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**TRAVTALK**

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# India as an aviation hub

The two-day Global Aviation Summit held in Mumbai this January shed light on the vision that MoCA has for the country. A few highlights from the speech of **Suresh Prabhu**, Minister of Civil Aviation and Commerce and Industry...



Hazel Jain

**Suresh Prabhu**, Minister of Civil Aviation and Commerce and Industry, GoI, left no stone unturned to convince the world to work with India in aviation. He unveiled India's 'Vision 2040' at the event which aims to grow 187 million air passengers in 2018 to 1.12 billion in 2040. The summit was his brainchild – to bring the world on a common platform on Indian soil.

Prabhu said that a summit of this stature is necessary to encourage collective thinking and bring about reforms. The rise of fuel prices has been an issue but can be dealt with through an exchange. He said, "Aviation is a complex activity; it cannot work in solo. And if it is international flying, various countries need to get involved. So it makes sense that all the players in this business come together and draw strategies."

He suggested that if the countries agree, India will be happy to host the summit every year or biennially to encourage more intra-national discussions – to talk about challenges and strategies to deal with them. Speaking about the theme – Flying for All – he spoke of targeting the bottom of the pyramid made popular by marketing guru CK Prahalad. He said, "Imagine if everyone at the bottom of the pyramid can afford a product. Railways work in India because



**Suresh Prabhu**  
Minister of Civil Aviation and Commerce and Industry, GoI

it is affordable. So how can we make aircraft cheaper, how can

we build airports that are more efficient, with less land and lower cost?"

The ministry also launched a drone policy. "We want to ensure that drone becomes one of the preferred tools – whether it is controlling law and order or disaster management. We want to ensure that drones are manufactured in India and I welcome all of you to be part of this process," Prabhu added.

Delhi-Manila-Delhi direct from April 2019 on Philippine Airlines



For more, see Page 6

# Rishikesh on an adventure trail

The 5<sup>th</sup> PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2019 (ATRTCM) is scheduled to be held at Ganga Resort in Rishikesh from February 13-15.



Manas Dwivedi

Set to be organised in collaboration with Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) and Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), PATA ATRTCM

is looking to impart more knowledge and opportunities to tour operators, especially from Uttarakhand. **Captain Swadesh Kumar**, President, ATOAI says that they are aiming to get maximum participation from the host state.

"Till date, we have received registration from 49 buyers and 60 sellers. We have already received more than 200 registrations and we are expecting around 300 delegates to attend the event. We want to encourage the travel

fraternity of the state to attend the mart and conference in big numbers. To promote the same, PATA has schemed out special rates of \$100 for delegates from Uttarakhand and ATOAI has decided to further absorb \$50 of the registration

fee for them. We aspire to offer knowledge and opportunities to the local tour operators, so that they can network and expand their business," Kumar explains. The three-day event is themed on 'Rejuvenate your soul through travel'.



**Captain Swadesh Kumar**  
President  
ATOAI



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## Towards seamless bookings

As travel agents struggle to get hotel inventory through various sources, GRNconnect is set to launch a new technology platform that would simplify business for agents, shares its MD, **Deepak Narula**.



TT Bureau

For online hotel booking portal GRNconnect, innovation is the best way to move forward in business. **Deepak Narula**, Managing Director, GRNconnect, says, "We are moving to a new technology platform and have also released a new API version 3.0 (1.4) which is based on latest technology—an intuitive and consistent restful API which uses lean JSON formats in lieu of the verbose XML formats and offers low latency, good performance, is fault tolerant as well as highly resilient. Besides adding more hotel inventory to our prepaid module, we have added apartments and pay@hotel too. We are also moving to a new user interface, which is friendlier and easy to navigate and has a lot more features."

He believes that the new technology would further ease the way travel agents



**Deepak Narula**  
Managing Director  
GRNconnect

work. "When we launched www.GRNconnect.com a couple of years back, we brought a major change in the travel agents' working and now with this release, we are going to add more value to it. Currently, travel agents are struggling to get hotel inventory through various sources, apparently with the API, they can create their own website with real-time inventory and functionality which will open more avenues for a travel agent to expose their products with

the corporates and direct clients," he informs.

Narula believes that it would simplify travel agents' operations as they are working towards automation and providing all kinds of tools to them to smoothen their hotel booking process. He adds, "Apart from this, the new interface is designed keeping in view the user experience, which makes it easy for them to navigate the new features that give them benefit of the most competitive pricing, various types of inventories within the hotels, sort out the best deals to better their profits, etc."

Claiming that 2018 was a great year for their company, he says, "The goal of each company is to be better year on year. Hence, with the combined effort of our sales, operations, techies and support teams, we have recorded a tremendous growth in the year 2018."

With several plans and initiatives scheduled for this year, GRNconnect is poised to record better numbers for 2019. "We have appointed GSAs in some foreign markets and have added a lot of login as well as high-potential API customers in India and across the world. As a result, we have a client base in over 27 countries and we are expecting a good volume of business from these tie-ups and we believe 2019 year is going to be a super year for us," adds Narula. ↴

### Did you know?

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## Technology Talk



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# TRAVTALK

## VIEWPOINT

### The adventure continues...

2018 was declared as the Year of Adventure Tourism by Ministry of Tourism (MOT), which saw the government taking a serious look into this segment. While Indians are opting for adventure holidays, they are usually indulging in these activities abroad. Security seems to be a major concern, which is why MOT introduced guidelines on adventure tourism in India, to bring safety and risk management to the fore. These guidelines covered land, air and water-based activities, apart from insurance, risk assessment, first-aid, CPR and sustainability. However, the accreditation for service providers of such activities is still not mandatory, which does put a question mark on these guidelines. But one can consider this to be the first step in that direction. In December, Madhya Pradesh played host to AdventureNEXT by Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA). In fact, MP also organises Jal Mahotsav in Hanumantiya every year to showcase its adventure potential. While many other initiatives are being taken to promote adventure activities in India, it is still at a nascent stage. The upcoming PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart 2019 (ATRTCM), to be held in Rishikesh in February, might just be the perfect platform to showcase India's potential as an adventure destination.

### Ruling global skies

Ministry of Civil Aviation recently released its vision document for 2040, which reveals that in the next 20 years, India's passenger traffic will increase six-fold to 1.1 billion and the number of airports will touch 200. In fact, the document revealed that in the years to come, the country will have its own aircraft leasing industry, along with tax structure and repossession processes. India is all set to receive delivery of around 1,000 aircraft, which would further increase the fleet of commercial airlines to 2359 by 2040 from 622 in March 2018. The document also revealed that MoCA might create a Nabh Nirman Fund of USD 2 billion to fund low traffic airports in their starting phases. After the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), which was released in 2017, this vision takes MoCA's plans for Indian aviation a step further.

# Ode to new-age travellers

Social media platforms are creating new opportunities for hotel brands to learn about their guests and meet new service expectations, opines **Ignace Bauwens**, Regional Vice President– Middle East, Eurasia & Africa, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

The future of the hospitality sector is set for major transformation led by technology and the evolution of the traveller demographic. This is particularly true for India, where the growth of digitisation and the Internet of Things are changing the expectations of modern, tech-savvy travellers and shaping a more competitive landscape. In addition, the growth of the global middle

has worked in the past, and be future-ready to address the needs and aspirations of the next generation of travellers.

Today's customers are spoiled for choices. 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

a journey. Hence, social media platforms act as a powerful tool that enable businesses to have a direct conversation with their customers. This is creating new opportunities for hotel brands to learn about their guests and meet new service expectations. If done right, these interactions can be monetised in exchange for enhanced services, identifying new revenue streams.

services, in-room amenities and a loyalty programme that adds value to the guests.

Our focus for the future must be to deliver relevant, innovative and digital-savvy offering to customers any locations they prefer, at price-points they seek, and in doing so, create memories they cherish.

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



**Ignace Bauwens**  
Regional Vice President– Middle East, Eurasia & Africa, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

“ A recent report by IBEF revealed that India is the most digitally-advanced traveller nation in terms of digital tools being used ”

class in India - with higher disposable income than previous generations - has opened up to a new demographic of travellers seeking new and different travel experiences.

