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Can Amazon stir up travel?

Amazon's entrance into the travel space in partnership with Cleartrip has shaken the industry. While many trade associations are focusing on empowering members, others insist on changing the model of working.



Sanjay Narula
Vice President
Travel Agents Association
of India (TAAI)

“We don't see Amazon as any different from other online platforms. It does have a large reach, and I've heard that they intend to come up with offers where they are going to invest more money. At TAAI, we are offering tools to members to deal with the competition. Paytm is in the space already and Amazon intends to introduce value offers in terms of price. However, I believe there is a lot more that goes in serving the customer when it comes to engagement.”



Pradip Lulla
Vice President
Travel Agents Federation of
India (TAFI)

“Amazon as a new entrant would create more competition in the travel industry because it is also offering big discounts in the domestic space. This would disturb the business of the travel trade. However, if they use their deep pockets to create unfair competition, we will write to Amazon telling them not to do it. At the same time, we are empowering our members with Joint Bank Guarantee scheme as well as the newly launched TAFI Connect, which will act as the online B2B platform for our members.”



Homa Mistry
Chief Executive Officer
Trail Blazer Tours India

“Every day, the online business is affecting the regular business. If Amazon comes in, the market will change, especially when they have tied up with Cleartrip. I am sure the new dynamics will happen, but we are lucky in India because it is still a complicated destination and therefore the offline model is still growing at a steady pace year on year. I think everybody shall look at the online space, where bigger players will become bigger, but there is enough space for all.”

Contd on page 8 ▶

Tourism to contribute \$280 bn to GDP

The total contribution of travel and tourism to Indian GDP is forecast to increase by 4.97 per cent per annum to \$280.5 billion by 2026, according to a recent report commissioned by CII and Deloitte.



TT Bureau

India was ranked seventh among 184 countries in

terms of travel & tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2017, according to a report by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Travel and tourism is the third largest

foreign exchange earner for India. During 2018, FEEs from tourism increased 4.70 per cent year-on-year to US\$ 28.59 billion. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) increased

5.20 per cent year-on-year to 10.56 million in the same period. Foreign tourist arrivals for medical purpose increased from 427,014 in 2016 to 495,056 in 2017(P).

During 2018, arrivals through e-tourist visa increased 39.60 per cent year-on-year to 2.37 million. During January 2019, arrivals through e-tourist visa increased by 21.10 per

cent year-on-year to 0.29 million. The launch of several branding and marketing initiatives by the Government of India has provided a focused impetus to growth. ▶



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KLM expands across India

The national flag carrier of The Netherlands is set to expand its Indian network to Bengaluru apart from increasing the flight frequency on Amsterdam-Mumbai route from September 2019.



TT Bureau

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is scheduled to enhance its footprint in the Indian market with a thrice-weekly direct flight from Amsterdam to the Silicon Valley of India by the end of October 2019. The launch of this new flight comes in line with the suspension of Jet Airways' service to the route. The airline will use the Boeing 787-9 (Dreamliner) with a configuration of 30 seats in Business Class, 45 seats in Economy Comfort Class and 219 seats in Economy, seating a total of 294 passengers.

Bengaluru will be the third Indian city to which the airline will fly after Delhi and Mumbai. It is touted to open up more opportunities for

Know your KLM schedule

KLM will add one extra frequency between Amsterdam and Mumbai on Thursdays, starting from September 2, 2019. As of September 3, 2019, KLM will add another frequency on Wednesdays, making a total of five flights per week. All additional flights will be operated by a Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Flight KL 877 will depart from Amsterdam at 12:15 hours and arrive in Mumbai at 00:05 +1 local time. The flight KL 878 will leave Mumbai at 02:20 hours local time and land in Amsterdam at 08:00 hours.

travel between Amsterdam and India. In doing so, KLM will be offering additional connections between the United States and India via its Amsterdam hub.

