treasurer

IATO

G The depreciating rupee can benefit export businesses like ours, at least for a short term, as the exchange rates are low and the packages are cheaper currently. In the future, all the quotes for the next year will be done on the current rate and after prices come back to normal, it will have a negative impact. As most of the inbound bookings are made eight-nine months beforehand, it will have a serious impact on the business

if the price of dollar against rupee is not stabilised by December. FTOs will then see losses and we will face competition from our neighbouring countries.



Sandeep Jain Managing Director Special Holidays Travel

tion some years back, could not see an increase in incoming tourists despite that. This is because today India, despite the devaluation of rupee, has a positive image around the world. The packages would be cheaper only for countries using USD or Euro, but prices remain the same

for countries in Southeast Asia and other nations.

believe it will just have a short-term effect on the business. Our quotations have been sent to clients long back. For the upcoming season also, we have planned bookings in advance. We, as tour operators, are taking care of the quotations being sent out to

As far as my company's business

is concerned, I don't think the falling

rupee will have a major impact on the

number of tourist arrivals in India. I



QUICKBYTES

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avoid confusion and dilemma regarding the prices. Although the current situation will certainly help inbound tour operators get more revenue flowing at the moment, I believe it will not lead a big leap in the number of arrivals. This is a temporary phase and the rupee will soon become stronger again.



C The devaluation of the rupee would certainly make the hotels and shopping cheaper for foreign tourists. However, domestic flights and transport might not be affected much because of the high fuel price. Overall, we expect the falling rupee to make the package price cheaper, while bringing more MiCE tourism to India. The depreciation of currency of other countries like

Turkey, South Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia and even China may negate the benefits that India could have. This would help countries such as Britain, USA and Japan. 55

We have seen the devaluation of currency playing a positive role in inbound tourism of many countries, but that is not the only reason for increase in inbound tourism. For example, countries like Egypt and many BRICS nations like Brazil, which faced devalua-

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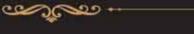
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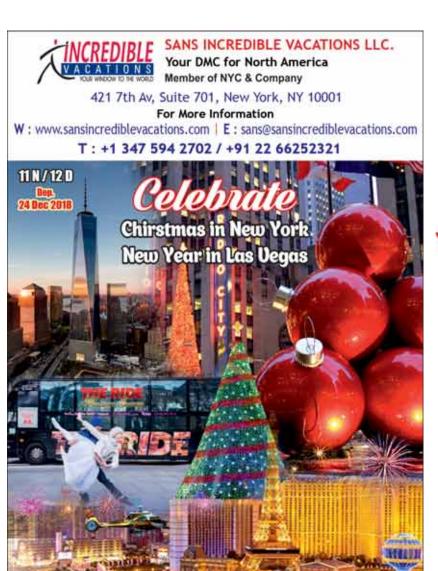


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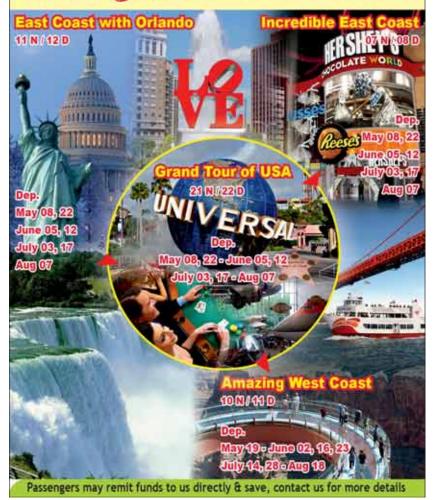




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India is growing fast

India is a market most destinations cannot afford to ignore, including Greece, whose plans for promoting tourism abroad include a direct presence in India.

Hazel Jain

t has been a little over a year since the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) delegation led by Tourism Minister **Elena Kountoura** came calling to India. It was an educational trip for the team which concluded that India is an opportunity for GNTO to reinvent new ways of communicating its messages about its tourism products, promote sustainability and depict Greece as a 365-day destination for the Indian market.

Following this lead is Konstantinos Tsegas, Secretary General, GNTO, who says that India is growing very fast and becoming a superpower through technology, energy and global economy. "It is a huge market we cannot ignore. We follow a dynamic campaign. For Greece. India represents a touristic market with a lot of potential as the tourism expenditure of the country has been growing extremely fast, and people in India have shown high interest to travel to Greece. GNTO is targeting audiences of high socio-economic profile in Asia through technology and social media to build a strong appeal. India is a market we are seriously looking at for expanding our policies," he says.

When asked whether the tourism board plans to have a direct presence in India, he shares, "The process of our policies and the results of our strategies in the upcoming years will be the answer to this question. What is certain



Konstantinos Tsegas Secretary General GNTO

is that our plans for expanding our touristic product abroad include a much more direct presence in India."

Without sharing any numbers from India, Tsegas adds that the growth percentage of arrivals from India is around 9.7 per cent each year. His plan now is to promote Greece as a 365-day destination for Indians. He adds, "We are happy to see that our target markets consider Greece as a 365-day destination. Greece is known for its culture, rich history and stable political conditions."

NTO

Responding to the kind of expectations of Indian travel trade from Greece in 2019, Tsegas says, "We are still working on our plans. We have seen substantial growth in trade activities over the years along with increase in pre-bookings and an emphasis in new markets. The end of 2018 is about to show the results of the bookings made for the period of autumn and of the growing interest for city breaks. With the statistics we already have, 2019 seems to be even more promising than 2018."

GNTO is targeting travellers across different age groups by appealing to each group through different platforms and messages – Generation Z, affluent families, educated youngsters and seniors. It is not looking at an online training programme for the India market but is instead relying on individual sales calls.

India Numbers

GNTO's growth percentage of arrivals from India is around 9.7 per cent each year

There has been an increase in pre-bookings and focus on new markets

MTDC hosts Landwehr Orchestra



As its ongoing quest to promote art and culture, Department of Tourism, Govt of Maharashtra and Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) recently organised the first-ever Landwehr Orchestra of Fribourg at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay in Mumbai. The concert aims to celebrate the history of The Landwehr and the citizens of Switzerland.

STATES

Kerala Tourism ticks all boxes

The pall of gloom that had descended in the wake of the August floods appears to have been lifted. God's Own Country has bounced back.

YTT Bureau

he biennial showpiece event – Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) 2018 - turned out to be an unqualified success. Facts speak for themselves: 35,000 business meets involving 1,635 buyers shortlisted from 7.000 applicants (545 of them from 66 foreign countries - the highest in the KTM history so far), 325 sellers in 400-odd stalls and the highest number of foreign buyers from the US and the UK. That definitely showed the trust of global tourism industry in Kerala.

"It is historic, coming as it is a month after the worst natural calamity our people faced. I even wonder how our tourism would have got back to track but for this KTM edition coming at the right time," Kerala Tourism Secretary, **Rani George** said about the event.

Her sentiments were echoed by Kerala Tourism Director, **P Bala Kiran**. "KTM lent a smile of hope to faces in the industry in contrast to a general gloom that prevailed among its captains till a week ago. This edition proved that KTM is not a celebratory event, but a business meet. It's a positive lesson not just for us in Kerala, but the whole of India and even the world," he noted.

KTM announced plans to reinvent its decade-old responsible tourism, update customised packages, strengthen tools of publicity, broaden the tourism map and spruce up heritage spots to increase the footfalls. It would give a huge fillip in further promoting public-private participation in the fields of travel and hospitality, wellness and culture.

Take the example of Nefertiti, the Egyptian themed luxury vessel of the Kerala Shipping and Inland Navigation Corporation (KSINC). Set to be launched this month, it may chart a new course in cruise tourism in Kerala. Named after the beautiful Egyptian queen Nefertiti, it will have several features to remind people aboard of one of the oldest civilisations of the world. The Chaliyar River Challenge 2018 (a 68-km kayaking championship) will also be held as per the schedule.

The recent installation of a giant sculpture of the Jatayu bird mentioned in the Ramayana, a new addition in the inventory of Kerala Tourism, and the Muziris Project are sure to woo visitors.

Tourism Minister **Kadakampally Surendran** said, "A survey will be conducted seeking the possibility of offering job opportunities through tourism for people in the state's flood-hit areas. Students of Kerala Institute Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS) will conduct the survey among the natives in this regard." The government has earmarked `700 crore for the tourism sector under the Nava Kerala reconstruction activities. The administration is also mulling modifying certain laws for better tourism practices in the state, he said.







National Tourism Award 2016-17 **Category I – First Prize** Best Inbound Tour Operator

Thanking all partners and members of the travel fraternity for their continued support, guidance and acknowledgment helping Caper Group reach the pinnacle of success.



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National Tourism 🖉 🚉 🚰 🥁 🚵 🌆 🔘 🚈 🔘 🚛 🖉 🌆 The Constraint of the Ministry of Tourism.

Tourism in India's heart: MP

Steered by the theme 'Business. Leisure. Knowledge. Life.', the fifth edition of Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart 2018 attracted some 75 foreign and 125 Indian buyers, 70 sellers, and media from around the world.

Inder Raj Ahluwalia

he Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart 2018 brought two aspects into sharp focus — the sustained hard work of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) and the private sector has yielded positive results, and secondly, this is just the beginning of a march to a strong tourism progression.

Hari Ranjan Rao, Managing Director, MPTB put things into perspective by declaring, "Madhya Pradesh takes tourism seriously. Quick decisions are taken because of a special dedicated cell that acts as a 'tourism cabinet'."

Rao further stated that the state has all the tourist attractions visitors could wish for. A third of the state being under forest cover makes wildlife in



general, and tigers in particular, a huge attraction. "There are nine national parks, 25 wildlife sanctuaries and six tiger parks. The UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Khajuraho, Sanchi and Bhimbekhta are also gaining in popularity, as is religious tourism," he informed.

The increased participation of Madhya Pradesh in overseas



According to Bhavana Walimbe, Additional MD, MPTB, several new tourism products have been introduced. "City

walks are organised across the state to enlighten participants about local history, heritage and cuisine. Tourism quiz programmes are conducted to educate school children. 'Cycle safaris' and 'heritage runs' have been started. Several large water bodies have been opened up for tourism. A 'museum of music' is also in the offing. The state is gaining ground as a film shooting locale.

We have also taken a lead in promoting adventure tourism and are ready to host the high-potential AdventureNext from December 10-12, 2018," he revealed.

Capt Swadesh Kumar, President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), stated that AdventureNext would provide a big boost to

The increased participation of Madhya Pradesh in overseas roadshows has received an overwhelming response

the state and get international adventure tour operators coming to India for the first time. Apart from the Indian adventure segment, the state would also benefit from the event.

PP Khanna, President, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), stated that there were now daily additions to the group of travel players, and events like the MP Travel Mart provided an opportunity to meet everyone. He felt that domestic tourism has to be further promoted in India, and MP Tourism deserves credit for this. The state is now among the top states in promoting tourism into India.

Khanna further advocated the concept of holding domestic travel marts.

STATES

All indications suggest that Madhya Pradesh is making strong progression in the field of tourism, and the future appears bright

MP Attractions

✤ There are nine national parks, 25 wildlife sanctuaries and six tiger parks. The UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Khaiuraho, Sanchi and Bhimbekhta are also gaining in popularity, as is religious tourism





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It's 'Mission India' for Russia

The number of tourists from Russia to India has grown by around 27 per cent, thereby showing good recovery of arrivals as compared to the past few years.

Manas Dwivedi

On the sidelines of the Rus-sian Indian Summit 2018, the Russian Export Center in association with the Russian Information Center, organised a round-table conference on



tourism. With more than 120 trade professionals from Russia and India attending the event, Rajan Sehgal, Member-Managing Committee, TAAI, and Sanjiv Pasricha, Executive Vice President, Event & Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) made the keynote address, along with Timur Vekilov, Chief Representative in India of Russian Export Center.

The round-table moderated by Paresh Navani, Partner, Russian Information Center (RIC), discussed the needs and special services required by Indians and ways to address the same. In this regard,

Russian Information Center announced the pre-launch of Ural Airlines set to begin operations from March

24, 2019, connecting Mumbai to Yekaterinburg and Moscow, along with some tourism products to take advantage of the new airline service between the two countries. Further, RIC presented its 'India Friendly' programme to the Indian travel trade. On this, Navani said, "The India friendly programme trains Russian hotels on

is a joint venture between the Russian Information Cener and the tourism department of Russia with the training being imparted by St Petersburg University."

Navani further added, "The idea of this business mission was to deliberate over how to increase the tourism flow between India

I The India Friendly programme trains Russian hotels on Indian culture and cuisine whilst ensuring that other specific needs are provided to Indians in Russia. The programme is a joint venture between the Russian Information Center and the tourism department of Russia 77

Indian culture and cuisine whilst ensuring that other specific needs are provided to Indians in Russia. After the programme, eligible hotels are certified as India Friendly. The programme

and Russia. It is a platform to exchange ideas and expectations. We have also partnered with all the associations from India and we hope to make possible convection in Russia." On the occasion, the Russian Export Centre also announced the establishment of India representative office in Mumbai. Anna Belyaeva, Managing Director—International Business Development, Russian Export Center said, "The business mission was organised in view of the visit of the President of the Russian Federation.

Vladimir Putin with a large del-

egation of Russian companies

accompanying him, especially

to promote their businesses

areas of expansion for Russia.

and tourism — one of the

We believe that tourism is one of the most important services that we shall be promoting from Russia to India."

NTO

Ivan Breganov, Regional Manager, IFS, Russian Visa Center confirmed that the number of tourist visas issued from January to September 2018 has already surpassed the total number of visas issued in 2017, pegging the year-on-year growth around 27 per cent.

New Services

🐓 The Russian Information Center announced the pre-launch of Ural Airlines set to begin operations from March 24, 2019, connecting Mumbai to Yekaterinburg and Moscow

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Hahn Air salutes North India

Hahn Air organised a special evening for its travel trade partners at The Metropolitan Hotel and Spa, New Delhi, to recognise the top performing travel agencies from Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

T Bureau

Hahn Air's award ceremony saw in presence Dennis Huk, Vice President—Global Account Management, Hahn Air and Sanjay Shrivastava, Director—Global Account Management for Northern India, Hahn Air. India's Directors of Global Account Management, Bharat Kapoor and Zafar Shamsi, were also present at the event. More than 150 travel agents attended the ceremony in which Hahn Air awarded 21 certificates of appreciation and nine 'Martin Awards' for top agencies, appreciating them for their continued support and growth.

India has become one of the five top markets worldwide for Hahn Air which has become

the leading ticketing specialist across the sub-continent. Shrivastava gave a product presentation of the airline's offerings followed by an address by Huk, where he thanked the travel partners of the region and presented awards to them. "We want to appreciate the agencies, service providers and our supporters in the market. We are working with all IATA accredited agents with no differentiation," he said.

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Huk revealed Hahn Air's strategy worldwide and for the Indian market. "We are further expanding and looking for new partners to increase our portfolio of airlines. Last year, we implemented 46 new partners to our network and we'll continue to do so. We have already implemented many new partners this year,



Dennis Huk Vice President—Global Account Management, Hahn Air especially on our H1 Air services. H1 Air is our distribution service for airlines, which do not participate in the GDS," he said.

When asked about the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) New Distribution Capability (NDC) technical standard and how Hahn Air is adapting to the

same, Huk said, "It will be interesting to see how the new payments solutions from IATA will increase the travel agent network. We are looking into

tronic Miscellaneous Document (EMD) products. "We already have some partners for which we offer EMDs for seat reservation, excess baggage,

etc, and have plans to increase

Sharing their agenda to expand

the agent and airline network in

India, he said, "We are already

working with the top players in

India with all the major airlines

in India on our system, includ-

ing Air India and Jet Airways.

that. With NDC, we are only

evaluating things," he said.

66 We are already working with top players in India with all the major Indian airlines on our system, including Air India and Jet Airways. SpiceJet is also on H1 Air. Our big breakthrough has been the agreement with Austrian Airlines 77

certifications and working with IATA and all the working costs involved. We are also looking at providers, because multi-ticketing in the industry and how to combine several airlines will be an interesting part to watch out for "

In terms of ancillary services, Huk said that they have Elec-

SpiceJet is also on H1 Air. We are always in talks with airlines. Our big breakthrough has been the recently-signed agreement with Austrian Airlines."

AVIATION

Hahn Air works with over 350 airlines and the India market forms an integral part of its network. The airline even has a dedicated service desk for India which can be reached out to 24*7 days at serviceindia@ hahnair.com

Hahn Strategy

🖊 Last year, Hahn Air implemented 46 new partners to its network

The airline has already implemented many new partners this year, espe-cially our H1 Air services



AGENTS

58.3% repeat Indian bookings

Trafalgar's in-house survey has revealed that India delivers a repeat booking rate of 58.3 per cent and these guests are choosing to travel further to more exotic destinations such as South America.

Hazel Jain

As part of its annual ritual, Trafalgar recently launched its new 2019 brochure in India that includes some new itineraries, including a new continent – Africa. To introduce this to its agent partners, **Gavin Tollman**, CEO, Trafalgar & Costsaver, flew down to Mumbai from Geneva to meet the travel agent partners, exchange ideas and get feedback from them on the India market.