These shifts represent an opportunity to innovate our industry and create lasting value. But to unlock the full potential, we must look beyond what

that social media has had a huge impact on the hospitality industry with more and more travellers often relying on social networks such as Facebook and Instagram to pick their next holiday. A recent report by IBEF revealed that India is the most digitally-advanced traveller nation in terms of digital tools being used for planning, booking and experiencing

Despite all the focus on emerging technology, we must not forget that people will remain a brand's most powerful competitive asset. Travel has always been about the experiences and memories you make and share. Travel habits hugely remains emotional. Hence, while technology is absolutely key to future-proof your business, hotel brands should never compromise on the fundamentals. It is crucial to ensure the highest standards of guest service, quality food & beverage offering, efficient concierge

## Fly direct to Manila from Delhi from April



Philippine Airlines has launched direct flights between Delhi and Manila, effective April 17, 2019. The airline's flight PR 727 will depart from Terminal 3 of Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport at 1.45 am (all local times) and will arrive in Manila at 10:45 am the following day and the return flight PR 726 will depart at 20:45 pm and reach Delhi at 1:00 am. Airbus A321neo will be deployed for the new route from India to Philippines.

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# MoCA votes for 'flying for all'

Keeping this theme in mind, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) orchestrated the first-ever Global Aviation Summit 2019 in Mumbai. The question remains whether low fares can sustain the airlines who are constantly struggling to stay afloat.



Hazel Jain

The first-of-its-kind-in-India aviation summit was reminiscent of Captain Gopinath's vision when he started Air Deccan. 'Flying for all' is an idyllic goal and perfect for a populous country like India, where every penny matters. And in an aviation market that has been growing in double-digit figures, this seems plausible even.

As per the 'Vision 2040' released by the ministry during the event, the Indian aviation market is on a high growth path with the total passenger traffic to, from and within India, during April-November 2018 growing by around 15 per cent year-on-year as compared to just six per cent globally. India is now the seventh-largest aviation market and is expected to become the third-largest by 2022.

The presence of 83 countries at the event reflected the kind of interest these figures managed to generate. As **RN Choubey**, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, puts it, "We are the aviation locomotive of the world. We are a land of inclusive growth and we wish to grow with you. The 20 per cent growth seen over the last four years will continue for the next 20 years given the stability of oil prices."

Surely, he hit the nail on the head with that last comment. Despite continuous growth in the aviation sector, Indian airlines have not managed to make much profit; some not at all. Oil prices have been the main culprit, but the constant need to win passenger numbers at the cost of making money is another key reason for mounting losses.

And yet **Jayant Sinha**, MoS, Ministry of Civil Aviation, said proudly in his speech, "The affordability of flying in India is second to none. We have the most affordable fares and I tell

people that flying in India is cheaper than taking an autorickshaw if you look at it from a per km basis. If it is `5/km in a rickshaw, flying is `4/km."

Ironically, no one from the ministry addressed the diminishing profit margins of airlines, including that of Air India. The continuous 'growth story' also begs the question

why a few airlines have gone/are going under. India needs a different algorithm that ensures flying for all while allowing airlines to make money.



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Secretary  
Ministry of Civil Aviation



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# IITT 2020 to focus on adventure

Having witnessed a record number of attendees this year, India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT) will focus on adventure in its next edition with a special pavilion showcasing major world attractions.



TT Bureau

With more than 300 booths, 500 exhibitors and 25 countries, the sixth edition of the three-day India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT) held in Mumbai's MMRDA Grounds closed on a successful note. This has prompted the organisers to plan for the next edition on a bigger scale. **Mohit Mewani**, Exhibition Director, ABEC

Exhibitions & Conferences, says, "We will focus on adventure tourism in a big way next year. We are also looking to grow the attractions section. For this, we will create a huge pavilion that will have activities and attractions from various countries. We plan to dedicate about 800-1,000 sqm of space to this with a minimum of 70-80 attractions from across the world."

Speaking about this year, he said that there were new entrants to IITT such as Bhutan. "Apart from that, we have Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka and a lot of participants from Maldives as well. In terms of exhibitors, we have grown by almost 20 per cent. However, this year Cox & Kings has come in a big way with almost 1,000 sqm of space which has never been



**Mohit Mewani**  
Exhibition Director  
ABEC Exhibitions & Conferences

seen in the exhibition industry ever before. Cox & Kings has created an experiential zone which includes French cafes and self-drive in NSW and a lot more," Mewani adds.

This goes on to show that IITT has a lot to offer, apart from normal booths. "We help the exhibitors conceptualise their booths in innovative ways so that they can stand out. Our main anchor booth which

includes the top 20-25 clients – we personally go to them to try and understand what they want to do this year and what we as a show are focussing on – understand their buyer profile; we do profiling of our buyers to match our exhibitor requirements," he says.

The team at IITT wants the show to be the biggest and

sure that every exhibitor who comes here is satisfied and the show is fruitful for them in terms of not only the money but also the time they invest in," Mewani emphasises.

According to him, the first two days received around 15,000 odd visitors. On the third day—open to B2C—the show saw about an equal

discussions with industry experts talking on key topics such as MICE, cruise tourism, weddings and technology. Besides, it also had workshops conducted by Fiji Tourism, Bhutan Tourism, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Akquasun, Ark and Star Cruises. Mewani says, "I would like to extend my special thanks to our key sponsors which includes Cox & Kings, Akquasun, Star Cruises, Sri Lanka and Indonesia."

Over 500 exhibitors from more than 25 countries showcased their products and services. Day one saw an expert panel discussion on developing new destinations through film tourism with travel specialists while the second day had many more business sessions focusing on diverse topics such as cruise tourism, outbound MICE and data privacy. ↴

## Did you know?

The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai has acquired an image trademark. It is the first building in the country to get intellectual property rights protection for its architectural design

“We have Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka and a lot of participants from Maldives as new entrants to IITT. In terms of exhibitors; we have grown by almost 20%”

the largest in the country in the next five years. "We are going to ensure that we give everybody the basic – ROTI – Return On Time and money Invested. We want to make

number of attendees as IITT had done a lot of B2C marketing as well this year. On the sidelines of the show were many interactive sessions which included the conference



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# Mobile app for U&I Holidays

At its recently-held six-city roadshow across India, U&I Holidays launched a mobile app for end customers, enabling them to travel without their vouchers and even give instant feedback.



Nisha Verma

U&I Holidays recently launched a mobile application for its customers during its six-city roadshow across India to engage and educate the agents about its product offerings.

Shyam Upadhyay, Director, U&I Holidays, said, "Innovation is most important today with every wholeseller or retailer having an online portal. The latest addition for our portal is mobile application, which is not for the operator. This mobile application is going to be used by the end user. We will start this from Bali. A guest travelling to Bali now need not carry any hard copies. He can just download the application and can have all his itinerary and vouchers on the mobile phone. At the same time, we

have connected the driver and the client directly, just like in Uber or Ola cabs, allowing guests to see where the driver is, or if he has reached or not. Also, most of the Indian restaurants, shopping places have been marked and mapped in the application."

He added that it is advantageous for them to get instant feedback. "As a DMC, real-time feedback is the most important for us. If clients get convinced on tour, it's fantastic. But if anything is wrong and he comes back to India, one can probably lose the client or bear a compensation. Now, with this real-time feedback, everyday, once the tour gets over, client will automatically get a pop-up, and if they have a complaint, they will definitely put it forth. That will directly go



Shyam Upadhyay  
Director  
U&I Holidays

to the Bali office or head office and all the senior management at U&I Holidays. We have a dedicated quality control team who's going to work on it. These are the real-time advantages, which, according to me no DMC is doing."

Our fourth edition of the roadshow travelled to Kolkata, Delhi, Surat, Ahmedabad,



Ashish Indulkar  
Director  
U&I Holidays

Pune and Mumbai, with around 1,000 tour operators in attendance. Ashish Indulkar, Director, U&I Holidays, added, "This year's roadshow has been a big success. The business has been increasing as Bali has gained pace as a destination and with the launch of direct flights between India and Indonesia, the business has doubled.