It was in 2017 that Jet Airways made Amsterdam its hub and launched its flight on the route in cooperation with Air France-KLM and the latter's US partner, Delta Air Lines. KLM has reportedly said that post Jet's suspen-

sion of international flights in April, the carrier has decided to increase its capacity to India in order to be able to offer 'alternatives to its customers and to continue to meet market demand.'

Effectively October 28, 2019, KLM will offer flights between Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and Bengaluru on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Flight KL 0879 will depart from Schiphol at 11:05 hours and

arrive at 00:50 +1 hours local time at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. Subsequently, flight KL 0880 will depart from Bengaluru at 02:45 hours local time and will arrive the following day at 08:25 hours at Schiphol. Meanwhile, KLM has also decided to provisionally suspend its direct connection to Colombo, Sri Lanka with effect from the end of October 2019.



Tourism Breaking News

Indian arrivals in The Netherlands up by 22% during January-February



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TRAVELTALK

VIEWPOINT

Amazon: Threat or boon?

Amazon.com has now become the latest online player to enter the air ticket selling business along with Cleartrip and India will be the first country for the e-commerce giant's foray into this business. For the travel trade, it's another case of rate disparity as, to begin with Amazon is offering a discount which would certainly entice consumers to book with them. Now the question arising is how travel agents in India will deal with this situation.

While the US travel industry successfully prevented Google from selling tickets by taking a legal recourse, how will the Indian travel agents cope with this situation? Since Cleartrip is involved with Amazon, it might not be too easy to dismiss this, especially when other players like Paytm are already working in the travel segment. What needs to be done by agents instead is to change their game plan and work towards their strengths and products to offer specialised experiences. So, will the trade come up with ways to work with such OTAs and gain profit or fight them to make it a level-playing field?

Indian aviation takes a dive with Jet

The domestic aviation market in India has been in the world's eye for the longest time, recording an unprecedented growth in the last many years. However, domestic air traffic fell for the first time in six years this April, right when Jet Airways grounded its operations. DGCA's data revealed that 11.3 million passengers flew on Indian carriers domestically this April, which was down from 11.5 million in April last year. Last time when such a scenario happened was in 2013 when Kingfisher was grounded. In fact, close to 40 airlines worldwide shut shop in 2018. As the oldest private airline in India, Jet Airways offered various connections across the country. Today, IndiGo controls majority of domestic aviation market, followed by SpiceJet and Air India, after these airlines filled Jet's slots. With talks over Jet reviving, we can only hope that Indian aviation brings back its lustre.

New era for Indian cruising?

The potential of the local Indian cruise industry has been discussed at length. **Peter Kollar**, Head of International Training & Development, Cruise Lines International Association, identifies the spectacular coastline India possesses that could be promoted to the adventurous Indian.

While actual figures of Indian cruise passengers have risen over the past three years, the scale at which this has occurred has been a little askew mainly due to a low base point – in 2017, a total of 172,400 cruise passengers came from India, while in a recent Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) report, new consolidated figures show that 220,900 Indians cruised in 2018, up a very strong 28.1 per cent.

Typical Indian cruise passengers

CLIA's report states that 80 per cent of Indians cruise in Asia (up 4.7 per cent), with a considerable fly-cruise market out of Singapore. Further afield, 8.4 per cent are sailing in Europe, while 9 per cent are cruising to the Americas with the strong allure of Alaska, Caribbean and South America.

One of the remarkable figures for India over the past few years is the average age of these passengers. Overall, India boasts one of the youngest markets in the world, with the average age of an ocean cruise passenger being 37 years old. This figure is one that the local industry is well-placed to capitalise on as it allows time for continued exposure of cruising to the Indian public.

Though further afield locations may have a slighter higher average age bracket (such as 43 years of age in the Caribbean, 49 in Alaska and 39 in the Mediterranean), these are still relatively younger than other markets visiting the same regions. The Indian average ages haven't changed too much over the last three years, meaning if you are selling cruises, you really need to keep your target market open to a range of people – especially families. Though the

most popular time for Indians to take an ocean cruise.