The India team later visited Pune, Bengaluru and Chennai to launch the 2019 brochures, which has a new destination – Africa. The six itineraries include Maasai Mara, the Serengeti and the Kalahari Desert, among other destinations.



Gavin Tollman CEO Trafalgar & Costsaver

Speaking about how this could take off in India, Tollman referred to Trafalgar's in-house survey which revealed that not only does India deliver a repeat booking rate of 58.3 per cent, but guests are also now choosing to travel further to more exotic destinations such as South America, citing experiential travel as the biggest trend.

Elaborating on this, he says, "Five years ago, the trend was to take multi-destination trips. Today, Indian travellers want to travel to Scandinavia and South America. Our

'Agent First'

Trafalgar is 100 per cent loyal to its agent partners. Globally, over 92 per cent of the company's sales come from its agent partners Norwegian tours are off the charts and I believe we are just scratching the surface. While India is still the smallest of our Asian markets, the potential here is enormous. Our Indian business has a small base but over the last four years it has shown the fastest

NTERGLOBE

6 Our Indian business has a small base but over the last four years, it has shown the fastest percentage growth **7**

percentage growth from any of our offices in the world. So it has got my attention." With an agent network of 12 across India, Trafalgar continues to lay emphasis on

its Agent First policy. To this, Tollman says, "We are 100 per cent loyal to our agent partners. Globally, over 92 per cent of our sales come from our agent partners. Our focus has been exclusively on how we can work with them to drive business. It is not just one market – it is globally. I believe in the current environment, it is even more important that we focus on our partners. One key statistic that stood out in our survey was that 89 per cent of consumers find the volume of information available to them overwhelming.



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Kesari's dream turns into reality

It all started with a dream for Kesari Tours to showcase India to the world and the world to Indian travellers. Today, 35 years later, it takes pride in stating that the dream has shaped up well.

YTT Bureau

hirty-five year old Kesari Tours, based in India, recently conducted an incentive trip successfully for a large group of 2,400 pax on a cruise ship for the first time ever. Zelam Chaubal, Director, Kesari Tours, says, "The journey so far would definitely not have been possible without the support of the suppliers, airlines and of course, the tourism boards. We have the utmost gratitude for all of our partners as well as our travellers who made us this big."

She adds that it began with a humble start in 1984. "We started with tours across India and we now conduct tours to all the seven continents. During the journey, we have achieved many awards, but our largest achievement remains the people's trust. Kesari is a brand that people can rely on, and we hope to continue down the same path in the future," the director adds.



Zelam Chaubal Director Kesari Tours

Over a span of more than three decades, Kesari Tours has crossed milestones and won many accolades. One of the best ones so far, she says, is the 'National Tourism Award

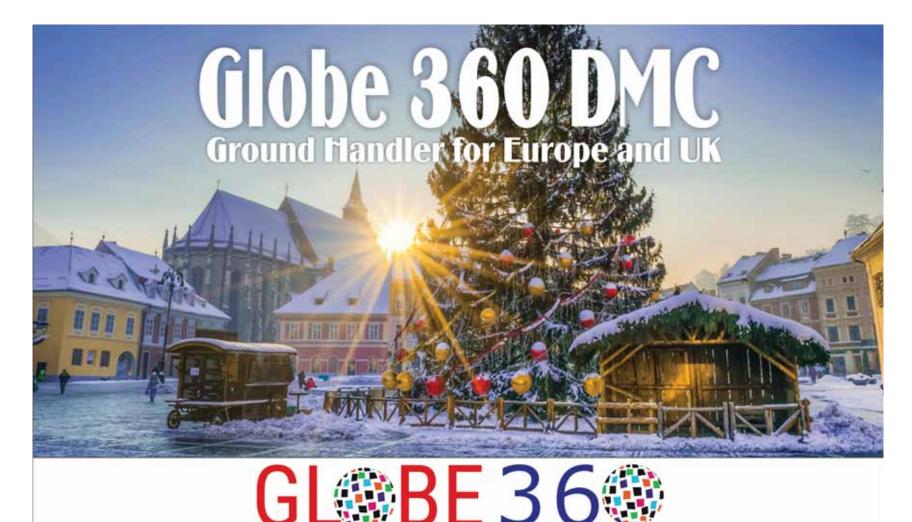


for Best Domestic Tour Operator – Rest of India' in 2013-14 as well as the 'National Tourism Award for Best Domestic Tour Operator for Kashmir' in 2013-14 and 2014-15 consecutively, presented to her father - Kesari Patil – by the President of India. He has also won the 'Gallery of Legends Award' by India Travel Awards West in 2016.

The best award though, she says, is from the customers. "The trust factor with Kesari Tours is strong. For us, our repeat clientele is the best award for us. In today's digital world when retaining the customer is the biggest challenge and brand loyalty means little, we are happy to say that our repeat clientele percentage is very high," she adds.

It all started with a dream, she reminiscences, to showcase India to the world and the world to Indian travellers. "Our inbound is also very well structured and able to handle foreign tourists. We specialise in spa tourism, yoga tourism, destination weddings, Himalayan tours as well as tours to Rajasthan, Goa, New Delhi, Ajanta Ellora and Kerala, just to name a few," the director concludes.

AGENTS



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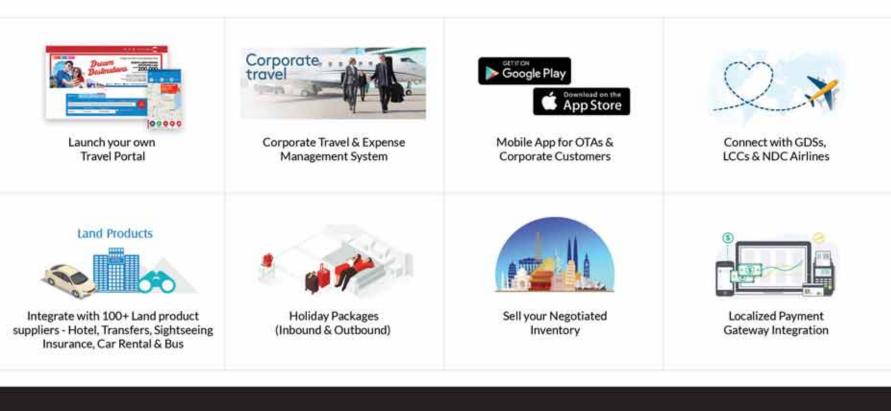
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London, Washington on radar

The government has been aggressively promoting India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) as a frontal organisation for marketing India as a leading MiCE destination.

Kanchan Nath

he India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) is set to conduct its 2019 roadshows in London and Washington, according to Chander Mansharamani, Vice Chairman, ICPB. He informed, "Many world associations are headquartered in London and a lot of American associations are in Washington. We'd perhaps like to have one roadshow in Australia, along with Asia Pacific Incentives Meetings Event (AIME) in Melbourne. Our roadshows this year witnessed a very good response in Paris, Zurich, Brussels and Geneva."

Mansharamani further stated, "We at ICPB, will soon be introducing a report on the size of MiCE industry in India. An agency for the same has been appointed by the government. They are also looking at the new structure for ICPB. We need to restructure the entire body by appointing marketing managers, backup staff, among others."

At ICPB's recently-held annual general meeting, Manshara-

tion of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO) in the USA for a certified programme. A residential programme will be conducted for two days while three other programmes will be held on different levels - entry level, project management and bidding. We also have plans to organise guest lectures once

66 Kolkata was a beginning for opening our chapters. Having eight members there will help increase our membership across India. If you consider going around eight cities to open the chapters, we will be able to add on at least 100 members to ICPB **77**

mani discussed the calendar of events and proposed to conduct four training programmes in a year. "We want to tie up with International Associain three months to further drive our membership," he revealed.

At the 11th Conventions India Conclave (CIC) 2018 held at Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, Kolkata, ICPB launched its first chapter—West Bengal Chapter in Kolkata. "We are also set to hold the first meet-



Chander Mansharamani Vice Chairman ICPB

ing of this chapter to discuss the kind of activities West Bengal can organise to promote MiCE tourism, participate at international trade shows and attract more conferences to Kolkata," Mansharamani elucidated.

On new initiatives being taken by ICPB, he said, "Kolkata was a beginning for opening our chapters. We have eight members there and this will help increase our membership across India. If you consider going around eight cities to open the chapters, we will be able to add on at least 100 members to ICPB. This will help us in creating a convention market pan-India. Just from being Delhi-centric, we now want to be an all-Indiacentric association."

Mansharamani also reveals that they are in touch with three more states. "Kerala is yet to become a one-time member and are keen on hosting the conclave next year. This will help us open a

Awards & Accolades

chapter there too. We are also looking at the states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. We will be calling for bids from different states to decide where to head for the CIC conclave," he assured.

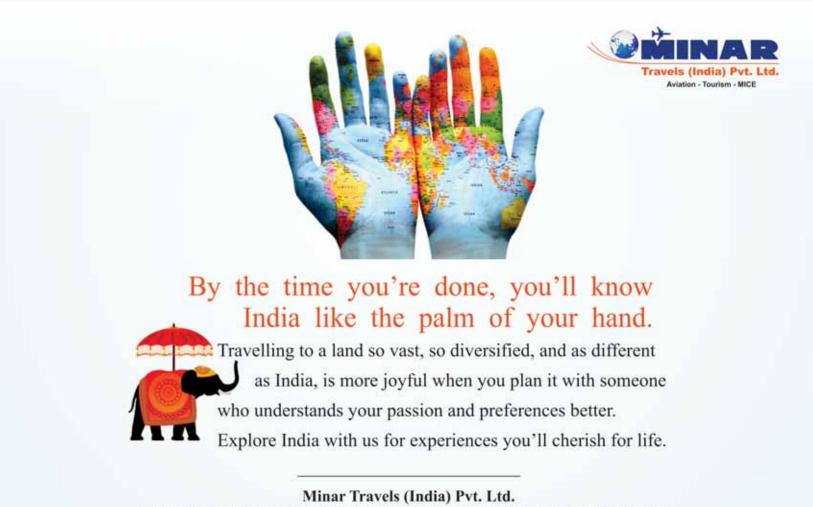
ICPBTALK

In the Pipeline

✔ ICPB is set to tie up with International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO) in the USA for a certified programme

A residential programme will be conducted for two days while three other programmes will be held on different levels

← Guest lectures will also be organsied once in three months to further drive membership



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WENTLY UN.

Explore beyond the mundane

Romit Theophilus, Director-India, German National Tourist Office, believes that the Indian market is increasingly exploring myriad facets of Germany by travelling beyond the popular cities.

YTT Bureau

he recently-held 'Discover Germany' roadshow in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai by German National Tourist Office (GNTO)—India aimed at cementing Germany as one of the leading destinations for Indians travelling to Europe. The German partners included regulars like Maritim Hotels, Baden Baden, KD German Rhine Line, Lufthansa German Airlines, Rail Europe, Vienna House, Saxony Tourism and Stuttgart and Southwest Germany. Two new partners at the event were Europamundo Vacations, a coach tour operator and a&o Hotels and Hostels, a hotel chain.

Talking on the sidelines of the roadshow, **Romit Theophilus**, Director-India, GNTO, said, "We are quite happy with the way Germany is being perceived in

the India market because many people are now considering the leisure segment. We have a lot more people asking for solo Germany and we love hearing travel agents tell us about that. We have also seen an overwhelming increase in the number of registrations on the web-based destination training module www.germanyspecialist.com launched in December 2017."

For the period January to July, 2018, the country received 54,7402 visitor overnights, marking a growth of 10.8 per cent from India compared to the same period last year. "Germany has seen a growth of roughly 13.1 per cent from January till now from India. We expect to close the year with approximately 900,000-920,000 overnights. We are on track to hit our target of One



Romit Theophilus Director-India German National Tourist Office million overnights for 2020. I really hope that we do that before time," he shared.

Theophilus mentioned that their focus this year is on Culinary Germany. "The goal is to showcase that German food not only entails meat but is quite diverse as well. The food in each city, state and the countryside is different. Our chief goal is to showcase German food exactly in that manner," he claimed.

Despite multiple destinations and venues suitable for Indian weddings, Theophilus said that Germany unfortunately hasn't been big on Indian weddings. "We are working on tapping the wedding segment by creating a lot of VR content and

Germany has seen a growth of 13.1 per cent from January to July, 2018 from India. We expect to close the year with approximately 900,000-920,000 overnights **77**

showcase weddings by virtually displaying sites and inviting people to come and plan their dream weddings in Germany. We have many castles and historical places that would be perfect as wedding venues and ity still ranks us as one of the better destinations in Europe because hotels, sightseeing and the general experience is much cheaper and affordable as compared to other places in Europe," he informed.

backdrops. In fact, affordabil-

Speaking on travel trends, he said, people are now keen on

exploring beyond the big cities

in Germany. "For us, it was

which the India market pre-

always Frankfurt and Munich

ferred. Berlin gained popularity

later with Dresden following

suit, especially for an Eastern

Europe itinerary where people tend to combine it with Prague and Berlin. Besides, we have seen a lot of travellers exploring states like Bavaria and Southwest Germany. Since there is a lot of Germany unexplored in the India market, we see a lot of potential in North and Central Germany. We are also promoting self-drives in Germany and creating awareness about the same," claimed Theophilus.

NTO

While the 'Discover Germany' roadshow is organised in bigger cities, GNTO is also tapping the Tier II and III markets in India too. "Year on year, we have been noticing an increased interest from the Indian travel trade in Destination Germany. This can be witnessed by the overwhelming participation received at our roadshows," he shared.

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India's big strides in aviation

Alexander de Juniac, CEO, IATA, believes that India will continue to be the fastest growing aviation market in the world, whilst sharing how it can achieve the same in an exclusive with **TRAVTALK**.

Nisha Verma

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) organised the International Aviation Summit in Delhi in as-



sociation with the Indian Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) and Airports Authority of India (AAI). Talking about the summit, Alexander de Juniac, CEO, IATA, said, "The summit was a roaring success, as we were expecting 500 delegates but received over 750 after which we had to close the registrations. Aviation is key for India in terms of development, prosperity, connectivity and the country has seen 50 months of uninterrupted doubledigit growth. We expect that by 2037. India will have 500 million passengers. What we have to do is cope with this growth in India, particularly in terms of

Alexander de Juniac Chief Executive Officer structure and regulations. We have to build efficient airports that offer good customer experience and improvement in the capacity of air traffic control. In terms of regulation, there is a need to reduce the cost that are on the airline profit and loss account."

Applauding the aviation policy in India, Juniac said, "In early 2016, India launched its aviation strategy to recognise the importance of aviation and establish a policy framework intended to maximise benefits. Indian airlines are preparing for 1000 aircraft scheduled for delivery over the next eight years, and even that may not be sufficient to satiate the thirst for travel."

However, he insisted that while it is easy to find Indians who want to fly, it's very difficult for airlines to make money in this market. Explaining the reason behind it, he said, "The steep rise in fuel prices and the steep fall in the value of the rupee are creating acute pressure on profits. According to IATA

6 India will have 500 million passengers by 2037. What we have to do is cope with this growth in India, particularly in terms of infrastructure and regulations **7**

members, India is a particularly challenging place to do business because the infrastructural constraints limit growth and the government policies impose excessive costs."

Nevertheless, Juniac lauded India's airport infrastructure and said that technology as a game changer, can help accommodate growth with modern processes. "Recent changes have eliminated multiple stamping of baggage tags and boarding cards as travellers made their way to the aircraft. We have high expectations from the DigiYatra

initiative by MOCA that is set to

transform processes and lead

india to top of the league,"

On the rising fuel costs, he

mentioned, "Fuel accounts

for about 24.2 per cent of an

average airline cost structure. In

India, it is 34 per cent, making

Indian carriers particularly sensi-

👌 Hahn Air

he added.

tive in this regard. All airlines are already suffering from the rising fuel prices and India's regulatory and tax framework around fuel hits airlines serving this market even harder. If we can comprehensively fix jetfuel infrastructure issues, India will be primed to take a giant step forward in the world of aviation."

AVIATION

Apart from the Indian aviation scenario, Juniac also spoke about IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC), saying, "NDC is a technology protocol we have developed to improve relations between airlines and passengers through travel agents. Now, when a travel agent looks at the screen or at airfares provided by the airline, he has very little information about the booking of class, airports, and the price. NDC allows travel agents to have access to these options."

Wishing you a sparkling festival of lights...

infra-

Happy Diwali!

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Taste of food tourism at WTM

Attendees at this year's WTM London will hear food tourism experts explain how destinations around the globe can benefit from the current interest in culinary travel experiences.

T Bureau

global survey of 50,000 Atravellers by a popular travel search engine found that more than six in 10 choose a destination for its great food or drink and that more than a third plan to take a dedicated food tourism trip sometime in 2018. Frik Wolf. Founder, World Food Travel Association, is moderating three sessions covering many aspects of a diverse and evolving sector.