Hopefully, with our online presence in the next one or two months, there will be an increase of more than 25-30 per cent all around the year."

Upadhyay added, "Apart from Bali, this year we are covering two more destinations—Maldives and Australia. We've been doing Maldives for the last eight years, but we have started doing Australia only recently. We want to sell more of Australia, for which we want to get into Tier II and III cities, where information is the most important factor. Australia is not a destination where every small retail operator can go and sit. Hence, a DMC like us, which has a strong and good network with strong presence in nine Indian cities, it becomes easy for us to sell and educate about the destination."

Going forward, the company is going to add more destinations to its portfolio. Indulkar shared, "In 2018, we added Australia to our kitty, and currently we are targeting only around 2,000 customers visiting Australia. In the next six months, we are looking to set our footprint either in Dubai or in Singapore. However, the biggest market that we are looking at is Europe, for which our homework has already started." ↓

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# AGENTS

## JTB's India showcase

The Global DMC Network by JTB, which owns Europamundo Vacations, recently displayed its vast product range in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai.



TT Bureau

A total of six DMCs under the JTB umbrella from Asia-Pacific, Europe, Japan and Korea participated at the JTB roadshow, namely—Tour

upcoming economy and there is a lot of long-haul travel happening from the country. Hence, we really want to get into the market with Global DMC network having all the destinations around the world."

Talking about the participating DMCs in the roadshow, Whitter said, "Our companies in this roadshow from places such as Japan, Korea, Asia Pacific, Europe and also America have been in the market for 50-100 years and we can showcase that experience here by bringing all the products for agents to tailor-make things for you."

**Aparna C Basumalik**, Country Head, Europamundo Vacations, claimed that the roadshow was a great opportunity for JTB to show the solidarity of the vast product range that they have. "Not only are we doing the Asia Pacific, Europe and America region, but also Japan. The roadshow began with introducing JTB as a group and all the companies under its umbrella, followed by the break-away sessions with DMCs, which gave each company an opportunity to showcase their product. Unlike other roadshows where agents only listen to what the suppliers have, here the suppliers listened to what the trade is looking for. It's a two-way process beneficial for both parties," she added. 📌



**Elena Bounimovitch**  
Global Destination Management, Global Marketing



**Rebecca Whitter**  
Global Business Unit Headquarters



**Aparna C Basumalik**  
Country Head Europamundo Vacations

East, Tumlare Destination Management, Kuoni Global Travel Services, Europamundo Vacaciones, JTB Global Marketing & Travel and LOTTE JTB.

Speaking on the sidelines of the roadshow, **Elena Bounimovitch**, Global Destination Management, Global Marketing, said, "India is an

**Rebecca Whitter**, Global Business Unit Headquarters, agreed, saying, "The Indian market is set to further grow in the next few years. Indians now want to travel more and indulge in experiential activities. Our company can offer that and give them the experience that they cannot get on their own."

## Travel trade networks through cricket



The Travel Agents' Cricket Tournament 2018, Season 2 held recently at Club 07, Ahmedabad, saw 16 teams playing the knockout rounds in which Travel Trip Asia, Faro Holidays, MH Hospitality and Accel Holidays proceeded to the semi-finals. At the presentation ceremony, **Sartaj Singh Mangat**, General Manager, RezLive.com, presented the winner's trophy to **Dvijay Sharma**, captain of MH Hospitality cricket team and **Kiran Parikh**, Assistant General Manager, RezLive.com, handed over the runners up trophy to **Sapan Shah**, Captain of Faro Holidays cricket team. **Zaheer Jeddy**, National Sales Head, RezLive.com, presented the Man of the Series Trophy to **Parshwa Shah** (Faro Holidays).

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## Kumbh 2019 to generate ₹ 1.2 lakh crore: CII

Underway in Prayagraj, Kumbh Mela is expected to generate a revenue of ₹ 1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh, says a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) report. Although the Kumbh Mela is spiritual and religious in nature, the economic activities associated with it generate employment for over six lakh workers across various sectors, CII said. The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated ₹ 4,200 crore for the 50-day Kumbh Mela this time, thrice the budget of the Maha Kumbh in 2013.

The hospitality sector aims at employing 2,50,000 people, airlines and airports around 1,50,000 and tour operators around 45,000. The employment numbers in ecotourism and medical tourism are being estimated at 85,000, says a CII study. Apart from this, there will be around 55,000 new jobs in the unorganised sector comprising tour guides,

taxi drivers, interpreters, volunteers, etc. This will lead to increase in income levels for government agencies and individual traders.

Kumbh attracts foreign tourists from countries like Australia, the UK, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, New Zealand, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka. The 'mela' is expected to generate a revenue of ₹ 1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh, while neighbouring states like Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh will also benefit from the enhanced revenue generation with many national and foreign tourists expected to explore other destinations. Rajesh Agarwal, state Finance Minister, said, "The UP government has allocated ₹ 4,200 crore for 2019 Kumbh Mela. The previous state government had spent around ₹ 1,300 crore for the Maha Kumbh, which was held in 2013."

## Fancy an island holiday?

Akquasun Group recently organised a destination workshop on Reunion Island in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai with the support of Reunion Island Tourism Board represented by Atout France in India. This was followed by cocktails and dinner.



## Adventurous escapades

The new year pins new hopes for promoting adventure activities in the country. Industry insiders suggest upcoming trends and updates.

TT Bureau



**Sandeep Khetarpal**  
Director  
Central Asia Guided Tours

"We talk about adventure as one of the main themes at Central Asia Guided Tours. In 2018, growth in adventure tourism from India has been less, but 2019 sees a lot of adventure enthusiasts and we are expecting more movement from

the country to opt for thrilling adventure activities in the ten countries in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Eastern Europe region. The CIS countries are currently garnering big demand. Apart from gyrocopter ride, hot air balloon or rafting, there are numerous activities which travellers can enjoy. Over the past six years, we have seen almost a 100 per cent increase in the number of tourists we are sending for adventure activities. To increase the popularity of adventure tourism in the country, people need to know more the popular and upcoming destinations, which have a huge potential to serve the adventure needs of travellers. We want to communicate that these countries are very safe and the possibilities to explore culture, history and modern attractions."

"This is perhaps the best time to live in if you are an adventure sport lover. The reason is because the country is aggressively promoting peaks and almost every state in the country is promoting their own tourism. That opens up a lot of mountains and ranges which were earlier not open for climbing. So, every state is interested in getting tourism to their destinations. At the same time, people have become health conscious. There are people running marathon, participating in physical activities or doing adventure activities. So, as a country, we are all moving towards fitness and promoting adventure tourism. Adventure is rapidly becoming a good way to healthy living. Maintaining good health is becoming necessary to pursue regular adventure activities. There is almost a revolution coming up, where nobody is okay with being obese and lazy anymore; everybody is getting out to doing something. Our foundation is working hard to promote this initiative and encourage people to take up trekking."



**Akhil Dua**  
Founder & Director, Trekla  
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# Inbound through films

According to PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Indian film tourism industry has the potential to generate US\$3 billion by 2022. It had recently organised a conclave on film tourism in Mumbai.



The PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) recently organised the third edition of Global Film Tourism Conclave on the theme 'Transforming Location into Vacation' at JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu. The programme was supported by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and was attended by over 150 delegates. There was also an exhibition for destinations to showcase locations, tax incen-

'Building brand India through film tourism', which shares suggested avenues for collaboration and policy initiatives that the industry can undertake towards making films an effective investment medium to enable destination tourism in India.

According to the report, there is a potential for up to a million film tourists to visit India by 2022 which could result in revenues of up to US\$3 billion. The Indian film industry is one of the fastest

cent in 2017 – both domestic and international.

**Points of discussions**  
Two panel discussions were held. The first one focussed on how to make India a global film tourism hub. **Abhijeet Patil**, Chairman, Raja Rani Travels moderated the session that was chaired by **Vinod Zutshi**, (IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India; **Sudhir Sobti**, Chief Manager, Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation;



tives and subsidies on the sidelines of this conclave.