The larger picture

Of the 4.24 million Asians who took a cruise in 2018, India remains the sixth-largest source market in the region, grabbing a slightly higher share with 5.2 per cent of the total market (however the higher slice of the pie may well be due to the lower contribution from Mainland China in 2018.) With all these statistics presented and understanding that it is still

determined whether the new operation of Jalesh Cruises will be included in the future figures of the CLIA report, the fact that a domestic cruise line is bringing awareness to the public and experienced by the locals, is a positive for greater emergence of the market.

As stronger numbers sourced from this region will advance, more international cruise lines will take notice and consider placing more vessels locally – purely because the market will be maturing and yields are likelier to be met. With the operations of Jalesh Cruises finally a reality, the possibility of a new era of cruising in India is finally here.

“Of the 4.24 million Asians who took a cruise in 2018, India remains the sixth-largest source market in the region”

age ranges haven't changed for children aged 12 years or younger that took a cruise, the largest increase in 2018 was families with teenagers.

a new market therefore jumps in figures are expected, is this potential of a new era of cruising a reality?

The real exciting aspect of these numbers is that India has reached these figures without a true domestic cruise line – until now. With Jalesh Cruises now operating in the region, along with the tremendous work they have done to tweak their first new ship Karnika specifically towards Indian tastes, the country is now on the verge of becoming a serious source market of global cruising. While it is yet to be

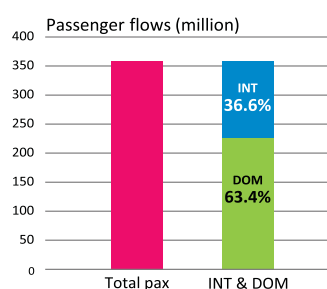
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Peter Kollar
Head of International Training & Development, Cruise Lines International Association

Domestic passengers on the rise

Expected increase in Indian air passenger demand 2017-37, and DOM vs INT contributions



Domestic passengers will account for around 63 per cent of the total growth by 2037, or 228 million additional passengers, as per a recent 'Project Rupee Raftaar' report by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Foreign passengers will contribute less to overall growth, representing 37 per cent of the total market growth, equal to 131 million additional passengers.

Of the 6.1 per cent average annual growth in Indian air passenger demand over the next 20 years, improvements in living standards (via higher incomes) are expected to contribute the major share, at 5.1 percentage points. Favourable population and demographic factors are forecast to contribute 0.6 percentage points to annual growth. Other factors, mainly future technological gains, will contribute 0.8 percentage points per year to the economy.

Source: IATA/TE

'1000 Indian restaurants in Germany'

Germany Travel Mart (GTM) 2019 attracted around 15 tour operators from India and discussed key challenges for the tourism industry within international competition.



Kalpana Lohumi from Wiesbaden

The 45th Germany Travel Mart (GTM) witnessed more than 500 experts from the international travel industry. The official opening of GTM was held in Kurhaus, Wiesbaden while the two-day workshop took place at the RheinMain CongressCenter. Drawing a parallel from the past, **Petra Hedorfer**, CEO, German National Tourist Board, said, "The first GTM in Wiesbaden took place in 1977 attended by only

by 2030. Our goal is to capture the Tier-II, III cities and educate the travel trade about what Germany has to offer as a destination."

Talking about the challenges, he added, "We want to change the

perception of Germany among Indians. We have 1,000 Indian restaurants in the country to cater to the demand of food products to the local and the Indian client. We are providing the most affordable hospitality as compared to our neighbours and attractions which are available at a lower cost."

"We are looking to promote Germany as a leisure destination and for that we are looking at our new segment of Bollywood Tourism. Wedding is another segment where we are looking at as Germany has many venues to offer that can cater to their needs," he added.