'Food Tourism 2025: What You Need to Know Now' will take a detailed look at how



'Food Tourism 2025: What You Need to Know Now' will look at controversial issues such as the connection between food tourism and overtourism

and ensure standards are set. The session will also look at controversial issues such as the connection between food tourism and overtourism, and growing concern over food waste and plastic. Set to take place on November 6, speakers at the session are Roberta Garibaldi, Professor, Marketing and Tourism Management, University of Bergamo, Italy;



5-7 November 2018

Patrick Torrent, Executive Director, Catalan Tourist Board; ability in food tourism will Maria Athanasopoulou, be considered in a session with Clare Jenkinson Senior Owner, Respond on Demand marketing agency; and Udi Destinations and Sustainabil-Goldschmidt, CEO, Jerusalem ity Manager, Association of British Travel Agents Culinary Institute.

Charlotte Alderslade,

Conference and Seminar Manager, WTM London said, "Part of the mission at WTM London is to help the global travel industry keep on top of the trends. Food tourism is an emerging stand-alone sector but it also resonated with other parts of the business. It is part of the living like a local trend, part of the tours and activities growth, has its place at the luxury

and budget end

is a truly global

phenomenon."

The specific

issue of sustain-

of the market and

aspects of sustainability and how the lessons learnt can help the food tourism industry. Many destinations have a local

(ABTA). The one-on-one

interview, to be held on

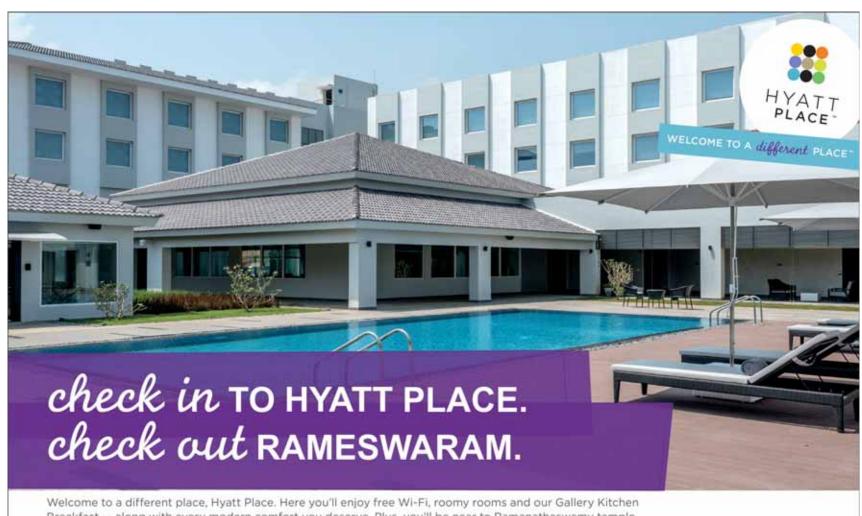
November 7, will look at

the successes of ABTA's

initiatives across many

EXHIBITIONS

cuisine, but the kingdom of Jordan has incorporated food into its culture through the practice of karam - welcoming guests and even strangers with food and drinks. Dr Abed Al Razzaq Arabiyat, Managing Director, Jordan Tourism Board will talk about how this creates a positive impact on visitors and how other destinations can use this approach to inspire their own food tourism culture. This session also takes place on November 7.



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HOTELS Marina Mandarin gets upgraded

The Marina Mandarin Singapore by Meritus has recently completed the refurbishment of its Pool Garden Pavilion. Not only that, the upcoming cosmetic refresh of its Deluxe, Executive Deluxe and Premier rooms will also see new furniture, carpet, wallpaper and bathrooms.

Karishma Khanna

With an expansive space of 31 square metres, the guestrooms at Marina Mandarin Singapore come with a balcony which affords panoramic view of the Singapore skyline. The hotel also enjoys an excellent location in the heart of Singapore's Central Business District, with direct access to Marina Square Shopping Mall, and convenient access to Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre via a pedestrian bridge. It is also minutes away from attractions



Eileen Khew Director—Sales and Market Marina Mandarin Singapore les and Marketing

such as Gardens by the Bay, the Merlion and the Singapore Flyer.

Eileen Khew, Director-Sales and Marketing, Marina Mandarin Singapore, shares details about the new development at the hotel. "The hotel has recently completed the three-month refurbishment of its Pool Garden Pavilion with a stunning new facade. Boasting a panoramic view of the Marina Bay skyline, the Pavilion is situated next to the mineral water pool that is adorned with garden foliage," she says.

The fully air-conditioned Pavilion, which can host events of up to 100 persons, now has lush carpeting, providing a comfortable walking space and a clean, contemporary visual appeal. New tempered glass sliding doors and adjustable curtain blinds allow natural daylight to brighten up the room. The glass doors can be opened to transform the Pavilion into a semi-outdoor venue, allowing guests to enjoy fresh air.

To support the smooth running of events, the pavilion is equipped with a new built-in projector and screen, as well as mobile stage. The space also includes a designated buffet counter, with a barbeque

6 To keep our partners in India updated about promotions and stay in touch with them, we make sales trips and trade visits to India at least once a year ""

buffet option at the pool deck, providing a perfect setting for an informal networking function or a relaxing party.

Speaking about the strategy the hotel will adopt to promote itself in the India market. Khew says, "To keep our partners in India updated about such promotions and stay in touch with them, we make sales trips and trade visits to India at least once a year." 🐓

Areyoua **TRAVEL AGENT**

seeking strategies for growth?







Jumeirah takes interest in India

Having successfully conducted a three-city roadshow in Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts is keen to nourish its ties with the Indian travel trade. Alessandro Aldo Cabella, Area GM, Jumeirah Group, talks about Zabeel House — the group's new brand, and how it plans to enter the Indian market.



show in Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai to strengthen the brand's ties with the Indian travel trade. Besides, it aimed at introducing the hospitality's newly opened brand - Zabeel House by Jumeirah.

Sharing more aspects of the show, Alessandro Aldo Cabella, Area General Manager, Jumeirah Group, said, "Around 18 Jumeirah properties participated in the roadshow which was attended by over 140 agents in each city, making it a huge success. The Indian market has witnessed a considerable rise in outbound luxury travel in recent years. Hence, the group



Jumeirah as we felt it is necessary to have a second brand in our portfolio. This new brand has been welcomed by European travel agents and many other partners whom we met during our India visit. It's

a new vibrant brand that's all

about the neighbourhood, it's

about the location we put our

hotels in - these are fun, fresh

and exciting. We don't use the

standard rating of a star hotel,

we call them upscale, lifestyle.

Zabeel House by Jumeirah

promises to be stylish, while

F The India market has grown by about 29-30 per cent. This growth is due to our offerings or, in view of our hotel brands that are appropriate for the market **7**

awareness and gain new consumers."

Cabella emphasises on the importance of the Indian market. He says, "We will repeat these shows couple of times a year. We have developed a new brand called Zabeel House by



HOTELS & RESORTS

delivering on the collection's 'upscale casual' promise of sharp design and smart service, with an informal approach and a moderate price point."

He further adds, "We already have two operational properties in Dubai. The third one will be opened by December in the Greens, Dubai. Also, the ones coming later will just not be in the UAE, but worldwide. Every property of Zabeel House by Jumeirah will have a sense of the neighbourhood because guests just don't come to the city, but they come to a neighbourhood where they want to experience something different- a bit of an off-beat experience."

According to Cabella, "Indian market has grown by about 29-30 per cent and we think

it's growing faster. It's primarily because of our offerings or, in view of our hotel brands that are appropriate for the Indian market.

HOTELS

India as a market has our great interest. Also, response from the people we have met over the past few days, the interest from all agents, wedding planners, groups, etc. has been tremendous.

Brand Zabee

Zabeel House by Jumeirah is all about the neighbourhood, it's about the location of its hotels these are fresh and exciting

✤ The brand promises to be stylish, while delivering on being 'upscale casual'

Creative supports Kerala

In a bid to revive tourism in Kerala, Creative Tours & Travels is not only extending financial contributions to its staff but also to the houseboat community in the state.

TT Bureau

The ground reality is that everything is back to normal, says Adl Karim, Director, Creative Tours & Travels (India), who is just back from Kochi after attending Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) 2018. According to him, the event this year was even better than the previous years with big numbers not just from domestic buyers but also international ones.

This is confirmed by the numbers release by Kerala Tourism, which states that KTM 2018 saw participation from over 1,500 buyers from 66 countries which made it one of the most successful editions of the event. It was a huge success even for Creative Tours & Travels which is one of the big DMCs for Kerala for international and domestic travellers. Karim says, "People are waiting for Kerala to come back in full force. We have offices in 10



Director Creative Tours & Travels (India)

locations in Kerala in almost all the districts. We promote Kerala as a destination in a big way - it has huge potential and it is one of the biggest destinations in India in terms of numbers after Goa for international as well as domestic tourists."

He adds that while most of the infrastructure is in place, some approach roads into Munnar and Thekkady that were damaged are now being reconstructed. "On our part,

we have made contributions to our own staff members in our offices who have lost their houses and valuables. We have also contributed to the houseboat community. A lot of houseboats in Alleypey were damaged so we have made some contribution to the houseboat association in Kerala Contribution to the Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund has gone separately from our company," Karim reveals

He adds that everyone was worried about Munnar and Thekady because these destinations are part of almost every standard itinerary for Kerala. "All the hoteliers from these two places were exhibiting at KTM to win back the confidence of buyers and the travel fraternity," he shares.

The company is also the only PSA in the western region for the Maharajas' Express - the luxury tourist train owned and operated by IRCTC. 😓



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23 years of Mumbai operations

The national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, Oman Air, recently celebrated 23 years of successful operations in Mumbai at Hard Rock Café, Worli. The airline invited its key trade partners for an evening of celebrations and thanked them for their continuous support over the years. The airline also announced new routes and initiatives for 2019.



Awarded for a creative itinerary

For an incentive group of 53 passengers, 'The Best Creative Planning Itinerary' was quickly planned and well executed by Kulin Shah, CEO, Kulin Kumar Holidays and his team.

As a precursor to the Visit Japan Travel & MiCE Mart 2018 (VJTM) by Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), Kulin Shah, CEO, Kulin Kumar Holidays was awarded by Santoshi Seino, President, JNTO for 'Best Creative Planning Itinerary' comprising an incentive group of 53 passengers. The company took just an hour to plan the itinerary and covered different activities, including sites covering nature, industrial visits, snow activity and city life.

Japan is an ideal destination for Indian MiCE with abundant facilities to offer to participants like high standard of hospitality, ease of transport, variety of Indian restaurants, ample sightseeing and a bustling nightlife. Since Kulin Kumar Holidays is operating tours to



Japan since 2005, it also has a DMC in the country that helps the company execute its plans conveniently by understanding

cutomers' requirements.

After receiving the award, Shah expressed his gratitude

towards every member of team JNTO and thanked them for their constant support. He felt extremely proud and happy to have been honoured with this prestigious recognition and looks forward to increased business into Japan from India.

At the event held in Hotel New Otani, Tokyo, names

The selection criteria were based on itineraries that made the best use of the features of the destination, illustrated successful post-event impact on attendees and demonstrated innovative use of technology

of other winners were also unveiled. These included Comfort Travel Services. Taiwan for Best Incentive Travel and JTB Australia for

Best Community Contribution. Prize winners also made a presentation on how their programmes made use of the distinctive features of venues and the benefits that were obtained by the sponsoring companies.

The selection criteria for

the awarded applications were based on itineraries

that made the best use of

the features of the visited

destination, illustrated suc-

attendees and corporates.

cessful post-event impact on

on receiving several applications for the awards. Besides, it was quite interesting for him to learn about such wonderful incentive programmes in Japan.

demonstrated innovative use

of technology and planning

and an outstanding contribu-

tion to the region through

Satoshi Seino, President,

JNTO, also expressed his joy

local community.

cultural exchanges with the

Advertorial

FAMILYALBUM

While addressing a large number of MiCE professionals from across the world. Seino expressed hopes that with the help of a continuous support, the incentive travel to Japan will continue to grow in the future. He believes that MiCE buyers can share more knowledge and resources to create a variety of incentive travel programmes with excellent content.



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Mandarin Orchard Singapore has been a landmark of world-class Asian hospitality in Singapore since 1971—preferred by business and leisure travellers for its service excellence and prime location in the heart of the city's most prominent shopping district. The hotel boasts some 1,077 spacious guestrooms and suites that offer views of the city skyline from higher floors. All are equipped with advance in-room technologies including a smartphone solution for complimentary local and international calls, as well as access to unlimited 4G data. Guests can also enjoy the latest blockbuster movies through a complimentary inroom movie platform. Leading the hotel's vibrant line-up of food and beverage outlets are *Chatterbox*, home of the legendary Mandarin Chicken Rice, and *Shisen Hanten by Chen Kentaro*, the highest Michelin-rated Chinese restaurant in Singapore. Within the hotel is *Mandarin Gallery*, a unique shopping destination featuring an exciting variety of cult and luxury brands, making for an all-encompassing retail and hospitality experience for guests.

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Internationally acclaimed *Marina Mandarin Singapore* is an upscale business hotel that enjoys an excellent location in Singapore's Central Business District, opposite the *Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre* and *The Esplanade—Theatres on the Bay*. Situated on the trackside of the annual Singapore Grand Prix Formula One race, the hotel is also within walking distance of popular tourist attractions such as *Gardens by the Bay* and the *Singapore Flyer*. All 575 guestrooms enjoy private balconies overlooking breathtaking views of the Marina Bay waterfront or the relaxing cityscape. Guests can look forward to some of the finest epicurean delights offered in the Marina Bay district, with options that include a Cantonese restaurant, a steakhouse, an atrium lounge, and a buffet restaurant featuring a Halal-certified spread. The hotel also offers an outdoor mineral water pool and a spa facility.





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Goa stays ahead in tech race

Nikhil Desai, Managing Director, Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), believes that Goa Tourism has been contributing immensely to the digital transformation of the country's travel sector.

TT Bureau

For Goa Tourism, the last one year has seen a record-breaking growth. Agreeing to this is Nikhil Desai, who says, "We have witnessed a growth of over 17 per cent and the arrivals have been touching an all-time high, both from the domestic as well as international sector." products include hot air balloon, scuba diving and amphibious vessels. Recently we have also introduced a first-of-its-kind tourist taxi app, run by Goa Tourism Board. As Ola or Uber do

C The first ropeway project is underway under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Around three to four hotels are being developed along with the Mopa International Airport

Desai revealed that the state is constantly adding several new products to its portfolio of offerings. "New adventure not ply in Goa, we have decided to come up with Goa Miles, an app-based system in which we don't charge anything from the driver. It is getting stabilised right now. During the current season, we are very optimistic that tourists will make full use of it. Apart from that, doubledecker hop-on-hop-off bus services, sky diving and a host of other products are in the offing. New properties are being launched in quick succession. The charter season also looks good. Now, Goa is also set to get excellent cruise liners. This season is looking up and we are optimistic of another double-digit growth in the coming year," he elucidated.

Digital transformation is key for any tourism board to move ahead in the race, says Desai. "Goa Tourism has been leveraging a lot of digital initiatives. We are one of the most digitally advanced boards in this country and our efforts are underway to make it even better in the days to come," he revealed.

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Goa is a blessed destination with

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people to come and enjoy the of-

ferings in Goa whilst preserving the

cleanliness, culture and spirit of the

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that their security and safety is our

prime responsibility.



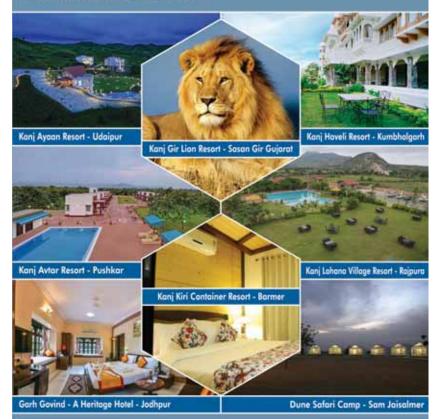
Manohar Ajgaonkar Minister of Tourism Goa

The state is also working closely with the private sector. "The first ropeway project is underway under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Around three to four hotels are being developed through the private sector. The Mopa International Airport is going to be one of the biggest airports in the country through PPP. We are also in talks for a large convention and film tourism facility being developed at Dona Paula on PPP mode. There are plans to develop a theme park under PPP again. A lot of initiatives are underway for the same," Desai concludes.

NEWS



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Building India's image

A round-table was organised ahead of the inaugural 'Conference on Soft Power' set to be held in Delhi from December 17-19, 2018.

→ TT Bureau

ndia Foundation's Centre for Soft Power in association with the Indic Academy organised a round-table discussion on 'Tourism & Soft Power' to identify, deliberate and discuss Indian soft power in the field of tourism. Multiple practitioners, experts, policy makers and other stakeholders from the vertical of medical tourism, experiential tourism, education tourism and cultural/event tourism reviewed the existing policy frameworks and recommended suggestions ahead of the inaugural 'Conference on Soft Power' to be held in New Delhi from December 17-19. The conference will cover multiple aspects of soft power of which tourism is a very integral part.