It is time to create a uniform single-window system across India to get the permissions for shooting of films and organisations like PHDCCI can play an important role in encouraging these possibilities. **Satyajeet Rajan** (IAS), Director General,

growing sectors in the country today and has grown from `122 billion in 2016 to `156 billion in 2017, representing a growth rate of 28 per cent. It is also one of the largest producers of cinematographic films in the world and the projected size of the industry is estimated to reach `204 billion by 2019.

**Vikramjit Roy**, Head-Film Facilitation Office, National Film Development Corporation; **Aashish Singh**, CEO-Motion Pictures, Balaji Telefilms.

The second session was titled 'Importance of Bollywood movies in increasing Indian tourists overseas' and had **Kulmeet Makkar**, CEO, Producers Guild of India moderating the session. The panelists included **HE Radu Octavian Dobre**, Ambassador, Embassy of Romania in the Republic of India; **Iliya Dekov**, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria to India; **Ferenc Jari**, Consul General, Consulate General of Hungary; **Zaal Choksi**, Executive-Marketing & PR, Macao Government Tourism Office; **Marijke Desouza**, Executive Producer, Dharma Productions.

The panelists highlighted that inadequate basic infrastructure such as roads, inland water transport, air connectivity acts are the biggest hindrance. There is an urgent need for investment in infrastructure linking roads, railways and airports to curtail such hindrances and provide basic infrastructure support to film tourism."

“The Indian film industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country today and has grown from `122 bn in 2016 to `156 bn in 2017, representing a growth rate of 28%”

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, spoke about the initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism and various state governments for promoting film tourism. He said that the Government of India has also approved execution of MoUs with countries like Romania and Bulgaria to foster bilateral cooperation through film tourism for promoting the two countries as attractive tourism destinations.

PHDCCI and its knowledge partner, Ernst & Young (E&Y) have jointly released a report

Leading Indian film director and producer, Ramesh Sippy and Satish Kaushik were also present at the event. They unanimously requested to curb the lengthy process of approvals and permissions to shoot in India and urged the state tourism boards to come out with film industry-friendly policy. Films are a great source of showcasing any country's culture, heritage and vast economic potentials. The Indian film industry achieved exponential growth of 27 per

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# Iitt 2019 opens to a packed hall

The sixth edition of the three-day India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT) in Mumbai's MMRDA Grounds in BKC had over 500 exhibitors from more than 25 countries showcasing their products and services. The exhibition was driven by an elaborate content which included workshops, training academy, speed networking lounge, panel discussions, and much more.





# Travel unbridled with Cosmos Lite

The Globus family of brands has introduced Cosmos Lite—the world's first á la carte tour style, which includes 10 innovative itineraries that combine major cities with undiscovered and unexplored destinations across Europe.



TT Bureau

Cosmos Lite is a new type of tour—an amalgamation of the essential features of Cosmos tours with a personalised approach to daily itineraries. Offering hassle-free travel, Cosmos Lite provides its customers with the freedom to tailor an itinerary to the clients' interests, budgets and pace.

Scott Nisbet, President and CEO, Globus family of brands, said, "With the introduction of Cosmos Lite, we're giving travellers an independent touring option—a new way to see, explore and experience the world around them. We get them to each destination and coordinate comfortable accommodations but their days – and the activities they plan – are up to them."

As the first product from the kitty of Cosmos tours this year, Cosmos Lite has come up with 10 innovative itineraries that combine major cities with undiscovered, lesser-known destinations across Europe. The Cosmos Lite vacation packages include city-to-city transportation (deluxe motor-coaches with complimentary WiFi); comfortable hotels (a base for independent exploration); daily breakfasts (to power travel pursuits); professional tour director (to point out the best sightseeing, dining and entertainment); MyCosmos optional excursions (available for purchase); and CosmosGo mobile app (fuel for free time with suggestions to make the most of each day).

Travellers for Cosmos Lite can choose from a range of MyCosmos excursions, such as a cooking class in Lisbon, a guided tour of Genoa or a bike tour of the Iron Curtain from Bratislava. Cosmos Lite travellers have the option to purchase only the tours and activities that they find interesting, or none, as sightseeing is not included. In case they need guidance on what to see or do, an expert tour Director will accompany guests as they travel between cities to offer suggestions for sightseeing, dining and entertainment.

"Cosmos Lite's á la carte touring invites travellers to design each day with free time, me time or see time. A Cosmos Lite vacation frees up days so travellers can fill them according to their interests, passions

and budget, yet we include for them touring vacation essentials for ease, comfort and discovery," concludes **Varesh Chopra**, Regional Director –India, South Asia & Middle East, Globus family of brands.

Those who want to roam around and discover the destination at their own pace, the new CosmosGo app, filled with a host of entertainment, sightseeing, dining and shopping

suggestions, is at their fingertips. Another feature that sets these tours apart from a typical tour is the fact that most Cosmos Lite excursions start later in the morning. ↴



**Varesh Chopra**  
Regional Director –India, South Asia & Middle East, Globus family



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# Sarova targets big India outbound

Sarova Hotels, Resort & Game Lodges is set to strengthen its foothold in the India market by organising roadshows, workshops and Fam tours for agents and media.



As part of its strategy to Agrow, Sarova Hotels, Resort & Game Lodges, organised a four-city roadshow in India, that travelled to Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad. **Selina Dima**,

Travel Trade Manager—Global Sales, Sarova Hotels and Resorts, Kenya, headed the roadshows and said, "Sarova has been a well-known brand in terms of luxury, cuisine and the quality of services it has to offer for all travel segments

be it leisure, MICE or wedding groups. International arrivals have been on a steady growth since 2015, and the Indian market has been one of the fastest growing source markets. Our four-city roadshow in India gave us a better standing

in the industry in tapping into this source market."

She claimed that the strategic location of their business hotels in Nairobi and Mombasa, strengthened by a strong brand showcase in India would position

Sarova as the preferred hotel partner for the Indian business traveller. "We have four city properties and six game lodges. We are known for our hospitality and this is rightly reflected in our tagline 'Refreshing African Hospitality'. We are big in MICE and

weddings and have even hosted big Indian wedding of around 2500 pax at our beach property in Mombasa. We even do tailor-made FIT business and other segments as well. Our properties are different and each property caters to different segments and markets," she added.

Talking about the Indian market, Dima said, "India is the fourth largest contributor to the tourism sector of Kenya and the same reflects for Sarova too. The purpose behind the roadshows was to touch base with those who are booking with us, as well as create awareness for the ones who don't know about the product. We want to meet the trade and



**Selina Dima**  
Travel Trade Manager—Global Sales  
Sarova Hotels and Resorts, Kenya

understand their needs for Kenyan products so that we can tailor-make our products. Based on India's population and the number of people travelling international from India, there is still potential for us to grow the market into Kenya."

She claimed that their speciality is food catering to all kinds of cuisines. "For the India market specifically, we have an Indian department with Indian chefs."

Apart from workshops and roadshows, Sarova also promotes itself via social media.

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# TAT to focus on ecotourism

India is one of the top 10 source markets for Thailand tourism, claimed **Yuthasak Supasorn**, Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), on his recent visit to the country. He also shared the board's plans to achieve the target of 2 million arrivals from India in 2019.



Nisha Verma

India remains a prime source market for Thailand with inbound arrivals growing to the tune of 20 per cent. **Yuthasak Supasorn**, Governor, Tourism Authority of Thailand, says, "As one of our top 10 markets, India recorded a growth of about 20 per cent last year. We welcomed around 1.5 million Indians last year and hope to achieve our target of 2 million by the end of this year."

Supasorn believes that since India is among the fastest growing economies of the world, many of them are travelling to Thailand, where their needs are being catered to by the service providers. "People in Thailand can cater to the needs of Indians not

only for weddings but also for leisure. Hence, we believe that Thailand has everything that Indians want."

He insisted that they are also looking to attract first-time travellers from India to Thailand. "We want to promote the first-time traveller to Thailand. According to statistics, over 70 million Indian people have passports but only 22 million are visiting Thailand. We want to focus on first visits from India to Thailand."

For 2019, the tourism board will be focusing on its existing campaign 'Open to new shades of Thailand'. "We will continue to focus on the existing theme to introduce local experiences and a number of new destinations to Indians.