Commenting on what GTM 2019 has offered to the German market, Theophilus shared, "The need of the hour for the travel agent is to move away with the traditional itinerary and look forward to selling some offbeat destinations which have potential to generate more revenues."



Petra Hedorfer
Chief Executive Officer
German National Tourist Board



Romit Theophilus
Director—Sales & Marketing
German National Tourist Office, India

100 people while the presence of 1,000 visitors at this year's GTM shows how strongly the business is growing."

Around 300 suppliers representing the hotel industry, incoming agencies, transport and local and regional tourism organisations showcased the quality of their services to an international audience of experts. Approximately 18,000 appointments were arranged online in the networking tool.

Hedorfer explained, "Digitalisation, sustainability as well as the appropriate development of infrastructure are key challenges for the tourism industry within the international competition. Destination Germany is excellently positioned regarding these challenges. GTM is an excellent platform to place our offer before the international travel industry and further expand the success of the German incoming tourism."

Romit Theophilus, Director—Sales & Marketing, German National Tourist Office, India, said, "India is one of the leading overseas markets in the country. We are getting close to 1 million overnights and we want to double that figure to 2 million overnights in the country

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Tourism Breaking News

■ Meenakshi Sharma is the new Director General (Tourism)

■ 10 per cent increase in Indian tourist arrivals to the Philippines in Q1

■ 220,900 Indians cruised in 2018, registering a growth of 28.1%: CLIA

■ AirAsia India to fly international by October starting with Bangkok & Kuala Lumpur

■ Incredible India Roadshows in USA, Canada and Africa in June and July 2019

■ Goldstone Hotels & Resorts expands portfolio in Dhanaulti, Uttarakhand

For more news, log on to:
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Changing dynamics in travel

► Contd from page 3



Tejbir Singh Anand
Vice President
Adventure Tour Operators
Association of India
(ATOAI)

“Cleartrip gets strengthened by leaps and bounds with Amazon joining in, not only by technology but by the depth that Amazon offers. Today travel agents should be wise enough to understand that they can’t do what a big OTA is doing, and hence use technology to their advantage”



Jyoti Mayal
Honorary Secretary
Travel Agents Association
of India (TAAI)

is no way we can stop that. TAAI connect plays an important role by acting as the perfect B2B platform for members to work with each other.”

“With Amazon entering the travel space, the dynamics will change, depending on the price they offer in the market. Their entry would even give a tough time to the existing OTAs. Google came individually as an internet giant and Amazon will be funding Cleartrip and there



Rajan Sehgal
Managing Committee
Member, Travel Agents
Association of India (TAAI)

“Right from airlines, hotels and even car rental companies have taken the online route, and this has affected the offline travel agent market. Companies like Amazon come with a big bang since they know the potential of the Indian market. When there were six to seven consolidators in India, the entry of OTAs almost killed the medium size agents by doing their own ticketing, and with two more OTAs coming, such offline agencies vanished completely.”

Inputs by Nisha Verma

Tourism institute gets global recognition



‘Food Savors’ representing National Institute for Tourism and Hospitality Management, Hyderabad, bagged Pacific Asia Travel Association’s (PATA) BUFFET for Youth Challenge for their impact in reducing food waste on campus. The challenge was implemented as part of PATA’s efforts in addressing food waste in the tourism and hospitality industry through BUFFET (Building an Understanding For Food Excess in Tourism) initiative.

Strengthen Indian links

With a 32% increase in visitation, India has proven to be one of Washington DC’s most successful growth markets, ranking fourth globally.

Manas Dwivedi

Destination DC, the official destination marketing organisation for Washington DC, organised a three-city sales mission in Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Delhi. Connecting with over 300 travel partners in the cities, the organisation shared plans to promote the new tourism developments and unique offerings of the district. The National Cherry Blossom Festival (held from March 20 – April 14) was the theme of the sales mission.