Sharing more details about the round-table discussion, **Vishala Reddy**, Founder Director, IdentCITY said, "This is actually a planning round-table for the upcoming conference in De-



Vishala Reddy Founder Director IdentCITY

cember. The country's foreign policies are more focused on hard powers like the military, industries and economic growth. Apart from that, the country is now adopting soft powers to influence the foreign policies and improve international relations."

"We aim to use art, culture, food, cinema, yoga and tourism as the soft power elements to attract international attention and help in India's image building globally. Travel connects people, changes perceptions and introduces people to different cultures. Therefore, tourism is an excellent interface to build a better brand image of the country. The round-table focused on issues plaguing the Indian tourism industry and deliberated over the kind of solutions to alleviate them. We will also come up with a working paper that will be submitted to the relevant authorities," she further added.

Talking about the deliberations at the round-table, **Neeraj Thakur**, General Secretary, Telangana Chamber of Event Industry said, "The objective was to make a white paper presentation about the matters related to tourism and have a close net study about the subjects which we are going to deliberate and discuss at the upcoming conference. We discussed how tourism can be used as a tool to elevate the position of India in the world."



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Manas Dwivedi

With an intent to strengthen the breadth and density of its network by adding new flights in key markets while selectively adding new routes and destinations, Indigo is looking to stronghold its dominant position in the Indian aviation market. Adding a number of new flights and destinations in the last couple of months, IndiGo has extended its reach to more than 60 destinations including 14 international cities.

On the recent developments, William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo says, "As part of the international expansion, Kuala Lumpur, Male and Phuket will be the new destinations on our network. We have recently started flights for Kuwait and

www.vietnamairlines.com

Abu Dhabi. Apart from this, Allahabad will be our fourth destination in Uttar Pradesh after Lucknow, Varanasi and Gorakhpur. Under the UDAN scheme, IndiGo has also started services to Hubli and Trichy."

"While we remain focused on building our domestic network, we will also continue to connect destinations internationally. With our existing fleet and the new A321neos that we expect to start receiving deliveries of towards the end of the year, IndiGo will have the capability to reach cities in China, Middle East and Southeast Asia," he adds.

Talking about his plans and targets for 2019, Boulter reveals, "With UDAN flights already in the pipeline along with others, we plan to offer our flights and services to more people across the country by adding new destinations to our flight routes. In addition, IndiGo has always



William Boulter Chief Commercial Officer IndiGo

been keen to explore long haul operations, and we remain open to opportunities around the same. We will continue to expand our network to meet the requirements of both business and leisure travellers wherever they demand it."

Boulter affirms that the industry has become highly competitive with the advent of low-cost airlines and competitive fares in terms of the growth of aviation industry. "We face intense competition from other low-cost carriers

With UDAN flights already in the pipeline, we plan to offer our services to more people across the country by adding new destinations to our flight routes

as well as full-cost carriers that operate on our routes. In India, low cost is critical to the airline industry which is characterised by highly pricesensitive consumers. On one hand, increase in input costs nt routes """ Boulter further mentions, "With a share of over 65 per cent in India's air travel market, Low Cost Carriers (LCCs) continued to gain acceptance not only amongst leisure travellers but also cor-

such as fuel prices, aircraft

landing and enroute charges

have increased pressure on

the industry's profitability. On

the other hand, demand for air

travel continues to be robust

rapid capacity expansion and

stimulating higher air travel

demand." he adds.

at low fares in the domes-

tic market, absorbing the

porate ones by meeting their key expectations of network density, schedule and on-time performance. This keeps a healthy environment in the market as all players work their best to come up with low cost and high utility strategy."

AVIATION

Foreign Links

✓ With IndiGo's existing fleet and the new A321neos expected to start receiving deliveries towards the end of the year, the airline will have the capability to reach cities in China, Middle East and Southeast Asia

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Encashing the festival season

With the festival of lights expected to bring in huge business to the Indian tourism industry, India Travel Award winners share their plans and ex- pectations for the ongoing festival season.

TT Bureau

★ Entrepreneur of the year 🛛 —



KD Singh (North 2017)

According to **KD Singh**, Founder and President, Travel-Bullz, the company witnessed an increase of 20-25 per cent in guests traveling to its destinations during Dussehra and Durga Puja. He says, "Looking ahead, Christmas and New Year are the peak travelling months for us. From families travelling from India, we expect a growth of around 40-50 per cent on existing guest's arrivals. October to March, as the major wedding season in India, attracts a lot of honeymooners to our destinations.

We expect to serve approximately 20,000 travellers in the third quarter of 2018. We are focusing on family and honeymoon exclusive packages."

To Register, Visit - agents.bigbreaks.com

★ Best Tour Operator- Inbound — A-La-Carte Tours (North 2017)



G Atul Khanna, General Manager—Sales, A-La-Carte Tours feels that the fluctuating value of currencies is likely to affect business. "The rate of the dollar has increased all over the world with business rolling everywhere. We are expecting that by December, it should come down and business will become smooth again. If the currency remains stable, travel bookings are not affected. Regarding the special plans, we have gone ahead and negotiated deals with various hotels to boost bookings. We are entering a tie-up with them and arranging the rooms so that we can sell them to our partners at low prices," he says.

★ Best Travel CRM — De Box Global (North 2017)

AWARDTALK

For Syed A Asim, Director, De Box Global, the festival season bring hopes for all the business in India. He tells, "From Diwali to Christmas and New Year, it's high time for our Industry to make hay. Since we are in the business of helping travel industry in achieving more business and grow by organising their processes, we have launched many new tools, reports and dashboards to specifically handle more volumes. We have expanded our team, moved to a bigger office just to make sure our customers get the best support during their peak season. I would like to specifically mention about the launch of our new Voice Assistant and CEO Report in our TravCRM.



★ Best Luxury Camp — The Ultimate Travelling Camp (North 2017)

G Dhun Cordo, Co-Founder, TUTC, reveals that her company has introduced early bird discounts and special festive family offers for its camps. "The concept of festive travelling is fast picking up with Indian travellers. Festive companion offers, discounted airfares, gift cards and special packages by hotels are further encouraging travellers to make the most of the festive season. It is also a time when Indian travellers seek to travel to domestic destinations. With our Kohima camps in Nagaland and Jaagir Lodge in UP starting operations in November, we have received a positive response in terms of inquiries from travellers," shares Cordo.



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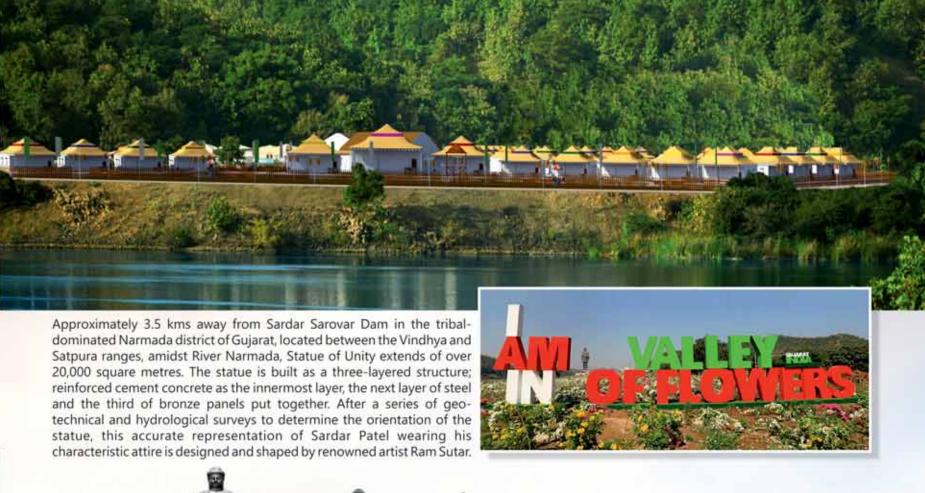
WORLD'S TALLEST LIVING MEMORIAL & A GIANT LEAP FOR TOURISS

The architectural marvel 'STATUE OF UNITY' stands tall today at Sadhu Bet in Gujarat as a grand tribute to the grand stature of Sardar Patel, saluting his efforts in uniting India. The extravagant living memorial set up along the breath-taking environs of Narmada Dam, 135-metre high viewing gallery, Valley of Flowers, upcoming Tent City, nearby forest; all sums up to make it a majestic tourist destination.

A story of sheer engineering and artistry excellence has taken the shape of 182-metre-tall Statue of Unity in Gujarat, an eternal tribute to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The Statue built on the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' (One India, Great India) glorifies the ideals of the architect of united India, Sardar Patel. Then Chief Minister of Gujarat Mr. Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the statue on October 31, 2013, and unveiled the same as the Prime Minister of India on the same day in 2018.

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153 meters 120 meters 93 meters 85 meters 38 meters 38 meters A Landmark GLOBAL TOURIST Destination

A living memorial in itself, Statue of Unity is systematically conceptualised with all the attractions of an ideal tourism destination. May it be the museum with rare documents and photographs or the laser, light and sound show and 3-D projection mapping conceived on Sardar Patel's life, this project has it all to engage the visitors and tourists. The panoramic viewing gallery at a height of 135 metres, accommodating 200 people at a time lets the visitors enjoy the magnificent environs of the dam and its surroundings. A three-star hotel, Shreshtha Bharat Bhavan and Guest Houses of State Governments are also planned in the campus of Statue of Unity.

To add to its tourism quotient, enhanced features like Valley of Flowers spread over 17 kms and Tent City are developed around this project. The statue and the surrounding areas are to be made accessible by boats and ferries to avoid vehicular traffic and pollution. The project site will be connected with modern infrastructures including expressways, highways, railways, ferry services and helipads. With an estimated 3000 tourists to be allowed every day at this destination, this project is sure to contribute in the socio-economic development of the nearby tribal areas and the state as it is to generate thousands of direct and indirect jobs every year.



FAMILYALBUM

Agents bond over cricket

TBO Group in association with Visawaale.com (ADI Group) organised Travel Trade Cricket league, a tennis ball cricket tournament for travel trade associations, partners and travel affinity groups to network and connect over a healthy game. About 16 teams competed for the trophy and showcased exemplary sportsmanship and bonhomie.



Meandering routes to success

Successfully completing five years in July this year, Meandering Vacations has been offering rewarding experiences to ride the wave of opportunity in the travel industry, while conquering challenges on its way.

Based out of Thane, Me-andering Vacations has a strong presence in leisure tourism and MiCE. Apart from it, corporate travel has also been strengthened by the growing list of the company's satisfied customers and their testimony of its awardwinning services.

It is pleasing to see the tourism sector evolve under the new regime, as it has been seriously looked at as a major contributor to India's growth story. Investors are being welcomed in the industry, and a lot of investment is seen coming in. Young companies like Meandering Vacations are benefiting through these opportunities as they embrace the change in the industry. A lot of scaling up options are also coming their way - right



Shivadatta Wagle Director Meandering Vacations

evaluation and alignment with our vision of growth remains the key factor in selecting these options. Consolidated projects are the way forward. Tourism industry – with its growth potential - remains one of the sought-after investing options globally, and India with its technologicallydriven young population is



Manoj Naii Directo Meandering Vacations

the right platform for exponential growth.

In these five years, adaption of the latest technology has enabled the company to manage travel for guests from diverse social strata, though its major contributors have been travellers with substantial travel budgets. Hence, Meandering

provides high-yield revenue to the principals, and its management of MiCE movements is also on upswing since it has organised events in the Far East and Europe. In addition,

its leisure travellers also bring the opportunity to research about new destinations as they are avid travellers, and thus, building a product for them requires immense consultation process. The company's out-of-the-box products have received excellent response all over, as it remains focused on meeting customer expectations every single time.

Meandering Vacations' office in Kochi takes care of its inbound division. It has handled guests from the US, the UK, France, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Canada. The

Meandering Vacations' inbound division was incubated in 2015, and since then the company has witnessed substantial growth in this vertical

> company aims to promote Indian tourism through safe and quality touring. Its inbound division was incubated in 2015. and since then the company has witnessed substantial growth in this vertical. Its partners over the globe have shown tremendous confidence in their ability of taking care of guests. Being transparent in setting the expectation right is

the company's key to success for foreign markets.

Advertorial

In 2013, Meandering Vacations started off with a well-chalked growth plan for five years and its own expectations in terms of the growth achieved. Moving on to its next charted path, the company anticipates an exponential growth in the next five years which will be based on some innovative products to be introduced for guests.

Key to Success

🖊 Being transparent in setting the expectation right is Meandering Vacations' key to success for foreign markets

✤ The company also anticipates an exponential growth over a period of the next five years

Jeju taps India's outbound

With no visa required for Indian nationals, Jeju Island is increasing its efforts to develop this potential source market and start with educating the trade about its spectrum of offerings.

Hazel Jain

NTO

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province and Jeju Tourism Organization recently held a joint roadshow in New Delhi and Mumbai to present the destination to travel agents. This was their second tourism presentation in India since 2015 when they made their India debut. **Park, Hong-Bai**, President, Jeju Tourism Organization, led the Korean delegation that comprised Jeju Special Self-Governing Province and three domestic businesses that were participating in the roadshow.

About 100 tour operators attended the show in each city. Indian nationals do not require a visa for visiting Jeju Island. Hong-Bai said, "This roadshow is an important first step for



Park, Hong-Bai President Jeju Tourism Organization

Jeju to tap the Indian market. Jeju will be working with Korea Tourism Organization and Hong Kong Tourism Board to boost promotion of each region in India and increase the satisfaction of Indian travellers who plan to visit Jeju."

He added that such initiatives are key since Jeju is not a familiar tourist destination for Indians yet. "Our focus is therefore on diversifying markets because it is difficult to generate demand continuously if it is concentrated in certain countries. We have been promoting ourselves in Southeast

No visa for Jeju

Indian passport holders need a visa to visit South Korea (except Jeju island). But they don't need one if they visit only Jeju. Asia and now we plan to focus on marketing in India. Indian travellers show interest in other cultures and the possibility of growth from India will be greater than that of China. If the government strives to promote Jeju through continuous marketing, it will be able to **L** If the government strives to promote Jeju, it will be able to gain the upper hand not only in Korea, but also in competition with major cities like Japan and China **1**

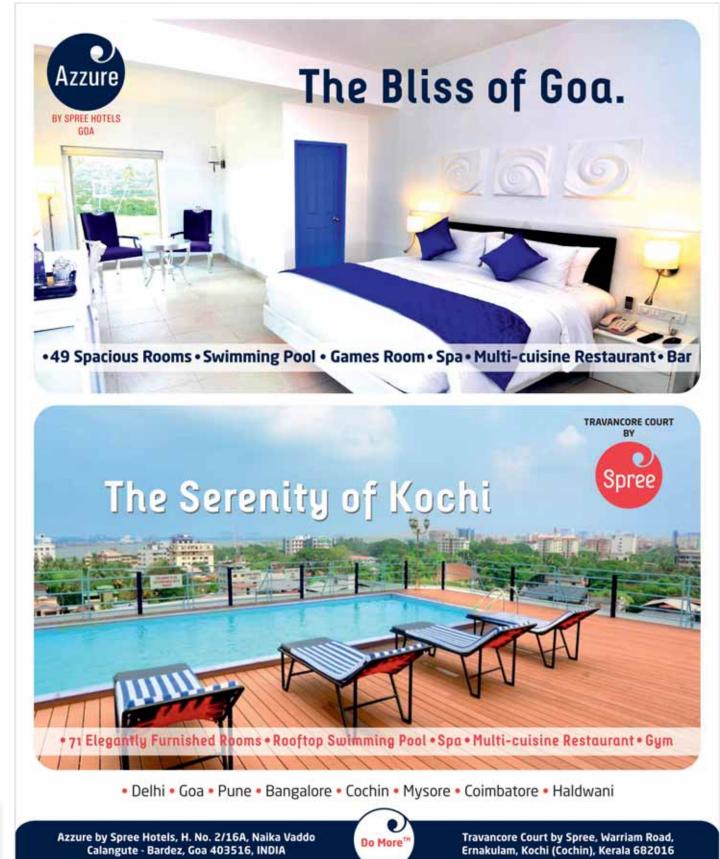
gain the upper hand not only in Korea, but also in competition

with major cities such as Japan and China.

There are also several Indian restaurants in Jeju, "Hong-Bai mentioned. Rather than just providing information on Jeju, its government has provided a foundation for joint promotion of various projects in the future. Speaking about his plan of action, Hong-Bai informed that he

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plans to build a network with the Indian travel industry and update them about various products that Jeju has to offer. He also plans to strengthen cooperation with destinations familiar to Indian tourists such as the Hong Kong Tourism Organization to jointly develop products.



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An India beyond the usual

India and Malaysia enjoy a healthy tourist exchange. The objective, however, still remains that Malaysians visiting the country be proposed a package that allows them to explore the unexplored.

Tripti Mehta from Langkawi

t is no secret that India's geography offers a diversity that caters to travellers of all kinds. The country continues to be a favoured destination for tourists arriving from Southeast Asia, and is a preferred travel destination for Malaysians. Speaking about the tourism connect between India and Malaysia, Mridul Kumar, High Commissioner of India to Malaysia, says, "Malaysia has a good, organic market for tourism in India. We had over 250,000 Malaysians who visited India last year. A lot of people from both sides travel to each other's country. We have about 2.7 million people of Indian origin who live in Malaysia; they travel to India for various

Mridul Kumar High Commissioner of India to Malaysia

reasons. There is a huge spiritual connect that you will see for people of Indian origin living here."