We want to introduce Indians to destinations including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and sea-side destinations like Phuket and Samui island."

Claiming that MiCE is an important segment from India to Thailand. "We work with

**“We want to promote the first-time traveller to Thailand. According to statistics, over 70 million Indian people have passports but only 22 million are visiting Thailand”**

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) in order to increase the number of MiCE to Thailand this year."

In fact, Thailand is set to receive a good number of tourists from India in the next

few months owing to the extension of visa-free waiver till April 30, 2019. Speaking on the extension, Supasorn, said, "Thailand will always welcome international arrivals, especially from India, because when we accept visa-on-arrival, one of two countries from which we

get the most benefit is India. We believe that until the end of April, we'd see a number of Indians visiting Thailand."

Other segments the country is focusing on include senior citizen travel, culinary tourism

as well as ecotourism and voluntourism. "Voluntourism is one of our major focuses this year because Thailand became the chairman of ASEAN, and TAT is set to propose ecotourism as the flagship theme for ASEAN," he shared. 



  
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## Taking Indore by storm

Best Western Plus O2, Indore is poised to record another year of growth in 2019 by offering the best of hospitality and service in the city.



TT Bureau

Best Western Plus O2, Indore is a complete business hotel offering a variety of rooms, F&B outlets and other facilities like swimming pool and gymnasium, informs **Sanjeev Kumar**, General Manager, BW Plus O2 Indore. "The USP of the hotel is the newly opened Night Club 'O2 Club and Lounge', which is one of the best night clubs in India," he claims.

Kumar shares that Indore, as the largest city in Madhya Pradesh, has a panoply of options to invite all kinds of tourism. "The place has got versatile options of religious tourism, medical tourism, manufacturing industries, pharmaceutical industries and automobile industries. Hence, there are options to hold huge conferences. Having been in city for more than a decade, I have



**Sanjeev Kumar**  
General Manager  
BW Plus O2 Indore

witnessed the improvement in the hospitality quotient of Indore in the past few years and it's getting better day-by-day to match international hospitality standards," informed Kumar.

The last one year, according to Kumar, has been good for business and hospitality. "While there were no major challenges for the industry, the flight connectivity would have benefited the sector

more. It has already increased tremendously this year and the airport is operating 24 hours. We are hoping similar or better movements this year as well," he shared.

He insisted that the city must witness more conferences from different segments. However, he opined that manpower has been an issue in a small city like Indore. "The government of Madhya Pradesh has noticed this challenge and several steps are being taken to fill this crisis. The state government has recently opened a state institute of hotel management in the city. We are trying to get the manpower from different private hospitality institutes and training them with our own resources to develop them to fit in our brand. We are also trying to hire talent from different locations where the hospitality options are limited," Kumar said.

## Fortune Select in Solan

Fortune Park Hotels has unveiled the latest addition to its portfolio — Fortune Select Forest Hill, Solan, offering a range of services and facilities for travellers.



TT Bureau

Located amidst a forest and on a hill that offers picturesque views, Fortune Select Forest Hill, Solan, offers a wide range of guest services and facilities for today's travellers. This property, set in the Solan Valley, is easily accessible by air, rail and road. Located 300 km from Delhi and 50 km from Chandigarh, the hotel can be navigated easily after 20 km of drive in the hills.

Ecstatic on the launch, **Samir MC**, Managing Director, Fortune Park Hotels, said, "We are extremely delighted to partner with the Owning Board of Forest Hill Resort and excited to present a new destination for holidays. Fortune, member ITC's hotel group, is known for providing contemporary accommodation and value for business and leisure travellers."



**Samir MC**  
Managing Director  
Fortune Park Hotels

Offering grand and spacious guest rooms, the hotel is beautifully planned with a fusion of classical, colonial and contemporary architecture, with a tasteful sprinkle of art deco. Guests can even enjoy majestic mountain views from the rooms and live in the comfort of idyllic bliss. The hotel offers three signature food and beverage destinations – Zodiac an astral coffee shop, Neptune bar and lounge, and Fortune Deli.

Apart from that, the hotel has a number of recreational activities such as trekking, cookery classes, sunset hi-tea, bonfire and more to keep the guests engaged. Other in-house facilities include, infinity swimming pool, pool table, foosball, table tennis, lawn croquet set, board games and more.

The property is also the perfect venue for corporate gatherings, milestone celebrations and spectacular events. Its striking landscapes and sophisticated setting provide a natural backdrop. There is a spacious ballroom, embellished with ornate chandeliers and rich colours, which can accommodate upto 250 guests. In fact, it can host spectacular destination weddings that are sure to look right out of a fairytale. Apart from that there is a private boardroom for meetings for upto 50 guests.



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# Connecting India and Brisbane

Brisbane is eager to welcome more Indians to visit and experience Queensland in the next decade, says **Andrew Brodie**, General Manager—Airline & Retail Management, Brisbane Airport Corporation.

 Harshal Ashar from Queensland

## Q When can we expect direct flights from India to Brisbane?

We are in talks with Indian carriers for a long time and we hope to make some announcement in the course of the next 12-24 months. In the meantime, we are focused on working with Tourism Events Queensland and Tourism Australia in India to bring capacity via the big hubs like Singapore or Kuala Lumpur or even Dubai from where we get capacity directly into Brisbane.

## Q What drives Indians to visit Brisbane?

Queensland is very powerful in terms of mining and earns market share of all trade between Australia and India. The other thing we are

blessed is with education. We have about 13 per cent of all Indian students who are educated here in South East Queensland and we want to keep growing this. We are working closely with Brisbane Marketing, Tourism and Events Queensland to showcase the best of education facilities in this state. We have a safe and clean environment and we are working hard to showcase the best of educational facilities we have to offer.

Another aspect is tourism and we cannot wait for more Indians to visit and experience these places. An added advantage is that Australians and Indians love cricket. With players like Brett Lee and Michael Kasprowicz supporting us, it is a great opportunity for us to attract more Indians because we know



Andrew Brodie  
General Manager—Airline & Retail Management, Brisbane Airport Corporation

they are also truly passionate about the game.

## Q Any new facilities at the airport? How do you think it would benefit Indian travellers?

We are building a second runway set to become operational in the next 24 months. We are spending 1.8 billion AUD on the parallel runway plus major infrastructure

which will take us from 52 movements an hour to over 110 movements per hour. That is more movements per hour than any other port in Australasia, which would mean that the capacity would increase manifold.

We do a lot of research – both qualitative and quantitative

the North which will allow for more duty-free and retail products and restaurants.

## Q What is the next big step regarding Brisbane Airport?

Brisbane Airport operates 24\*7 so there is no curfew. Sydney airport is curfewed, the airport to our south is

hubs directly into Brisbane, positioning us as a major gateway into Australia.

## Q A lot of hotels have come up in the recent past in Brisbane. What does that indicate?

We have eight new hotels constructed with 15 more to come. The city has been witnessing major developments—the Queens Wharf Development is set to open in 2021 and will have four new five-star hotels, 50 new restaurants, new casino and new amphitheatre, and shopping facilities among other facilities. From there, we have the Howard Smith Wharves Development and other developments which will have major hotels and entertainment areas. With Pullman and ibis having opened last year, Brisbane Airport itself now has three major hotels. 

“ We are certain that we can showcase the best produce of South East Queensland and offer superlative options of the same to our Indian visitors ”

to understand the needs and wants of the Indian traveller. We know that food is very important and so from the restaurant perspective, we are currently planning to expand the international terminal to

curfewed. Also, from a capacity point of view Sydney airport is becoming a terminal and runway constraint during peak hours. So we have the opportunity to bring more capacity directly from India via the big

# Brisbane on a winning wicket

Brisbane Airport Cricket match was recently held at Brisbane Airport International Departures Terminal with **Brett Lee** and **Michael Kasprowicz** participating to stage a world-first match inside an airport terminal. The former Australian players captained two teams comprising senior representatives from Indian and Australian travel industries in a 20-over indoor exhibition-style match.





# Industry insights by trade

Examining the current status of the industry, winners from India Travel Awards and India MiCE Awards share insights on the growth and suggest what more can be done to help the industry develop.