“With a 32 per cent increase in visitation, India has proven to be one of our most successful growth markets, ranking fourth globally. Through this roadshow, we aim to establish strong partnerships and continue to market both key attractions in the city and dynamic neighbourhoods that reflect the ‘DC Cool’ brand,” said Elliott L Ferguson II, President and CEO, Destination DC.



Elliott L Ferguson II
President and CEO
Destination DC

“As we look at the importance of coming into the Indian market, we enjoy being here and engaging in business. We have been seeing staggering growth in the number of visitors from India in the last few years. The diversity of Washington DC as a destination coupled with the free-of-cost activities visitors can do in the city and Air India’s non-stop flight surely make us attractive for Indian travellers,” he further said.

In 2017, Washington DC welcomed 135,000 visitors making India as the fourth largest overseas market for the destination. From 2015 to 2017, visitation to DC increased by 67 per cent. The destination in total welcomed 22.8 million visitors in 2017 from around the world registering a growth of 3.6 per cent.

On strengthening ties with the Indian travel trade, Ferguson commented, “Air India is a very important partner with three weekly flights to Washington DC. We are strengthening our relationships in terms of travelling to the US from cities like Delhi and other parts of India with non-stop flights. We endeavour to familiarise tour operators about the range of experiences Washington DC offers to travellers. From next year onwards, our new train system will operate from Dallas International Airport to the city.”

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Agents' business is key

Eyes set on \$60mn in 2019

Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore is looking at increasing the contribution of travel agents towards the hotel business from 5 per cent to 15 per cent.

TT Bureau

With 182 rooms on offer, and that too the largest in the city, Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Banagalore offers the best in hospitality with plush interiors and luxurious amenities, including swimming pool, award-winning Sohum Spa, open spaces, lawns, rooftop coffee shop, bar and an open air street food restaurant.

"We are one of the most expansive properties located in proximity to the airport and business-tech parks. Guests can enrol for 'I Prefer' – our loyalty programme and have access to great stays in the



Akash Gupta
General Manager
Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore

choicest of independent brand hotels across the globe who are part of Preferred Hotels & Resorts. We have excellent MICE facilities to host events and conferences with over 25,000 sq feet area and a dedicated entrance for the events floor," shared Gupta.

With so many hotels in Bengaluru, creating a niche is difficult. Gupta commented, "As a home-grown brand with our take-over of this hotel,

we have started a strategic, sustained brand development campaign which will unfold over the next 15-18 months. We have signed up with Preferred Hotels & Resorts to have international representation in global markets. We are competent, focused and professional in our approach to launch a new brand in Bengaluru."

With regards to engaging with travel agents, Gupta shares that the hotel team has a sales Blitz calendar planned for the entire year. "This includes meeting with travel agents in Delhi, Mumbai and other feeder markets like Kochi. Travel agents make for 5 per cent chunk of total business and the hotel team is working on changing it to a modest 15 per cent. We also have familiarisation trips planned this year for key agents all over India," he said.

TT Bureau

Kehar Travel Ventures closed last year at US\$20 million, purely on online travel platforms by achieving a remarkable response from the B2B market, claims Rajan Kehar, Managing Director, Hotelexpertz.com. "Kehar Travel Ventures has a portfolio of online systems, namely, www.hotelexpertz.com, www.faretripbox.com and www.travelarmour.com, which have captured a good and quality market share," he claimed.

Kehar insisted that the aim is to offer the best in service and business to their clients. "Being new to the market, we want to do something new for our clients — be it the launch of our air ticket portal or our travel Insurance portal," he informed.



Rajan Kehar
Managing Director
Hotelexpertz.com

The company expects good growth this year. Kehar asserted, "With India's travel spends expected to grow at 13 per cent to \$136 billion by 2021, we will be looking for a tremendous growth in our business portfolio. We are expecting multiple growth as well as targeting US\$60 million business by end of 2019."

He believes that technology plays an integral role in their business. Kehar agrees,

saying, "Technology plays a tremendous part in creating innovations in the products. We are coming up with our new version of www.hotelexpertz.com V.3. We emphasise on the new technology platform with a new look of our website to prepayments modules to book for our travel partners. But we strongly believe that our contribution, dedication and involvement always make us stand out from our peers."