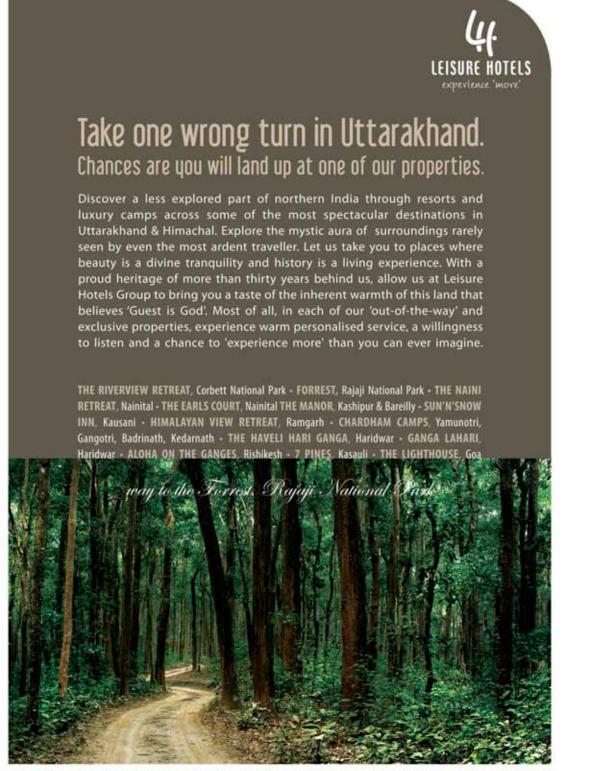
What makes India a global tourist attraction is the completeness it offers in terms of travel options, but Kumar feels that the packages the country offers to visitors need a little work. He says, "India itself is a full-fledged package. However, what we need to do is get more people from Malaysia to India, and that requires a little push. Our packaging is not as mature as it should be. If our tour operators can create need-based packages and make them end-to-end, giving travellers from Malaysia an offer that is cost comparative and takes them out of Tamil Nadu and Kerala (their natural choice) and allows them to explore the Buddhist circuit, India's

Northeast, Kashmir, etc, the business of tourism will only flourish. It is important to give them a very different atmosphere that they haven't seen and provide them good packaging through honest tour **L** If our tour operators can create need-based packages and make them end-to-end, giving travellers from Malaysia an offer that is cost comparative **J**

operators. It is a huge market that you can easily tap."

On a lighter note, Kumar recommends some Indian

and Malaysian destinations that travellers from either side must visit. "For Indians, Genting and Kuala Lumpur are very common sectors. Sabah and Sarawak are also beautiful and unexplored. These are some of the places where people can come and enjoy their holidays. I would also suggest that Malaysians visit our hill stations; I bet they have not seen hills like ours. Take them to Darjeeling, take them to the Northeast, take them to Kashmir, and maybe even Ooty, and they'll be left in awe," he concludes.



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Eros set for festive season

Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel New Delhi, Nehru Place, shares that the festive season brings with it huge business from both domestic and inbound markets.

has been looking up and has

continued to be buoyant this

year too. We are pleased to

deliver growing occupancy

Going forward, the hotel is

undertaking many initiatives to

meet its targets. "Eros Hotel,

with its imposing presence

of over two decades has

line with the market."

and average rates which is in

E ros Hotel Nehru Place, New Delhi, is geared up to welcome guests for the upcoming festival season. Davinder Juj, General Manager, Eros Hotel New Delhi, Nehru Place says, "We are ready to bring out the best offerings in the last festive quarter of the year. Diwali is a season of exchanging gifts and we at Eros Hotel are well-

Eros Innovates

✤ With a rising preference

for healthy low-calorie reci-

pes, theme lunches during

corporate events, express

trends, Eros Hotel New

guest needs

check-in, among other new

Delhi aggressively caters to

✓ The hotel pursues inno-

vation coupled with high

standards of services

s Hotel party, where Eros Hotel has a distinct locational g out the advantage of being next to the upmarket residential areas wali is in South Delhi." ng gifts are well- In fact, the season also calls

for many inbound guests. Juj agrees, "Of course, adding to the buzz is the wedding season and spurt in the inbound leisure travellers during this time. Everyone including our chefs, serving staff and room attendants consciously work to create invigorating experiences for our guests. Diverse dining options with three restaurants and a bar offer experiences accentuated with ingenious food promotions and live music appealing to the

known for curating exquisite hampers to match our clients'

demands for gifting. Christmas and New year, however,

present opportunities when

people like to wine, dine and



General Manager Eros Hotel New Delhi, Nehru Place

senses of the discerning leisure travellers seeking luxury and relaxation. Wellness and yoga sessions in our lawns next to the poolside have always been sought-after and highly appreciated by our quests."

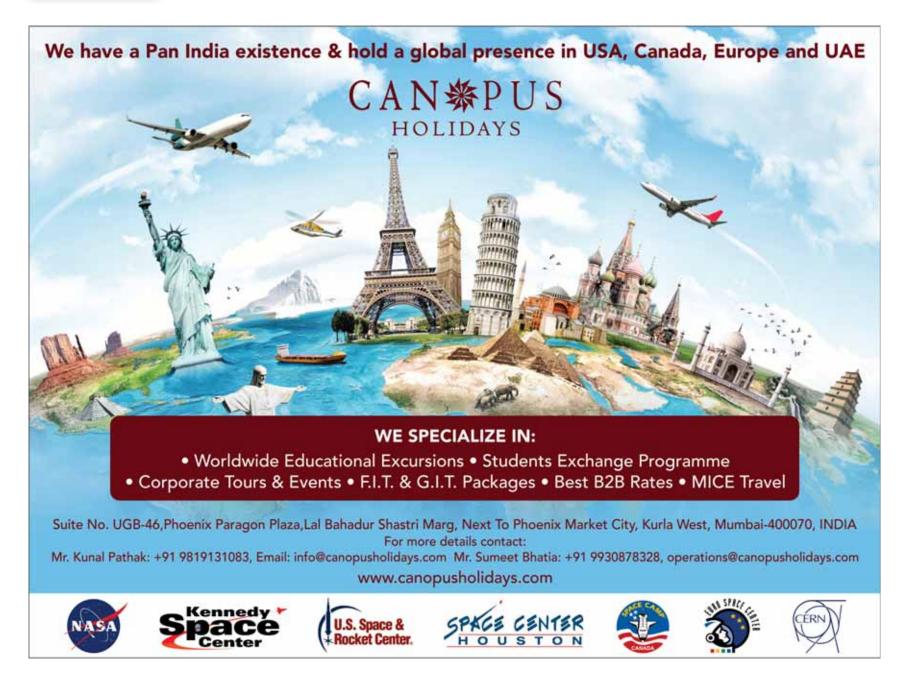
Talking about their growth in terms of RevPAR and ARRs, he shares, "Overall, the market



always been at the forefront of identifying needs and expectations of our guests. We will vigorously pursue innovation coupled with high standards of service delivery. For example, there is a rising preference for healthy lowcalorie recipes, theme lunches during corporate events and express check-in, among other new trends. True hospitality revolves around the basic value of 'anticipating guest needs' and we at Eros New Delhi do exactly that," Juj mentions.

HOTELS

Talking about the recent devaluation of the rupee against USD and Euro, he says, "The falling rupee may have repercussions but the hospitality business is expected to gain."





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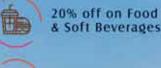


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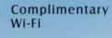
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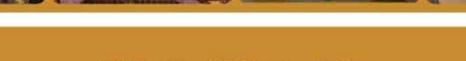


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Czech strengthens Indian base

Czech Tourism has witnessed 85,680 Indian tourists in 2017, a growth of 27 per cent compared to 2016. The European country now aims to receive more than one lakh Indian visitors by 2019-20.



n a bid to strengthen and popularise destinations in Czech Republic and attract more Indian tourists, Czech Tourism, along with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in New Delhi and VFS Global, conducted a three-city roadshow named Czech Republic

Go Beyond

Indian tourists visit not only the capital city of Prague, but also Karlovy Vary and fairytale town Český Krumlov — a favourite spot for honeymooners

← The Czech Republic is promoting itself as a premium destination targeting families, experiential travellers, business tourists and MiCE travellers — the 'Land of Stories' — in New Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

On the occasion, **Milan Hovorka**, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in India, said, "In the days to come, our aim is to promote not only Prague — the most popular destination among Indians, but also other cities of the country. We plan to strengthen our base not only in the capital cities of India, but in other parts as well."

The Czech Republic has witnessed a significant rise in Indian arrivals with a growth of 128 per cent from 2015-2017. The country received 85,680 Indian tourists in 2017 — a growth of 27 per cent compared to 2016, and it now aims to receive more than one lakh



Milan Hovorka Ambassador of the Czech Republic in India

Indian visitors by 2019-20.

Arzan Khambatta, Head, CzechTourism India, said that the roadshows have been an excellent platform for Czech tourism partners to network with Indian agents and tour operators. He informed, "Indian tourists visit not only the capital city of Prague, but also



Arzan Khambatta Head CzechTourism India

Karlovy Vary and fairytale town Český Krumlov — a favourite spot for honeymooners. As Czech Republic continues to be one of the most-favoured destinations, we look forward to welcoming more Indians in the years to come.

"We are promoting the country as a premium destination



Veronika Janečková Head—International Markets Management, CzechTourism

targeting families, experiential travellers, business tourists, MiCE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) honeymooners and leisure travellers, " he concluded.

Terming India as one of the most promising market, **Veronika Janečková**, Head—International Markets

Management, CzechTourism, said, "The Czech Republic has a lot to offer to the Indian travellers in terms of unexplored destinations and unique experiences. Families, millennials and MiCE are the three segments that we are targeting in the Indian market. The country hosts a diverse array of natural landscapes that appeal to visitors of every kind – be it architectural lovers or adventure seekers. Through this roadshow, we are able to reach out to new markets and strengthen our relationship with the Indian travel trade."

NTO

She further added, "With growing travel aspirations among Indians across demographics, activities such as wine tourism, spa tourism, pristine nature stays have been driving Indian tourists to the Czech Republic."

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Standing as tall as a 'Minar'

Set to introduce innovative products for attracting more travellers, **H S Duggal**, MD, Minar Group, talks about the company's growth plans. Moving forward, he claims that the company has a bright future ahead.

TT Bureau It has been a positive and successful year for Minar Travels,

I cessful year for Minar Travels, especially after its luxury travel brand — Vilasa — has become a Traveller Made DMC, informs H S Duggal, Managing Director, Minar Group. He further adds, "We are doing well with our new markets. At the same time, our outbound tours department has been strengthened, and we look forward to doing better this financial year. With expansions in full swing, we have created more jobs in the process.

Sharing his strategies about boosting both inbound as well as outbound verticals further, Duggal says, "We have developed a fresh team that is focused on product development, while finding innovative experiences and destinations. Following this spirit, we've revamped our outbound under the name 'Wishcover – Inspired Journeys by Minar', and we will also look after the MiCE division. Another vertical, Elbon Conferences and Events is steadily increasing its market share, has handled a few conferences and will be

domestic destinations, shares Duggal, adding "We've named it Inspired Journeys because we want to offer experiential travelling to clients where they can literally live, breathe and soak every moment. From the souks of Morocco to the beaches of Bali, we curate

66 While at Minar, we will focus on all kinds of business, Vilasa will only stress on quality and high-yield trade keeping offbeat destinations in mind **77**

managing more in the remaining part of the current financial year. The future looks bright for this vertical with events in line for the next two years."

Wishcover is dedicated to leisure travel for the Indian clientele to outbound and

itineraries according to what the client wants."

He also informs that the inbound department has bagged more business from new markets. The company is now targeting to increase its business in Northeast India. "We have plans



HS Duggal MD Minar Group

to open our office in Bengaluru while strengthening our reach in Mumbai and Hyderabad," he mentions.

According to Duggal, "As outbound travel from India is growing at a phenomenal rate, with more and more people realising the value of travelling, Indian travellers are now maturing, willing to explore new destinations like Helsinki and Baku. Cruise tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism industry, with more people opting for cruise packages. The UN World Tourism predicts that India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by the year 2020."

Keeping 2019 in sight, he shares, "The targets for 2019 are already in place. We're gearing up to expand our outbound segment. With more and more Indians travelling each year, we're also including more offbeat destinations in our products. While at Minar, we will focus on all kinds of business, Vilasa will only stress on quality and high-yield trade. Besides, with digitalisation growing rapidly, we plan to collaborate with artists and bloggers too."

Considering currency fluctuations as a major challenge, Duggal points out, "In some countries, the sales have slowed down, impacting our targets and forecasts. High taxes on hotels and elevated prices of fuel and visa fee continue to make India an expensive destination, compelling some to choose neighbouring countries as their holiday destinations, which are comparatively cheaper."

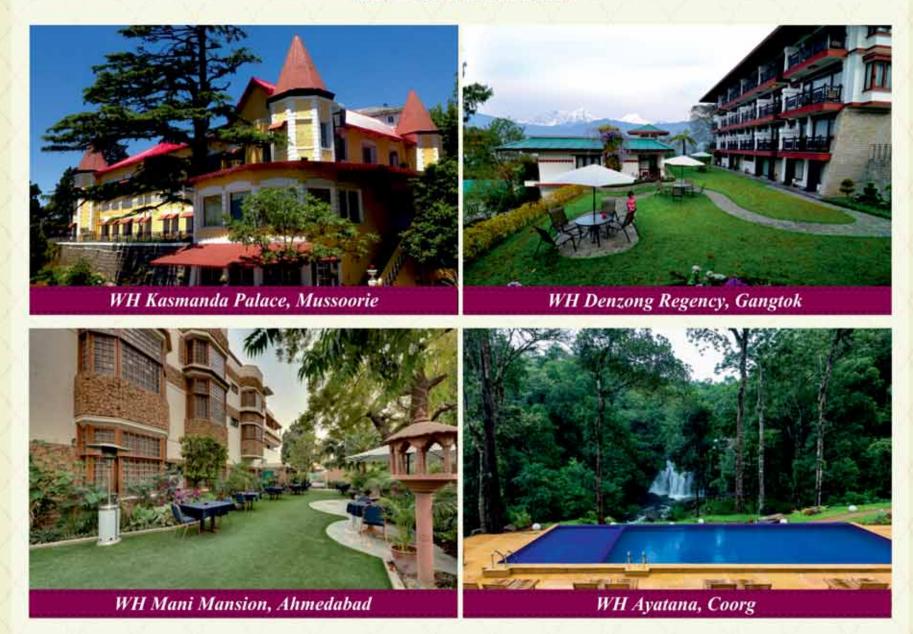
AGENTS

He urges the Government of India to lower charges on landing, parking, navigation and ground-handling on charter flights coming to India. Duggal also hopes that Minar, along with all its verticals, will have an increased presence at all international and domestic travel-related fairs and exhibitions.





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Agra turns into a sea of blues

Guideline Travels in association with Genting Cruise Lines organised 'Deep Blue Bash', a thanksgiving event for its partners and clients at ITC Mughal, Agra. Exciting networking activities and interesting games were organised, including a visit to the Taj Mahal.

FAMILYALBUM



NEWS

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YTT Bureau

When senior journalist June Mukherjee set on an adventurous Segway ride, it turned into a nightmare within minutes as she fell off the Segway and realised that her right leg was nonfunctional. Far from her family in a foreign country, Mukherjee was traumatised after the accident that took With the support offered by TrawellTag, I was able to receive the best treatment and remain stress-free throughout the course of recovery in South Africa

TrawellTag Cover-More was always by her side to ensure

that she was indeed in the safest hands possible. 🐓

British Airways, Vistara celebrate 1st codeshare flight from India



British Airways and Vistara recently celebrated their first codeshare flight from India. Both announced a strategic partnership last month to expand their network in the Indian market. The agreement means that British Airways will add its 'British Airways' code to Vistara flights in India, enabling customers to connect with Vistara to 13 new destinations. The step will open up routes to cities like Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Goa, Kolkata, Kochi and Pune, that were earlier not easily accessible from the UK.



June Mukherjee

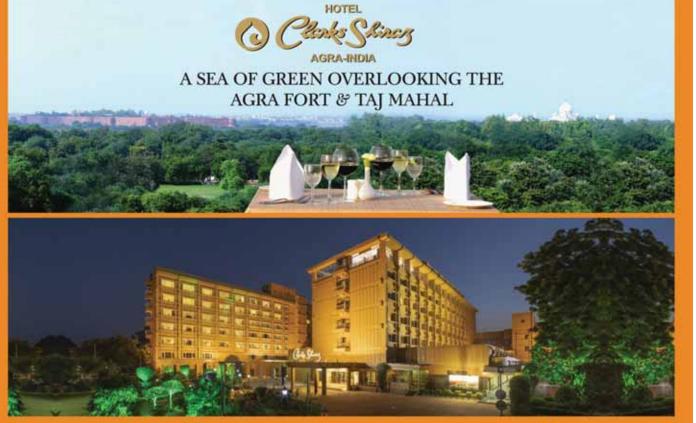
place while she was attending the OTOAI Convention in Cape Town, South Africa. The convention organisers informed the emergency assistance team of TrawellTag Cover-More who then swung into action immediately and arranged for her admission into one of the most renowned medical facilities in the country. Multiple fractures from her right knee to the ankle were detected. Necessary arrangements for Mukherjee's subsequent surgery were undertaken and all the financial aspects of the procedure were taken care of. The assistance team kept on monitoring her heath constantly by coordinating with the doctor who was handling her case.