TT Bureau

## ★ Best Global Distribution System — **Travelport Galileo**



“Sandeep Dwivedi, COO, ITQ believes that the Indian travel and tourism industry has seen exponential growth in the recent years offering a large marketplace. “The way digitalisation has transformed this entire sector is commendable. Technological advances have made travellers and travel businesses more connected with each other now. The country is known to be the most digitally-advanced traveller nation as reported by a survey conducted by Travelport. Numerous LCCs, OTAs, TMCs along with government initiatives towards civil aviation have painted a completely different picture of the industry. Keeping the tourist areas clean and green along with being more hospitable to outside travellers would definitely add to the all-round development.”

## ★ Fastest Growing B2B Travel Portal — **JustClickKaro.com**



“According to Navjot Bhasin, Managing Director, JustClickKaro.com, the Indian travel and tourism industry in the online sector is currently regularising itself. He says, “With more cities getting air connectivity under the UDAN scheme, the country is getting more inbound traffic at a rapid pace. I believe that the numbers are going upwards very aggressively. The only thing which we are missing is a platform, which is professionally organised, so that everyone including customers, agents and vendors can work in a better manner. We are looking forward to enhanced cooperation between all the associations.”



## ★ Best European NTO — **VisitBritain**



“Understanding the nerve of the travel and tourism industry in Tier-II markets, Vishal Bhatia, Country Manager—India, Visit Britain briefs about the travel trends prevailing in the smaller cities. “I think, if you look at the market in cities like Nagpur from a consumer point of view, what we are seeing is that the consumers here are getting a lot more confident now, accessing a lot of information on digital platforms nowadays, especially on their mobile phones. So, it’s the mobile first approach we take, when we are communicating with them. People here in the industry are looking at inspiration on vernacular languages. So, we are also talking to the trade press to create the demand from the consumer side,” Bhatia says.”

## ★ Best MiCE Operator — **iCON Planners**



“Ritesh Joshi, Head—Corporate Travel, iCON Planners says that the Indian travel and tourism industry is growing exponentially. “Total contribution by travel and tourism sector to India’s GDP is expected to increase to `32.05 trillion by 2028. MiCE segment is seeing overall surge in inbound as well as outbound market. We are seeing considerable thrust from airlines as well hotel industry specifically for MiCE business. Infrastructure needs to be created at a rapid pace to absorb the growing tourism demand. We need infusion in tourism education and affiliated institutes to churn out able leaders,” he says.”

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# Fly direct from Warsaw to Delhi

Polish flag carrier and member of Star Alliance, LOT Polish Airlines is set to launch a new direct service between Warsaw and New Delhi, commencing September 17, 2019.



Kanchan Nath

The first flight by LOT Polish Airlines will commence on September 17 from Warsaw's Chopin Airport to New Delhi's Terminal 3, with the return flight taking off from New Delhi on September 18. Elaborating on the same, **Michał Fijol**, Chief Commercial Officer and Member of the Board, LOT Polish Airlines said, "After a gap of 25 years, it is great for LOT Polish Airlines to return to the Indian market, which is extremely important and strategic for us. The Indian economy is growing fast, at a pace of more than 7 per cent annually. Furthermore, the Polish economy grew fast in 2018 at 5 per cent per annum. The relationship between both these economies is important and will grow and the direct flight is necessary to develop it even further."

**Warsaw: an aviation hub**  
LOT Polish Airlines has strong long-haul operations in North America. Fijol shared, "We fly to New York JFK as well as Newark Airport, Chicago, Toronto and Los Angeles. We are also starting operations to Miami effective June 1, 2019. Furthermore, we are now enhancing our Asian long-haul operations with flights to Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Singapore, Astana and soon to New Delhi. It's an important market and thus we will start with 5 weekly flights from the beginning. It's a part of the world where we see that the traffic is large and growing because of the economic environment. We will now be connecting two Star Alliance hubs: one in Warsaw—the hub for Central and Eastern Europe as well as for some destinations in Western Europe and the second being New Delhi."



Michał Fijol  
Chief Commercial Officer and Member of the Board, LOT Polish Airlines

## Gateway for transfer passengers

The new route launch features excellent connectivity via Warsaw, starting from 40 minutes connecting time to/from London City airport, Paris, Brussels, Kraków, Geneva, Amsterdam, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, Hanover, Oslo, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Berlin, Billund, Prague and Budapest.



Amit Ray  
Regional Director—India and DACH markets, LOT Polish Airlines

Fijol said, "We are flying many times per day, for instance, to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, five times daily; Prague, five times daily; Budapest, four times daily and Berlin, thrice daily. All Polish domestic airports are served up to eight times daily. The flight between Delhi and Warsaw is not only a direct flight for point-to-point traffic, but it also provides huge

opportunities for transfer passengers to travel further, both within Poland and even further to Central and Eastern Europe."

## Seat-load factor

Over 8.9 million passengers travelled between India and Europe in 2017. On the expected passenger load factor, he said, "We will be deploying the Boeing 787-8 and Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. For long-haul operations, we only operate Dreamliner with a capacity of 252 or 294 seats. We try our best to fill the plane completely. Based on our experience on other long-haul markets, we target a seat-load factor of 85-90 per cent on the India route."

## Star Alliance

Elaborating on benefits of being a Star Alliance member, Amit Ray, Regional Director—

India and DACH markets, LOT Polish Airlines said, "We are a fully integrated partner of the Miles & More frequent flyer programme. For India-based frequent flyers, who hold a frequent flyer card of any Star Alliance member airline including the home carrier Air India, passengers will be able to earn and burn miles on LOT Polish Airlines too."

## Working with the trade

Upon arrival in Warsaw as the first point of entry into the Schengen area, immigration will be conducted here only. "With a minimum connecting time of just 40 minutes, guests can connect to dozens of onward destinations within two hours. With our focus on product and passenger experience, we seek to give Indian guests an option to travel comfortably aboard our flights," Ray concluded.

# TravClan networks in Delhi

B2B travel platform, TravClan recently organised 'Delhi Darbar' for networking and interacting with its trade partners. The company discussed and informed about its new products and offerings for travel agents, DMCs, B2B suppliers and hotels.





# For a greater tourist exchange

The reception of the third meeting of the India-Japan Tourism Council, held in Delhi recently, discussed challenges and measures to expand bilateral tourism exchange between the countries.



Anupriya Bishnoi

The reception of third meeting of the India-Japan Tourism Council, which concluded recently in the capital, was attended by several senior officials from the Indian and Japanese tourism industry. Speaking on the occasion, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, says, "A lot of economic activities transpire between India and Japan but unfortunately that momentum has not been translated into the tourism space. If you look at the numbers, there are about three and a half lakh people travelling between India and Japan. In the last council meeting in Tokyo, we thought we must double the number in three years' time,



that is, take it up to seven lakhs. In this council meeting, we have worked further on this agenda. India and Japan have a shared action plan — 'Matching Action Plan' — which means, we would do a few activities to promote the Japanese visiting India and similarly the Japanese Tourism Organisation undertaking activities to promote Indians visiting Japan."

Talking about ways to upgrade the number, Billa says, "We must enhance the level of activities that we do like Fam tours, getting key influencers, etc to get the numbers growing. We also had an aviation round-table, in which we got all the airlines together, to sit down and talk about how we can enhance the connectivity between both the countries.

Fortunately, ANA plans direct daily on Tokyo-Chennai route from October."

**Atoshi Seino**, President, Japan National Tourism Organisation, considers India as a valuable market but also believes that the number of tourist arrivals from India to Japan is not enough. He says, "Currently, the number of travellers from India to Japan

constitutes less than 1 per cent of the entire international travel we get in Japan. Considering India is such a huge country with 1.3 billion people, I think it's not enough. The reason we have an office in Delhi now is to get a fresh perspective for the kind of demand and travel needs that's generated here and to reflect into what we are offering back in Japan."