Once fit to travel, Mukherjee was flown back to India under expert medical supervision. Throughout this period,



Necessary arrangements for June Mukherjee's subsequent surgery were undertaken and all the financial aspects were taken care of by Trawell-Tag Cover-More

The assistance team kept on monitoring her heath constantly



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Experiences at WelcomHeritage

WelcomHeritage is geared up to welcome guests—both inbound and domestic, with its signature services, comfortable stays, unique experiences and upcoming properties.

TT Bureau

With the festive season in full fervour, WelcomHeritage is set to woo travellers with its quintessential properties and experiences that offer the best of the destination they are situated at. Sunil Gupta, CEO, WelcomHeritage, says "We have rolled out special packages for the festive season where our domestic guests can enjoy various value-added services and facilities to make their holiday memorable. For Christmas and New Year, select properties organise Gala Dinner included in a package of two-night stay."

On the other hand, for inbound guests, the hotel offers their 'Unique Experiences'. "India is a vast country with diverse culture and traditions. Each of our destinations offers something different from the other and endeavours to showcase the rich cultural and traditional brilliance of the region, thus promising you an experience that is as diverse as India," adds Gupta.

Sharing details of the same, Sanjeev K Nayar, General Manager, MIH, WelcomHeritage, says "Enjoy an enchanting wildlife safari in the mesmerising beauty of the forest landscape or witness the fine architecture of 200 years old cluster of temples and forts; cruise along the lake in the colourful shikaras, walk around the country's first heritage village, relish the panoramic view of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks, experience authentic village tour on tractor, plunge into the spectacular infinity pool with astounding views or feel the adrenaline rush



Sunil Gupta CEO WelcomHeritage

with activities such as rock climbing, turban tying, horse safari, sand dune experience, bird watching, trekking and hiking. WelcomHeritage has properties across some of the most fascinating destinations in the country for your perfect holiday retreat. Each of our hotels has a unique experience to offer, a secret to share and a story to tell."



Sanjeev K Nayar General Manager MIH, WelcomHeritage

The brand is coming up with new properties as well. "We currently have two properties in the pipeline. One is the WelcomHeritage Tadoba Vanyavillas Resort & Spa, located near Tadoba National Park primarily known for spotting Tigers. It is a 36-room resort spread across 65 acres amidst a private lake making it an ideal getaway for nature and wildlife lovers. Another one is a heritage property located in Udaipurwati – Welcom-Heritage Inderpura Haveli, a 25-room hotel. We intend to launch both these properties in the coming months of this fiscal year," reveals Gupta.

Happy with the growth during the last fiscal year, WelcomHeritage is targeting double-digit growth during this fiscal. Nayar reveals, "Further, we continue to expand our footprint and business. We are in conversation with several property owners. We are looking at the northern and southern regions for expansion as we see a lot of untapped potential. Another region to expand our brand presence is the eastern part of the country. We are also exploring options in South India and Northeast India, which

has huge untapped potential of heritage tourism."

HOTELS

Gupta claims that the future is promising for the group. "We expect that the hospitality industry in whole will do great business. Expectations will be higher for 2019, however success can never be guaranteed, one needs to earn it. What is clear is that 2019 promises to be a game changer in the hospitality industry," he adds.

New Segments

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AGENTS

Nucore eases challenges

Present in the market since 2006, Nucore Software Solutions partners and works with travel agents, irrespective of their size, in alignment to their strategy for achieving its goals.

Catch the bliss

of surprise



In the market since 2006, Nucore Software Solutions' scope has evolved from just an accounting system provider for the travel industry and for travel agents in particular.

The solutions firm has been providing an end-to-end integrated financial management platform named TRAACS (travel agents accounting system), connecting travel agents' entire business-enabling systems like sales channels (GDS/OTA), operations, accounting and finance management, reporting and customer-relationship units, which help them to focus on their key performance indicators for business.

Irrespective of the size of agents, Nucore partners and works in line with their strategy to achieve its goals. For a big agent, this is done by providing a stable platform for managing their growth through handling large volumes of dayto-day business transactions and their instant accounting and reconciliations, and business intelligence dashboards, to timely measure their performance levels and provide required direction alerts on strategic decisions to be taken internally.

Sharing more details is Suhail VP. CEO. Nucore Software Solutions, who says that it provides an opportunity for strong engagement platforms like CRMs with their corporates or key customers, providing self-servicing tools for enquiry, orders and SOA to empower corporates and much personalied services. "For small and medium agents, we provide the support for stay in control amidst the competition powered by tools for cost reduction, expense control and possibility of automations to revenue increase without adding cost to it," he says.

Speaking about the new products of Nucore, Suhail says, "For travel agents, we are in the development of couple of products which will have strong integrations to their existing TRAACS platform."

Explaining this, he adds that the TRAACS – FMS is a franchisee management system for large agents who have a lot of sub-agents or franchisees by providing close integration with their selling platforms and strong credit control, and B2B portals for easy collaboration with sub-agents.

For airlines, it has SkyTRAACS – the next-generation revenue accounting, cost accounting and financial accounting solution. It addresses back-office challenges like agent billing, revenue accounting, etc.







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Are you game to be Park Ranger?

Protecting Phillip Island's (near Melbourne) unique wildlife and managing the natural environment are all in a day's work for a nature parks ranger, and a new mobile game gives kids the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and take on the role of a ranger to protect various species from Victoria's wildlife island.

TT Bureau

he Phillip Island Park Ranger game brings conservation activities to life and puts the gamer in charge of managing the island's natural habitat and protecting wildlife species like Australian fur seals, little penguins, hooded plovers, shearwaters and more, through a series of five challenging mini-games.

The Rewards

Completing all the levels once, rangers can upgrade their control centre and be rewarded with a free child's four Parks Pass to visit the Penguin Parade, Antarctic Journey, Koala Reserve and Churchill Island

Players could find themselves monitoring the Australian fur seal population out at Seal Rocks and disentangling a pup from fishing line, next they could be removing marine debris from one of Phillip Island's many beautiful beaches and protecting the endangered hooded plovers.

Roland Pick, Communications Executive, Phillip Island Nature Parks, says, "This game includes the kinds of tasks our rangers and researchers carry out every day, and will give kids a great insight into the role these dedicated people play in conserving the environment for our incredible wildlife."

He further informs, "We developed Phillip Island Park ranger to give kids the chance



to engage with conservation issues and actions in a fun and relatable way, using real examples of conservation activities in a real setting. However, many kids today already have such a great understanding of the need for conservation.

The game features a control centre from where rangers can

monitor their tasks and move seamlessly from removing weeds in the shearwater habitat on Cape Woolamai to repairing the electronic circuitry on the penguin weighbridge at the Penguin Parade.

Each successfully completed task earns experience points and kids earn bonus points for tasks completed while playing on Phillip Island. Completing all the levels once, rangers can upgrade their control centre, improve their ranger rating and ultimately be rewarded with a free child's four Parks Pass to visit the Penguin Parade, Antarctic Journey, Koala Reserve and Churchill Island.

Phillip Island Park Ranger is free to download contains



TECHNOLOGY

no ads and has no in-app purchases. Parents need not worry since the game is completely safe and suitable for children aged five and up. Younger kids can also play it, but they might need a hand with mini-games. 橾



TECHNOLOGY 200% growth in 2017-18

Sanit Kumar Sharma, Managing Director, Click On Trip, believes that in the B2B space, the company is moving in the right direction and is all set to enter the B2B railway services.

Bureau

Sanit Kumar Sharma, Managing Director, Click

On Trip, claims that the advantage of partnering with the company lies in its excellent position to offer competitive rates/air fares on all domestic and international airlines as compared to any other B2B travel company. "We have superior deals with Jet Airways, Air India and Vistara, which we pass on to our associates and partners. Moreover, our partners are free to offer their own fares on our platform unlike elsewhere," added Sharma.

This is the reason, he insists, behind the immense growth year-on-year. "We saw 100 per cent growth in 2015-16, which increased to 150 per cent in 2016-17 and around 200 per cent in 2017-18. This has motivated us to expand our operations on several fronts. We have added additional office premises and personnel to manage the growth. We are confidently aiming to achieve a turnover growth over 250 per cent in 2018-19."

The company has also opened a new office in Mumbai. "We have acquired office premises at the prestigious Nariman Point area of South Mumbai. It will be a fully functional one shortly. This will help us get a firm foothold in the country's commercial capital with excellent growth prospects," he claimed.

Referring to the team as the company's strength, Sharma said, "All our employees are industry qualified and well-trained with hands-onexperience. They proactively guide, assist, train and encourage our trade partners regularly by visiting offices. We organise periodic review meet-

Far-Reaching

As per the company's growth targets, Click On Trip is already planning to participate in international trade fairs in Southeast Asian countries, Dubai and hopefully in Europe next year

66 Our new office at Nariman Point in South Mumbai will help us get a firm foothold in the country's commercial capital with excellent growth prospects ""

ings followed by interactive conferences. Such brainstorm-

ing sessions have helped us achieve our goals jointly much faster than anticipated. We are now hopeful of opening our branch offices in other metro and Tier A cities of India by Diwali 2019 "

For Click On Trip India, the horizons are big as it is reaching out to various markets in the

country and around the world. "We are regular participants at national trade fairs. We hope to have our footprints in several Asian countries like Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and Hong Kong soon," he revealed. The company is set to now venture into B2B railway services.



Managing Director Click On Trip



Tradition meets modernity

Known for its century-old legacy, Taj Connemara has reopened in Chennai. The property is known for its architectural influences of Classic Colonial, Art Deco and a refreshing interior design.

TT Bureau

A fter undergoing a year-long Tenovation and redesign, Taj Connemara reopened in Chennai recently. Over a century old, the hotel is a proud relic of the colonial era, and is named after Lord Connemara, the then Governor of Madras.

Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer. The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), said, "Taj Connemara is another jewel in the Taj portfolio of iconic heritage hotels. We are committed to continuing our century-old legacy of restoring historical treasures across the globe for our guests. The newly-renovated hotel draws on its illustrious past while offering patrons a distinctive, modern and individualistic experience."



Puneet Chhatwal Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL)

Restoration of a design icon Taj Connemara's refreshed design has eclectic architectural influences of Classic Colonial, Art Deco and distinctive elements from the celebrated architect, Geoffrey Bawa's 'Tropical Modernism' style, coupled with a refreshing interior design. The hotel's 147 rooms and suites spread



across the Tower and Heritage wings are each appointed with elegant four-poster beds, vintage prints and objects d'art. Sensitive preservation of the Art Deco facade and interiors will showcase the hotel's original features including wooden carvings sourced from the 16th and 17th century temples of Mahabalipuram.

Guests will enjoy 4.5 acres of landscaped greens and enclosed atrium gardens. Ahmar Siddiqui, General Manager, Taj Connemara, Chennai, said, "The hotel is the result of the efforts of a team including master craftsmen and artisans who have tirelessly and lovingly worked on restoring the city's legendary landmark. I look forward to extending the warm Taj hospitality to our guests."

Food & Beverage

Restaurants and bars at Taj Connemara shall prove to be attractions for Chennaites and hotel guests alike. Informal and formal dining choices convey a 19th-century clublike feel. The Lady Connemara Bar & Lounge – city's first licensed bar – reclaims its position as the place to be seen at. Novel culinary experiences showcase nostalgic Anglo-Indian dishes and regional Madras specialties in a relaxed ambience at the all-day-diner Verandah, while the quintessentially Chennai experience Raintree continues to serve authentic Chettinad fare in an alfresco setting.

HOTELS

Taj Restores

Taj Connemara's 147 rooms and suites spread across the Tower and Heritage wings are each appointed with four-poster beds and vintage prints

✓ Wooden carvings are sourced from the temples of Mahabalipuram

The wonders of North Cyprus

iCon Planners took a large incentive movement of around 1450 executives of Lupin Pharma to The Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), where the pharamaceutical company organised an awards ceremony for its Star Club Members and their families, which was also attended by the Minister of Tourism of TRNC. Lupin executives experienced the beauty and hospitality of the nation.



HOTELS NOVEMBER 1⁵¹ FORTNIGHT ISSUE 2018 TRAVTALK 57 Pining for a Darjeeling holiday?

With the festival season and winters just around the corner, Pine Touch Retreat, Darjeeling, is set to welcome guests in a property that will offer them a large number of luxurious amenities.

T Bureau

he festival season has started with good numbers for all the properties around the country. However, for Pine Touch Retreat, Darjeeling, the recent Durga Puja holidays brought great business. Sharing more details, K Mukherjee, Director, Pine Touch Retreat, Darjeeling, said, "The hotel is ready in all respects to receive quests for the festival and inbound season. We had good domestic visits to the property during Durga Puja too, and guests were quite glad during their stay."



Director, Pine Touch Retreat Darjeeling

Talking more about the property, he said, "The property is three-storeyed and has 10 well-equipped rooms with attached bathrooms offering 24 hours hot-water facility for guests. Many rooms offer mountain views, while others have a balcony offering the same. The USP of the property is a roof top, which allows guests to relish the surroundings around. The hotel also has Wi-Fi, room service. sight-seeing facility and great food and beverage options. We also provide pickup and drop facility from Bagdogra airport and New Jalpaiguri Railway Station for quests. Our USP lies in our competitive prices as compared to the location we enjoy."

Witnessing an increase of 20 per cent in the last one year, they



🐓 Pine Touch Retreat. Darjeeling is surrounded by pine trees. The USP of the property is a roof top, which allows quests to relish the surroundings

6 The hotel is ready in all respects to receive guests for the festival and inbound season. We had good domestic visits to the property during Durga Puja too ""

now expect a further growth of 10 per cent next year.

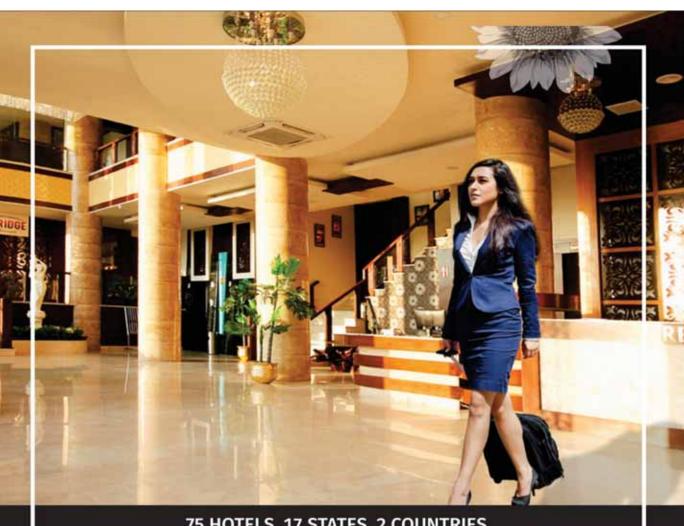
Mukheriee also informed that they are adopting various sales

and marketing techniques. "We are doing media promotions, digital marketing, and are also participating in travel and tourism fairs for creating awareness. We also deal with travel agents and pay commissions to those who get business for us."

Despite Darjeeling being one of the most popular tourist destinations in India, people make a choice to stay around nature, he claimed, saying, "Our property offers just that, as we are surrounded by natural bounty and pine trees." He further added, "In the

coming months, Darjeeling will be the place to enjoy full view of Kanchenjunga, along with chilled weather conditions."

Those staying at the property can enjoy breakfast on rooftop and relish the 180-degree view of the mountains. 橾



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JA Resorts & Hotels greets trade

FAMILYALBUM

JA Resorts & Hotels, represented by Avante Garde Consulting in India, organised networking evenings for the travel trade in Mumbai and Delhi respectively. **Thomas Grundner**, VP—Sales & Marketing; **William Harley-Fleming**, General Manager, JA The Resort, Dubai; and **Christopher Tutty**, Director of Sales, JA Resorts & Hotels, interacted with partners.





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New markets in sight

By recording a decent growth in the last year, Aamantaran Travel is set to shoot its profits by entering new markets and adopting targeted marketing.

TT Bureau

While the last one year inbound players, **Deepak Bhatnagar**, MD, Aamantaran Travel, says that their performance was quite satisfactory. Talking about his expectations from the upcoming year, he says, "We are aiming for the overall growth of 10-15 per cent over the last year for 2018-19, and are working towards reaching that goal."

Currently, Aamantaran Travel is working closely with markets like Japan, Russia Cls, Far East,

Key Strategy

Aamantaran Travel's mantra is a personalised approach through various marketing and sales trips, including participation in international tourism fairs



Deepak Bhatnagar Managing Director Aamantaran Travel

Australia, Central East and Europe. Apart from it, they are also exploring other markets. "Our focus would be to enter all emerging markets and boost our portfolio," shares Bhatnagar.

Apart from this, he informs, "We would be looking for some new business from the market where we are not present currently, and also consolidate our share by

introducing new products."

He insists that personalised marketing is the key to go forward for them. "Our mantra is a personalised approach through various marketing and sales trips, including participation in key international tourism fair, roadshows and one-to-one meetings," reveals Bhatnagar.

Regarding participation in WTM, he emphasises, "We are looking forward to meet some new potential buyers as it is indeed important for us as well as Indian inbound tourism to attract new operators."

He further adds that they need support from the government. "We are looking forward to get the support of our government in our efforts to promote tourism by reducing taxes, bringing inbound under the export category and improving the overall infrastructure."

The Book & Relax camp

After successfully setting its foot in Mumbai and Delhi, Book N Relax is now undertaking a slew of measures to introduce new products and services.

aking a few exciting Mannouncements, online tour operator Book N Relax has introduced new products and properties to speed up its approach towards expansion. Sharing more details. Mohd Uzair, Initiator- North India, Book N Relax, says, "We have recently announced a new product 'Camping by Book N Relax', especially curated for youngsters and schoolgoers. The debut camp is going to come up at The Sultan Resort in Jaisalmer."

"We are expecting around 350 attendees at the camps. They will be led by our navigators Dhwani Adhia and Bhakti Nagda. Every camp will comprise leisure and team-building activities for millennials and corporates — desert safari and camel ride, along with various cultural and culinary



Mohd Uzair Initiator- North India Book N Relax

activities. We are also planning to expand to other locations," he adds.

The company has also announced the launch of its new property. On this, Uzair says, "We are delighted to announce our new property, Royal Park Resort in Chandigarh which is ready to serve the customers post its soft launch on November 1." Sharing his views on World Travel Mart (WTM) in London, Uzair feels that such an event is crucial for his company as well as the whole tourism industry. "WTM will provide a common platform to buyers and sellers for exchange of ideas and increasing business buyers from different countries."

AGENTS

According to Uzair, many new and interesting travel trends are also blooming in the industry. He feels that Canada as a destination is set to reach record numbers soon. He also mentions, "Looking at the popularity of adventure and culinary tourism, we have successfully launched our new product, 'Real Food Adventure Tour', that offers cooking class, wine tasting and visit to $% \left(f_{i}^{2}, f_{i$ local markets. With the rising popularity of solo travelling, travel companies are now building catered products."

Agents dine and network

Commemorating its successful journey in India, Tour Managers, Fiji hosted networking dinners in Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru for all its major trade partners and travel agents. The event in Delhi witnessed the presence of High Commission of Fiji and was attended by 40 top producing agents selling Fiji as a luxury destination.





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SPECIALFEATURE

Culinary travel is increasingly gaining popularity with the rise in food-inspired tourism as the up-and-coming travel trend. **TRAVTALK** lists some of the scrumptious dishes from regions across India.

To Travel is to Eat

GOLGAPPA & CAVIAR -

Manas Dwivedi

Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity Ajay Anand, Director of Culinary Golgappa & Caviar is most popular among travellers here as street food and Delhi are almost synonymous, and we are serving a refined version of it. This has been given a twist with Tzatziki and a punch of dried ginger gastrique and Golgappa water caviar. In addition, almost all the street food offerings in our menu are among the list of popular dishes.

• WOOD FIRE PIZZA

Jaypee Residency Manor, Mussoorie Tanuj Nayyar, Executive Chef We have a special chef who makes local Gadhwali food here but the most popular dish is a Wood Fire Pizza. Topped with home-grown fresh herbs and exotic vegetables, this pizza is very different from the usual ones. The thin crust, hand-rolled pizza is made with special tomato sauce made from Italian pelati tomatoes. Baked on wood fire oven, the pizza fumes an aroma and smoky flavours.

• PORK BELLY CONFIT

Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel Sahil Arora, Executive Chef

We are popular for our thin crust hand docked flat breads which offer varied options ranging from non-vegetarian to vegetarian. The other most popular dish definitely is Pork Belly Confit which is is served with garlic and parmesan mash accompanied with sweet apple sauce. Mumbai suburbs are a great place for travellers who like to explore food options.

MISAL PAO

Hotel Sahara Star Mumbai

Salil Fadnis, Executive Chef & General Manager Located in Vile Parle, the area around the hotel is the hub of Maharashtrian food. One special dish we have on our menu is Misal Pao. It is a traditional Mumbaikar dish made with potatoes and a variety of sprouts. Topped with a lot of onions, Farsaan (salty Gujarati snack), coriander and fresh lemon juice, it is served with lightly baked Pao.

SUPERFOOD DOSA The Den, Bengaluru

Kapil Dubey, Executive Chef

Superfood Dosa and Quinoa Gaulauti Kabab are the most popular dishes. Travellers visiting Bengaluru certainly want to try Karnatakastyle dosa. Travellers who are health-conscious get the goodness of ingredients like oats and ragi with very less oil content in it. The filling is done with Kennebec potatoes and sweet potatoes mixed with avocado, beans and sprouts. Superfood Dosa is prepared in olive oil and is infused with a flavour of coconut. It is served with coconut and tomato chutney with grated corianders on the top.

MEEN KUDAMPULI
 Grand Hyatt Kochi Bolgatty

Chef Harmann, Executive Chef

We offer Malabar, Thai and western grill cuisine based on local ingredients. Meen Kudampuli is mainly made from Kokum and Fenugreek. Kokum, also called Malabar tamarind, is used in dishes for flavour in a large variety of beverages and curries. This fish curry is one of the most sought-after dish in Kerala. We make our guest experience unique with local ingredients like home-made goat cheese, local mango ginger, drum stick leaves, coconut apple, goji berry, wild honey pollen, to name a few. We incorporate these ingredients into our menu offerings and tell guests where exactly these ingredients are coming from and who is growing them.

NALLI BOTI KORMA • Azaya Beach Resort, Goa

Swatantra Gautam, Executive Chef The most celebrated dish at our hotel's restaurant is Nalli Boti Korma. The dish which originated from Lucknow consists of lamb shanks and boneless meat cooked with rich yakhani and delicate spices. The restaurant features live kitchens that embrace the idea of eating out of the pan, off the grill and out of the wok. Dishes are crafted using the best of local and international produce and prepared with the freshest of ingredients with innovative presentations to dish out signature meals.

MANDI BIRYANI

KOSHA MANGSHO The Leela Ambience Gurugram

Hotel & Residences

Ashish Bhasin, Executive Chef

chicken tikka, butter chicken and

dal makhani, one regional dish

which is taking centre stage is Kosha Mangsho, a spicy, velvety gravy mutton curry cooked in

mustard oil originating from Bengal. Other dishes like Chingri

Vhaja, pan fried prawns flavoured

with curry leaves and mustard

seeds are also popular.

Apart from all-time favourite

Novotel Guwahati GS Road Gaurav Narayan, Executive Chef Mandi Biryani, also known as iranian Biryani, is the most popular dish amongst travellers here. It is a traditional dish from Yemen prepared with basmati rice, flavoured chicken, prunes, black currant and a wide range of spices. Mandi Biryani is widely known for its aroma; it is nonspicy and can be prepared with both chicken and mutton.

AGENTS

Preferred choice for guests

Prefertrip's strength lies in its team's experience, corporate partnerships and technology platforms to provide unique, user-friendly experience to all its clients.



Having started operations in 2013, Prefertrip team with collective hospitality experience of more than 100 years has exclusive partnerships with leading hotel brands across India. It has launched its own hotel brand called PreferInn with properties in Gurugram, Mussoorie and Dehradun to cater to the needs of corporates and long-staying travellers.

Prefertrip is a hotel marketing and revenue management organisation that provides services aimed at increasing hotel sales



Virender Pal Singh Chief Operating Officer Prefertrip

(leisure and corporate) by implementing best marketing, operational and revenue management strategies with an emphasis on customer satisfaction to independent stand-alone hotels and branded properties.

Virender Pal Singh, Chief Operating Officer, Prefertrip, says, "We have initiated many programmes targeting corporate users to make their stay as memorable and relaxing as possible. A happy customer is a repeat customer. Currently, we are working to promote our new offering Prefertrip Experience. It is a platform for hotels to promote its ancillary services to its quests apart from room services. Some of them are conference and meeting room discounts, F&B, spa, gym and yoga classes, access to exclusive shows, pick up/drop facility, complementary dinner or lunch and much more. Services offered can be in-form of coupon code or offers to buy online or later at the hotel."

Market study has proved that guests generally prefer hotels where such in-house services or perks are available. This is a unique platform being offered to partnered hotels and Prefertrip will not charge hotels to list these services.

Currently, we are working to promote Prefertrip Experience, a platform for hotels to promote its ancillary services to its guests apart from room services **J**

Prefertrip has a team of hoteliers, marketing, operational

and F&B experts and they follow a mantra based on

four Ps: Place, Partnerships, Promotion and Product.

This means that they identify hidden gems in terms of great hotels and boutique resorts and tie up with few hotels per category, per location and increase its presence in the market. They also identify one point of contact at the hotel and review services and materials to mark it as a Prefer trip guarantee. The team creates a market segmentation to identify the right customer and strengthens its online presence by creating paid ads, blogs and promotional content.



Successfully French in Jaipur

The fourth edition of Atout France's Ambassador's Travel Awards was recently held at Sujan Rajmahal Palace in Jaipur. Under the patronage of the Ambassador of France to India and in partnership with VFS Global, these awards were instated in 2015 with the objective of rewarding a selection of travel agents across India for their efforts in showcasing France as a travel destination.





FAMILYALBUM





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PARTNERS



Emaar hosts Indian trade partners

FAMILYALBUM

Emaar Hospitality Group recently organised networking events in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Delhi for leading travel trade partners to highlight its differentiating strengths. About 200 travel partners from the three cities attended the events, where Emaar Hospitality Group presented a roadmap of its current portfolio of 14 hotels and three serviced residences.



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



AGENTS

Globe 360 bets big on MiCE

Specialised in offering professional ground handling services to B2B operators in Europe and the UK, Globe 360 DMC is looking to explore newer itineraries for MiCE travellers.

TT Bureau

With a focused expertise in MiCE groups, UK-based Destination Management Company (DMC), Globe 360 DMC has experienced 20 per cent growth in 2017 in comparison to last year. Divya Gussain, Operations Manager, Globe 360 DMC shares, "In just three years of inception, we have seen around 20 to 30 per cent growth each year. This shows our commitment and hard work we have put in to establish the company in the Indian market. For the next year, we are targeting a growth of another 30-40 per cent in our business from this year."



Divya Gussain ations Manage Globe 360 DMC

Based in London, Globe 360 DMC has branch offices in the UAE and India. In India, the company has two sales offices. Explaining more, Gussain mentions, "We are a DMC for Europe and the UK with specialisation in mainland destinations with customised bookings for B2B tour operators."

Talking about her plans ahead, Gussain informs that her company is currently focusing on existing plans and products but there can be new announcements about new itineraries in the next six months. "In another two years, we will be probably coming up with a new destination in the Baltic and Balkan countries. We are still working on background research and homework for the same. The offering is in the pipeline and we are trying to work things out with local suppliers."

While briefing about Globe 360 DMC's promotional plans, she says they are aggressively promoting their brand via advertisements and other promotional tools. "We are using various tools of digital marketing to promote itineraries and MiCE packages for Europe and UK. We are also attending all the major travel trade shows such as SATTE

and OTM. We are also likely to attend TTF next year," Gussain affirms.

"Next year, we have three-four fairs and exhibitions in Germany. For that, we are planning to do some contracting with some hotels for certain loca-

In another two years, we are likely to come up with a new destination in the Baltic and Balkan countries. We are still working on background research on it "

tions where we can promote the exhibition and trade fairs." she further adds

Expressing her views on travel trends, Gussian says that more and more individual travellers and bagpackers are visiting Europe and the UK. She adds, "For Europe, we have observed that millennials from India prefer travelling individually rather than travelling in groups. A lot of industry and students visits are also taking place towards Europe."

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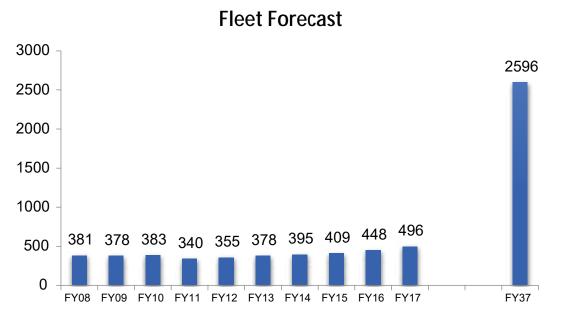
NUVEIVIBER 2018			
EVENT	CITY	DATES	
Switzerland Tourism Workshop	Kolkata	1	
Scandinavian Tourist Board Roadshow	Mumbai	1	
India International Travel Exhibition (IITE)	Mangaluru	2-4	
World Travel Mart	London	5-7	
AdventureNext Latin America	Campo Grande, Brazil	7-9	
Indian Corporate Aviation Summit (ICAS)	New Delhi	9	
Israel Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	13	
Israel Tourism Roadshow	Kochi	15	
Israel Tourism Roadshow	Chennai	16	
China International Travel Mart (CITM)	Shanghai	16-18	
India Travel Mart	Jammu	16-18	
Travel Education Show	Delhi	17-18	
India International Travel Mart (IITM)	Hyderabad	23-25	
Taipei International Travel Fair 2018	Taiwan	23-26	
Sharjah Tourism Educational Seminar	Delhi	26	
World Tourism Conference	Hyderabad	26-28	
Sharjah Tourism Educational Seminar	Mumbai	27	
TAAI 65th Annual Convention	Kunming, China	27-29	
IBTM World	Barcelona	27-29	
Sharjah Tourism Educational Seminar	Ahmedabad	28	
International Conference on Heritage and Culture	Cuttack	28-29	
PATA Destination Marketing Forum	Khon Kaen, Thailand	28-30	
Sharjah Tourism Educational Seminar	Bengaluru	29	
Sharjah Tourism Educational Seminar	Chennai	30	
Indian International Travel Mart (IITM)	Pune	30	

DECEMBER 2018

Pune	1-2
Hyderabad	1-2
Bengaluru	4
Bhopal	3-5
Cannes	3-6
Hyderabad	5
Athens	7-9
Jaipur	7-9
Madurai	7-9
Chennai	11
Bengaluru	13
	Hyderabad Bengaluru Bhopal Cannes Hyderabad Athens Jaipur Madurai Chennai

More planes for Indian airlines

In a recent forecast by Boeing, Indian airlines are expected to order as many as 2,100 planes worth US\$290 billion over the next 20 years.



As per a study by FICCI-Yes Bank report titled 'Opportunities and Financing Outlook for Aviation Sector', this increase is led by strong passenger demand, low fuel prices, high load factor, strong local currency and strong economic growth.

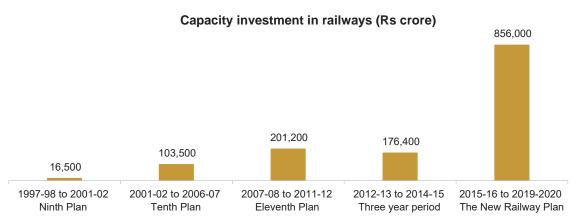
Indian carriers operated 496 aircraft in FY17 up from 381 in FY08. At the end of FY17, Indian airlines had ordered more than 800 planes. Boeing projects a worldwide demand for 41,030 new airplanes over the next 20 years, with India carriers needing more than 5.1 per cent of the total global demand.

Source: MoCA, Boeing

STATISTICS

Railways to invest in infra

The Indian Railways targets towards augmenting rail infrastructure, earmarking investment of `856,000 crore between 2015-16 and 2019-20.



Network decongestion and expansion, and safety comprise 60 per cent share of the overall capital expenditure. The capital investment on infrastructure creation is expected to sustain at high levels on the back of long-term financing via Life Insurance Corporation of India, funding by multilateral agencies, and building relationships and partnering with the private sector.

Over the last three years, 33 per cent of the total capital investment was towards construction of new lines, track renewal works, gauge conversion and safety works. Likewise, broad gauge line and electrification projects gather momentum. The commissioning of both in the last three years almost doubled, from 1,500 km during 2008-09 to 2013-14 to 3,000 km in 2016-17 for broad gauge, and 1,100 km to 2,000 km for electrification.

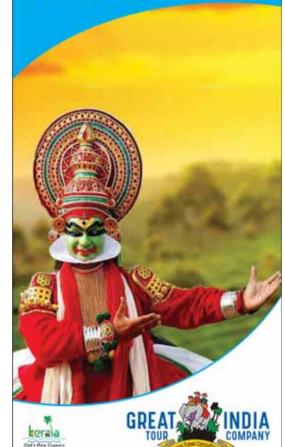
For 2017-18, the planned expenditure is 18 per cent higher than 2016-17 capital expenditure at `131,000 crore. While broad gauge commissioning target for 2017-18 is 25 per cent higher than the previous year, the targets for electrification is double at 4,000 km.