Recently, a new tax has been implemented by Japan's Parliament where all travellers leaving Japan will have to pay 1,000-yen 'sayonara tax'. Seino says, "The tax costs around 1,000-yen which is less than \$10. It is a tax that a traveller must pay before leaving Japan. This tax revenue will be utilised, making immigration smoother or getting new technology for facial recognition. We can also use it to improve the language capability on the ground so that foreign tourists can have a seamless experience in Japan."

**Yogendra Tripathi**, Secretary, MOT, thanked representatives of the Government of Japan and other stakeholders for their participation in the meeting.

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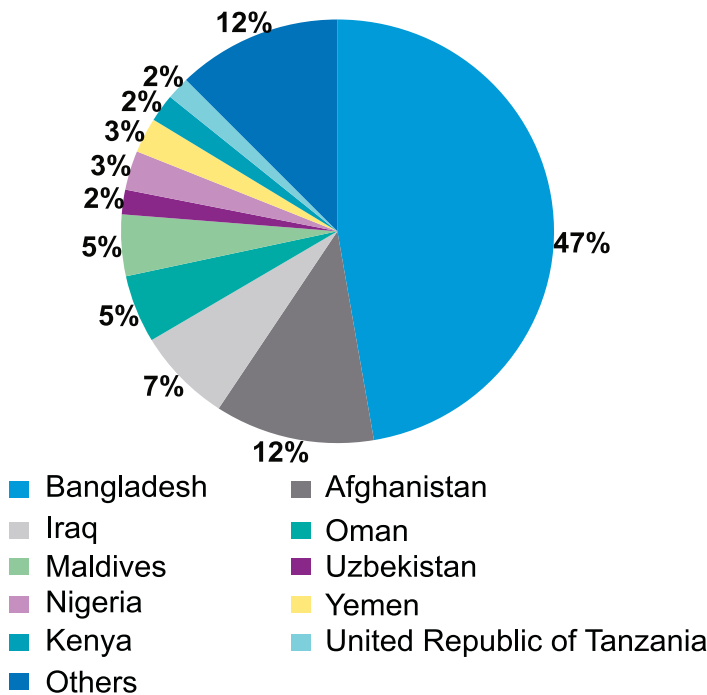
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| Dhaka Travel Mart          | Dhaka       | 21-23 |
| IBTM Arabia                | Abu Dhabi   | 25-27 |

For more information, contact us at: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

B'desh: 45% FTAs on medical visa

Bangladesh alone constituted about 45 per cent of total foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) to India on medical visa in 2017, according to a FICCI study on 'India: Innovating Transforming and Defining Medical Value Travel'.

Cumulative FTAs on medical visa to India 2014-17



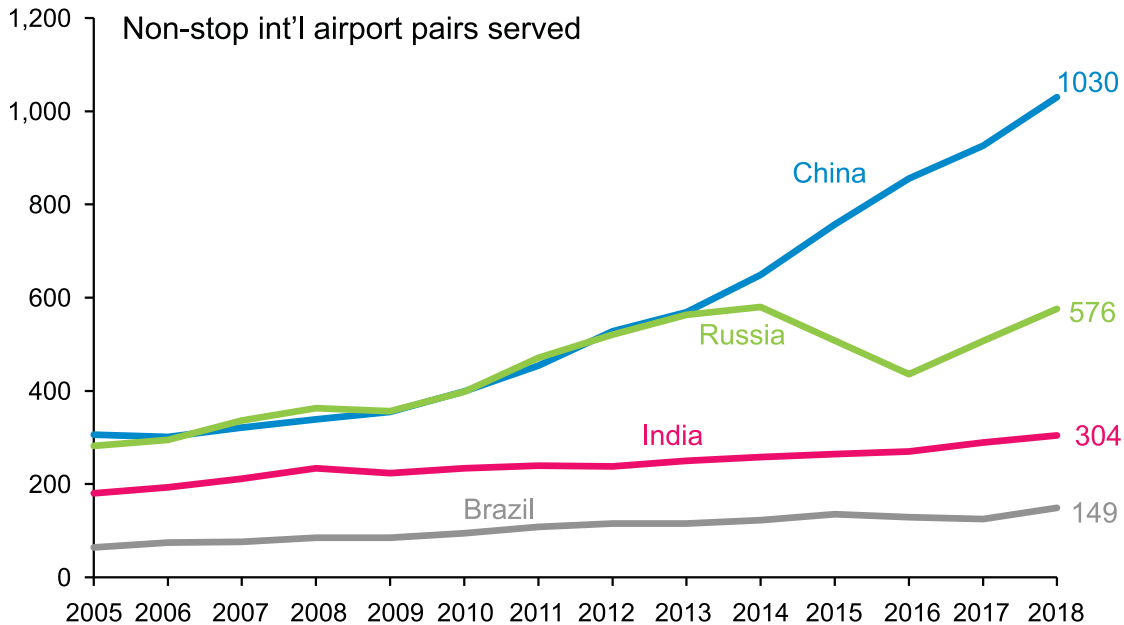
- Bangladesh holds the eighth place among largest population countries in the world. The major destination countries include India, China, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the USA, the UK, Australia, Japan and Germany for treatments including cardiology, oncology, neurology and orthopaedic.
- Majority of deaths in Bangladesh are due to non-communicable diseases out of which cancer has a share of 10 per cent. However, the existing infrastructure caters to approximately 10 per cent of cancer patients with 16 cancer treatment centres in Bangladesh. High costs, poor services, long waiting lists, lack of technology in Bangladesh are the major reasons for medical value travel from Bangladesh.

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2017& EY Analysis

Now fly to more int'l cities

Connecting to more international cities, India has steadily increased the number of overseas city pairs served by a non-stop service from the country over time, according to a recent study by International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Non-stop international city pairs served, selected countries



- There are 304 such international pairs in 2018, up from around 230 ten years ago. In relative terms, the India market appears to have considerably less international city pairs served than either China or Russia. However, Indian travellers have ready access (via the geographic proximity) to the Middle East superconnector hubs – Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha – that China and Russia do not.
- This increases the size of the network significantly for Indian travellers, as well as making India more accessible for international visitors. As such, it may go some way to explaining the relatively lower number of international city pairs for India relative to China and Russia.

Source: IATA, SRS Analyser





LOT Polish Airlines is the Polish flag carrier, and for almost 9 million passengers a year it provides the shortest and most comfortable journey as part of 107 routes all over the world. The Star Alliance member is currently the fastest growing airline in Europe, offering long haul flights exclusively on B787 Dreamliner, connecting passengers seamlessly to business and leisure destinations across Europe and North America.

LOT will start direct flights between New Delhi & Warsaw from September 17, 2019. To help grow its business in India, LOT is looking for:

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## International Air Transport Association (IATA)

### Mumbai



**Ritam Saha** has joined IATA as Manager—India. His current roles and responsibilities would be to oversee Financial & Distribution Services in India, which includes passenger and cargo stakeholder management, governance and credit management. His last assignment was with Qatar Airways as Commercial Manager. Prior to that, he was Area Manager—Sales for Jet Airways. Saha has held key leadership roles at Kingfisher Airlines in India and overseas.

## Hyatt Regency Pune

### Pune

Hyatt Regency Pune has announced the appointment of **Shobhit Sawhney** as its General Manager. He brings with him a deep understanding of the hospitality industry after having worked at different hotels across India and overseas. An alumnus of IHM Mumbai, Sawhney has close to two decades of work experience in the industry. During his tenure, he has worked with brands like the Oberoi Hotels, Hilton and InterContinental Hotels Group. His stint with the Hyatt brand began with Grand Hyatt Mumbai followed by Park Hyatt Goa which was also his last assignment in the same capacity.



## Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach Hotel

### Mumbai

**Nishant Agarwal** is the General Manager of AccorHotels' Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach Hotel. A seasoned hotelier, Agarwal brings 19 years of domain expertise in the hospitality industry. In his role, he will spearhead the operations at the hotel, ensuring its growth and expansion through innovative strategies. With a comprehensive understanding of managing teams across diverse markets, Agarwal's core expertise lies in delivering successful outcomes by empowering effective teams and building efficient processes. Over the course of his career, he worked with leading international hotel brands and gained expertise across various segments.



## Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi

### Pune

Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi announces **Parvez Nisar** as its Hotel Manager. His role as the will be to deliver high levels of customer service and successful positioning of the hotel. He will also be responsible for conceptualising programmes that enhance customer relations, re-align cost management to increase year-on-year profits, staff engagement activities and innovation. An industry veteran with almost 18 years of experience, Nisar has driven the conversion and re-launch of Premier Inn Pune to Fairfield by Marriott Pune Kharadi.



## Sarovar Hotels and Resorts

### Bengaluru

Sarovar Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of **Sheikh Mohd Parvez** as General Manager of Shrivanthi Sarovar Portico, Bengaluru. Parvez brings with him a professional experience of more than 25 years with core expertise in Food and Beverage operations. Prior to this, Parvez has worked with Lily Sarovar Portico, Nashik as General Manager. In the past, he was associated with brands such as Hilton, Grand Hyatt, Le Meridian, Holiday Inn and The Lalit. Parvez holds a B Com degree and two years' Hotel Management diploma from Mumbai.



## The Fern Residency, Bhuj

### Bhuj

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has designated **Rupam Ghosh** as General Manager of The Fern Residency, Bhuj. He holds 15 years of work experience after having worked with Mahindra Holidays & Resorts, Park Plaza Ahmedabad, Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma, Maldives; The Manohar, Hyderabad; Hotel Clarks Shiraz, Agra; Heritage Village, Gurgaon; among others. He has completed his Diploma in Hotel Management from IIAS School of Hotel Management.



## The Fern Sattva Resort, Dwarka

### Dwarka

**Debasish Muduli** joined as General Manager at The Fern Sattva Resort, Dwarka. He has 16 years of work experience having worked with Dukes Retreat, Khandala, Ras Resorts, SILVASSA, Silver Palace Hotel, Rajkot; Hotel Imperial Palace, Rajkot; Cambay Sapphire Hotel, Ahmedabad; Country Inn and Suites by Carlson, Ahmedabad; Park Plaza, Ahmedabad. His Last employment was with The Fern Gir Forest Resort, Sasan Gir. He has completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Accommodation Operations and Management from OIHM, Rourkela, Odisha.



## Radisson Noida Sector 55

### Delhi/NCR

**Kshitij Jawa** has been appointed as the new General Manager of Radisson Noida Sector 55. An accomplished hotelier with 13 years of hospitality experience, Jawa will be responsible for spearheading all the operations at the property. Leading a dynamic team of over 300 associates, Jawa will focus on parameters that drive revenue and profitability and ensure smooth functioning of the business. Prior to joining the Radisson Noida, he was the Executive Assistant Manager at Radisson Blu, Dwarka under whose strong leadership the hotel won the award for the best Associate appreciation week for 2018 in Asia Pacific.



## Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru

### Bengaluru

Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru has announced the appointment of **Tridip Chakraborty** as its new Front Office Manager. Chakraborty is responsible in ensuring check-ins, check-outs, complaints and requests are addressed in real-time and guests are attended to the minute they walk into the lobby. With more than 14 years of experience in the hospitality sector, he brings to the table a strong understanding of maintaining smooth relationships between the management and guests. Prior to joining Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru, Chakraborty was with leading brands such as Royal Orchid Hotels, Park Plaza, Sarovar Hotels and the Zuri Group Global.



## TALKing People

For **Rajeev Kumar**, General Manager, The Fern Kadamba Hotel & SPA, morning workout is a must to begin the day. Apart from it, he likes listening to Bollywood music, watching movies and following cricket. He says, "Being in Goa, there is much to explore with in the state. I prefer to travel to Kerala (Thekkady and Munnar) and enjoy Dubai Safari very much and want to visit Bali shortly. During my free time, I prefer to go through news and new hospitality trends. Besides, I always want to spend quality time with family and friends."



**Devesh Saraf**, Director, Triumph Realty loves going for a recreational jog while listening to his favourite tunes. "The two things that I'm extremely passionate about are sustainable social impact like renewable energy projects, and people and diversity and how different cultures co-exist and understanding different perspectives for exchanging ideas and opinions," he shares. He adds, "One thing that not many people know about me is that I can sail a catamaran in the sea. My favourite holiday destination in India is Goa and outside it is Koh Samui in Thailand."



**Rajan Malhotra**, Director of Sales and Marketing, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, loves spending quality time with his family to de-stress after a hectic day at work. "I am an avid traveller and whenever I get a short break from work, I pack my bag and travel to Goa or Kerala backwaters. London and Singapore tops my list for international travel for their unique landscapes. Movies and cricket both are very close to my heart and I consider both as my best friends. Music is another interest of mine and I love listening to old classical music after work hours," he shares.





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# All belted & on the road

**Puneet Kumar**, Senior Manager, Market Development-India, Hong Kong Tourism Board, is optimistic that the daily direct flights—Indigo from Bengaluru and SpiceJet from Delhi—will help drive growth in arrivals to Hong Kong and rebound their performance.



Peden Doma Bhutia from Hong Kong

## **Q***In what way does Hong Kong International Tourism Convention help to disseminate information to partners?*

The Hong Kong International Tourism Convention was attended by over 1,000 participants including senior government officials, representatives of tourism authorities and trade partners from the nine mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, the Macao Special Administrative Region and many other Mainland provinces, as well as 34 countries, including the Belt and Road countries. The convention provided an interesting opportunity for travel and trade professionals from across the globe to exchange thoughts and opinions on effectively utilising the vast tourism potential of the new initiative and development on the theme 'Leveraging Belt and Road Initiative & Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development'.

## **Q***How do you think will the Belt and Road initiative help develop tourism?*

With this Initiative, Hong Kong is committed to strengthening cooperation with different economies to promote tourism development, be it regionally or internationally. This includes major new operating infrastructures like the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the Express Rail Line. It also includes the enhanced

regional transportation network in Hong Kong. The cities in Greater Bay Area have signed a pact to commit development in four main areas: driving the development of tourism resources in the region for synergy benefits, developing multi-destination tourism products and promotions, holding regular meetings to discuss opportunities for collaboration and enhancing communication by organising visits.

Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area are appealing destinations with rich tourism resources and multi-destination tourism products which attract Indian travellers allowing them to enjoy and experience multiple tourist hotspots in this region with seamless connectivity to travel within the region.

## **Q***Hong Kong has been witnessing a dip in Indian tourist arrivals. At a time when the Indian outbound market is only growing, what is the need of the hour?*

At the beginning of 2017, the Hong Kong immigrations introduced Pre-Arrival Registration (PAR) for Indian nationals and it took few quarters in 2017 for both consumers and trade to adapt to the new requirement. As a result, we registered drop in our India arrivals. With our focused and consistent approach to educate and train India trade about PAR and visa procedures coupled with refreshed marketing partner-

ship, we have started seeing rebound in our performance, as of YTD Nov 2018, arrivals stand at (-2.4 per cent) from India to Hong Kong. We are confident to turn around our market performance with renewed interest in Hong Kong's offerings towards the MICE segment, fly-cruise and leisure travel segment. This will be amplified further with the launch of daily direct flights from two leading Indian low-cost carriers, Indigo from Bengaluru and SpiceJet from Delhi and drive growth in arrivals to Hong Kong.

## **Q***How do you intend to involve B2B partners in your marketing plan?*

The Indian trade market is an important channel that helps to convert the travel demand we create through campaigns. Hence, it is imperative to educate and train them for promoting and selling Hong Kong. HKTb has a knowledge platform PartnerNet for travel agents and operators. Once travel trade members are registered on it, they gain access to research statistics; HKTb's photo library; connect with potential business partners through our database of Hong Kong travel industry. They receive the latest information on promotional events.

An interesting feature is the enrolment for an

online training programme – Hong Kong Specialist – to build knowledge about Hong Kong and facilitate their selling and promotion of the destination. To further engage and appreciate the efforts of Indian trade in promoting and selling Hong Kong, we also launched the Hong Kong Specialist Club and to become its member, the registered travel trade partner will have to successfully complete three online training modules to enjoy exclusive privileges, such as a complimentary experience pack and use the HKS Logo – Promote Your Expertise and Special Trade Offers. 🇭🇰



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