The Indian Railways is working towards increasing the speed of trains by removing level crossings, reducing permanent speed restrictions and replacing loco-hauled commuter trains. The efforts are also being put towards improving customer experience by way of improved facilities inside trains.

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

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Sales Manager Location: Bangalore Position: 1

Assistant Sales Manager

Location: Bangalore Position: 1

Sales Manager

Location: Pune Position : 1

Business Development Manager-Facilities Location: Bangalore Position: 1

Sales Manager, Club Membership Sales Location: Bangalore Position: 1

Minimum experience 3 years for all positions

Education qualifications

Graduate or above Good communication skills and basic proficiency in Microsoft Office



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Regional Sales Manager

- Rail Europe, leader of European rail distribution worldwide, is a joint venture of the French National Railways (SNCF) and the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB)
- It which promotes, distributes and sells a whole range of rail products in more than 50countries across North America, Asia, Australia, South America, Africa and the Middle East

Role of the Regional Sales Manager

- The Regional Sales Manager (RSM) develops Sales in India, Sri Lanka,
- Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh markets • He/she ensures relevance of the
- distribution network, looks for new business opportunities to grow the market share of Rail Europe on these segments
- He/she ensures all is done to reach Rail Europe sales budgets on his/her group channel

Interactions

- The RSM reports to the Sales Manager based in Paris
- He/she works closely with the Sales teams based in various locations (40 persons across 17 countries)

Responsibilities & Missions

- Support the sales network: General Sales Agents (GSAs), travel agents and sub-agents
- Attend fairs, workshops, conferences on all the markets
- Identify and secure new opportunities of growth: new clients, partnerships, co-brands, corporates, groups, niche clientele, etc
- Implement marketing plan with local partners

Experience & Qualifications

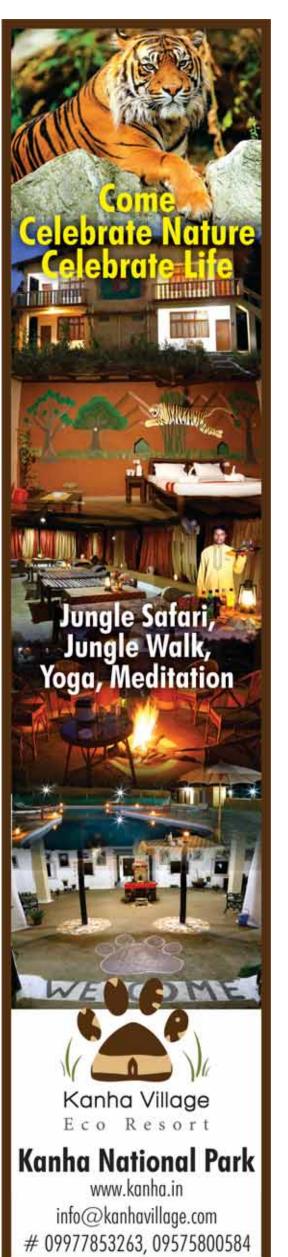
- The candidate should be based in Mumbai
 10 years' experience in the travel industry with strong knowledge of Europe. Rail travel product knowledge is a plus
- Valid passport to be able to travel for business trips within India and occasionally to Europe

RAILEUROPE

Inspiring connections

If you're interested in working with a dynamic fastpaced multi-cultural team, send your resume with the latest photograph to Monika Suri, Hiring Manager, Rail Europe at monika@jobsfortravel.com

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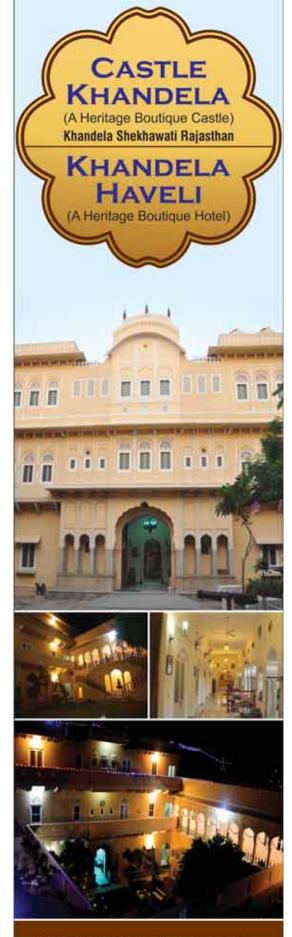


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AirAsia India

Bengaluru

AirAsia India has announced the appointment of Sunil Bhaskaran as its Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director to oversee the next phase of expansion and growth of the



company. Prior to this, Bhaskaran was Vice President-Corporate Services, Tata Steel with over 30 years of experience in the fields of manufacturing, export and commercial operations. He is also on the Global Advisory Board of Social Accountability International (SAI), New York. Bhaskaran completed his BTech from IIT Delhi in 1985, followed by a post-graduation in Management from IIM Kolkata.

Alila Diwa Goa

Goa

Alila Diwa Goa has announced the appointment of Sachin Shet as its new General Manager. Shet will be heading the overall operations of the resort. He brings along over

18 years of experience in the luxury hotel space. A graduate from IHM Goa, Shet began his career in 2000 and has worked at Taj Exotica Goa, Taj Hotels in Delhi and Jaipur. Prior to joining Alila Diwa Goa, he worked at The Leela Goa where he worked closely with the General Manager in managing the operations and maintaining service excellence.

Sayaji Hotels

ing Peop

Indore

Sayaji Hotels has appointed Sushil Amlani as General Manager-Business Development. With 24 years of experience, Amlani is a

> specialist in the field of business development. He possesses thorough knowledge and hands-on-experience of working on various models of development ranging from acquisition, management and franchise contracts, joint ventures, leases and equity. Amlani has been instrumental in working out modalities for certain business tie-ups with leading business and hotels. His experience also encompasses association with real estate projects and restaurants.

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre

Muscat

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN), developer of Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC) project, has appointed Said Salim Said Al-Shanfari as CEO to lead



the organisation through its next phase of innovation and growth. Al-Shanfari has rich experience working in leadership roles in marketing and communications across Oman. He successfully completed Oman's National CEO Program in 2017. With his leadership skills and experience from the CEO programme, Al-Shanfari aims to promote Oman and OCEC as a hub for regional and international conferences.

Novotel Pune Nagar Road

Pune

Novotel Pune Nagar Road has designated Nitin Pathak as its General Manager. With an experience of 18 years in the hospitality sector, Pathak believes in providing wholesome experience to

guests and empowering the employees to deliver their best. An alumnus of IHM Ahmedabad, he has completed his post-graduation with an Executive Masters in Business Administration from SP Jain Institute of Management & Research, Mumbai, His most recent stint was at ibis Gurgaon where he served as the General Manager for two years and successfully launched a new F&B concept as a pilot project for all ibis hotels in India with an outsourced agency-studio gourmet.

Banyan Tree Phuket

Thailand

Banyan Tree Phuket is proud to announce the arrival of Shannon Creado as the new Area Director-Sales and Marketing. Creado's



career spans across 24 years, including 20 years in sales and marketing. He brings strong leadership and public relations skills, combined with extensive experience across Asia and a deep cultural awareness that will benefit the resort's marketing efforts. Creado began his hospitality career in 1999, rising through the ranks until he became Director of Sales and Marketing for Goa Marriott Resort in 2006. He later took on Sales & Marketing Director positions in other Marriott resorts in Asia, as well as Anantara and Minor Hotels.

Cathay Pacific

Mumbai

Abhijit Abhyankar has been appointed as Cathay Pacific's Regional Head-Marketing and Digital Sales for South Asia, Middle East and Africa. He will be heading marketing and digital



and global contact centre sales strategy for the region. Abhyankar began his career in the hospitality industry in 1999 and worked with Ambassador Hotel, Le Meridien and Holiday Inn. In 2004, he joined KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and later Air France-KLM to handle corporate and trade sales.

Thereafter, he worked with Jet Airways in 2008, where he was handling key corporate accounts for India

Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa

Mumbai

Hilton Shillim Estate Retreat & Spa has announced the appointment of Srikant Peri as General Manager. With more than 30 years of

experience in hospitality industry, Peri will play a major role in expanding the business in India, including strengthening partner relationships, strategic planning, managing and overseeing day-to-day operations and driving business development to meet growing business and consumer needs. Peri is also expected to take the lead in carrying out the company's strategy to further continue the growth in both commercial and enterprise with a focus on core verticals like wellness and retreat.

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at **Brigade Gateway**

Bengaluru

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway has designated **Radhika Dewan** as Director of Sales. She comes with over 10 years of experience in sales and marketing domain with commendable knowledge and expertise. Prior to this, she held the position of Director of Sales at Fairfield by Marriott Rajajinagar where she was involved in strategic implementation and development of the hotel.

Punish B Sharma, Vice President—Operations, The Fern Hotels & Resorts, believes in being well-groomed and physically fit. "Health is always compared to wealth because it serves as a catalyst in allowing a motivated individual to work with fervour and efficiency toward their goals. For me, hitting the gym is a kind of mindfulness and self-exploration," he asserts. For Sharma, passion can be anything that simultaneously challenges, intrigues and motivates. He loves

to travel to places that have

tradition.

Of

an interesting blend

culture

and

Reuben Kataria, General Manager, JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru loves spending time with his family and friends. "When I have some leisure time at hand, I am all over the place indulging

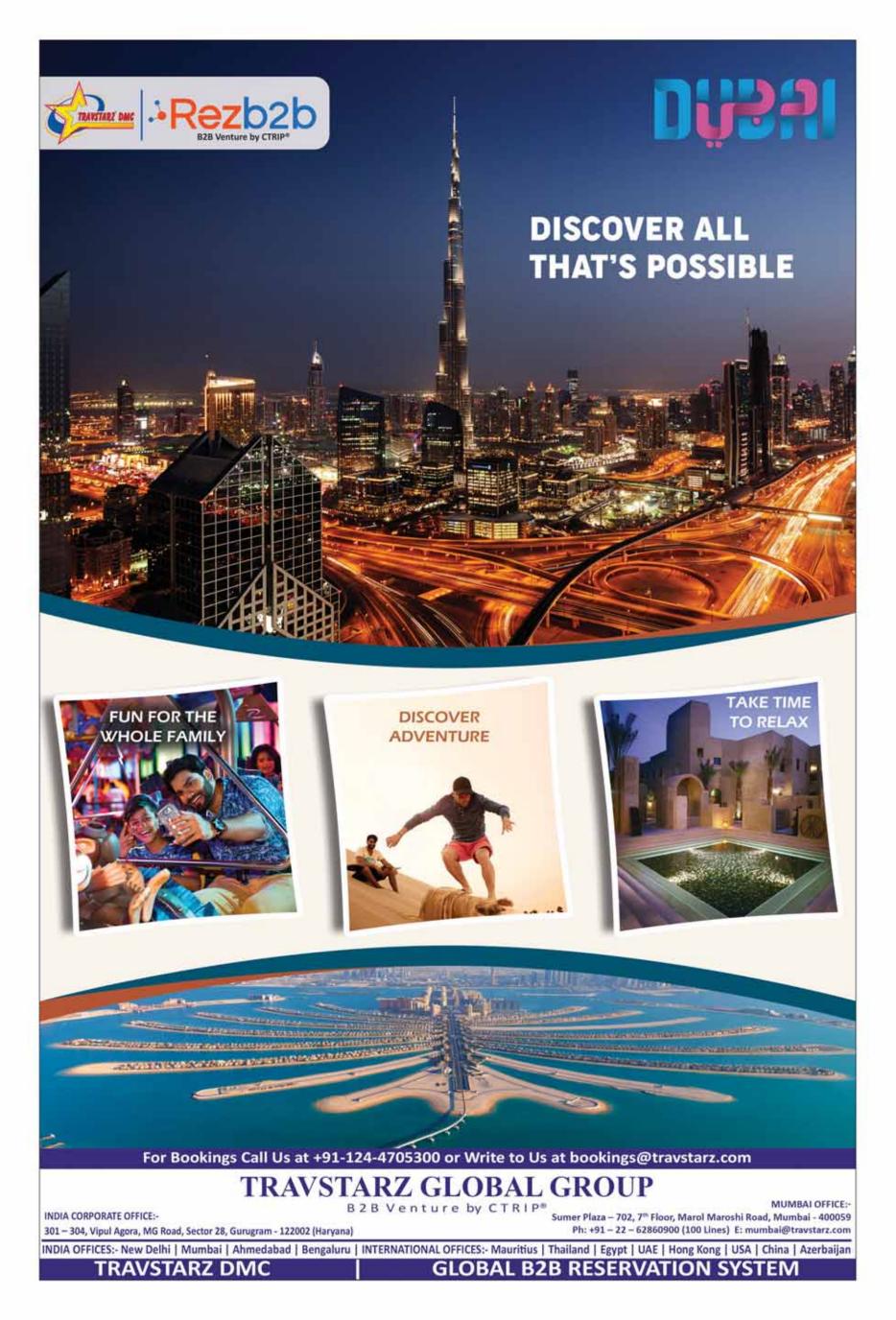
in photography, running, reading, cooking, dining or watching movies," he shares. Kataria loves visiting London due to its melting pot of cultures. "I love this city because of its colourful art and dining familiarity," he explains.

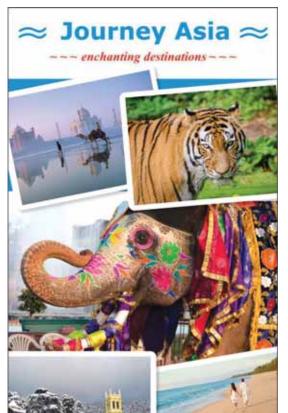
Sachin Maheshwary, General Manager, Novotel Kochi Infopark Hotel loves reading biographies and inspirational business stories. "While travelling, I prefer

exploring offbeat destinations and spend a lot of my weekends taking short trips and discovering the life around. As a food enthusiast, I enjoy exploring culinary trails and experimenting with new flavours. I also love travelling abroad; the next big plan is to explore the vineyards of

France," he shares. Maheshwary is also ardent about driving and often qoes for lona drives to enjoy a aood sunrise.

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India ready for global stage

Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India, claims that the MOT has taken necessary steps for the growth of Indian tourism and creation of awareness about the country's vast tourism potential to showcase the country on a global stage.

Nisha Verma

Big on growth

The last one year has been extremely productive in terms of inbound tourism with several initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism, informs Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. "Last year, we crossed the 10 million mark in terms of foreign tourist arrivals for the first time and witnessed a growth of about 14 per cent. In the past one year, we have managed to undertake many innovative steps to achieve an ambitious target of doubling this number to 20 million in the next three years," she said.

Infrastructure boom

Verma informed that MOT initiated two new schemes- 'Adopt a Heritage' and development of 12 iconic sites for creating world-class facilities apart from its flagship schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive). "Under 'Adopt a Heritage', we have sought partnership from the corporate sector, NGOs and other organisations to create the best facilities in and around our tourist sites. We received tremendous response from the corporate sector, while some organisations and schools have

Tourism Jobs

🐓 MOT launched a platform that will open doors for people to register themselves as tourist facilitators through online training and get certified

also come forward to adopt tourist sites and partner with us to offer a better tourist experience," she stated.

Talking about developing 12 iconic sites, she says, "We've had stakeholders' consultation on all the 10 iconic sites and are in the process of having consultants who will be making a master plan for the development of these sites. A lot of emphasis is being laid on

MOT at WTM 2018

well as on electronic media. "We launched the Incredible India 2.0 and five new films in the last one year, and have received tremendous response," Verma added.

Engagement with trade

Verma further asserted, "Apart from our participation in all major tourism fairs in the world, we also had the largest Buddhist Conclave, where around 200 delegates participated from

the consumers directly by organising roadshows in key as well as emerging markets. The introduction of e-visa has been one of the biggest game changers and has been a huge contributor to the commend-

strides in connecting with

MOT

We will be participating at WTM this year too. We have occupied 650 sqm of space there and about 27 co-exhibitors will be going with us. The delegation will be led by Tourism Minister (I/C) K J Alphons, along with the Joint Secretary. The theme for WTM India pavilion is 'Festivals of India.' We are planning to have an India evening on November 6 themed on Diwali. We are hopeful that we will be able to showcase to the world that India is a land of festivals, joy and celebrations. We already have a lot of interest generated in India as a destination because of the Incredible India 2.0 campaign. We hope to continue generating this kind of interest in India as a year-round destination.

community participation and development of all avenues like connectivity, infrastructure, skilling, etc."

Marketing in full swing

Verma talked about MOT's three-pronged strategy. We have increased our G2G (government to government) interaction by signing many MoUs and organising several joint action group meetings to implement some of the action plans, drawn out for cooperation with various countries," she said.

MOT has also enhanced its presence on digital platform as across the world, including not only pilgrims but also tour operators as well as media from Buddhist countries."

Talking about the recently-held India Tourism Mart (ITM), she said, "ITM was an industry-led event supported by us, which started in conjunction with the 12-day Paryatan Parv. At the three-day ITM, we received more than 250 buyers from 60 countries who had business meetings with almost an equal number of Indian sellers."

Further steps "We also took a number of



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