In terms of promotions and strategic planning, Hotelexpertz.com plans to focus on all the major Tier-II, III markets. "We are aggressively focusing to create new business and setting eyes on Indian hotel inventories whilst aiming for all major destinations in India for the summers. Our new version will be having all the contracted inventories in our system," he informed.

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SA e-visa policy to catapult arrivals

South African Tourism has set an ambitious target to bring in a world-class e-visa system in the coming months, and India will be among the top three nations it will be extended to. A timely and extensive e-visa regime awaits.



Tripti Mehta from Durban

Annually hosted by South African Tourism, Africa's Travel Indaba is considered as one of the biggest tourism events of the continent. This year's event in Durban was attended by over 1500 buyers from 88 countries. Speaking on the occasion, **Derek Hanekom**, Minister of Tourism, Government of South Africa, at Indaba 2019 said, "Africa's Travel Indaba has become synonymous with storytelling. This continent is teeming with stories and folklore which are woven into all the products and experiences that are showcased here. In 2018, Africa reached 67 million international tourist arrivals, a growth of seven per cent over 2017."

India, a key market

When asked to comment on where India stood as a source market for South Africa,



Derek Hanekom
Minister of Tourism
Government of South Africa

Hanekom said, "India has been competing neck-to-neck with China in terms of tourist arrivals from our top 10 source markets. We currently stand at 98,000 tourists from India, which can be increased tremendously over the next five years." The minister also said that though India does not have the number of outbound tourists that China does, if steps are taken in the right direction, India will surpass China in terms of growth in

arrivals in South Africa. "What plays to India's advantage," said Hanekom, "is that firstly, there are no language barriers between India and South Africa. Secondly, there isn't much difference in time zones and thirdly, culturally, Indians feel quite at home in South Africa."

Feasible targets

Hanekom explained that if, by 2020, India were to grow to

far-fetched target, Hanekom commented that two significant changes that would make this possible would be to make it easier for Indians - to get a South African visa and resume the direct flight between Mumbai and Johannesburg.

Bringing in the e-visa

South Africa's focus for countries across the world has been to make it easier for their

country needs a visa, we don't see a reason for us to not waive it. But, this has to be a political decision," he said. "Secondly," the Minister continued, "assuming that the conclusion may be that certain countries do need a visa, we will make it easier for them to obtain it. So, the first step would be to migrate to an e-visa system."

Hanekom informed that India would be among the top three nations that the e-visa regime will be extended to, the other two being China and Nigeria. However, migrating to a full and extensive e-visa system is a time-consuming process, and South African Tourism already has a plan in place to make the most of the interim period. Highlighting a key aspect of

the strategy, Hanekom said, "To make it easier to travel to South Africa, we would give recognition to a still-valid visa for the UK and USA, and also the Schengen visa. Almost all the travellers coming to South Africa would have one of those visas in their passport, and this measure would immediately make a huge difference and eliminate some of the issues of visa processing for India, China, and Nigeria."

Growth

The growth in leisure tourists to South Africa has been slow over the past couple of years, with a number of factors such as the Cape Town drought of 2018 contributing to the sluggish pace, informed Hanekom.

“India has been competing neck-to-neck with China in terms of tourist arrivals from our top 10 source markets. We currently stand at 98,000 tourists from India, which can be increased tremendously soon”

30 million outbound travellers, South Africa would need only one out of every 100 of these travellers to visit the nation to take the number of arrivals from India to 300,000. Not a

citizens to visit. "The first thing that we need to do is to re-examine which countries need a visa and why they need it. If the security apparatus isn't able to convince us why a certain

The South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, visited Africa's Travel Indaba, where he reiterated the government's commitment to overhaul the visa process and introduce a world-class e-visa system.

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Urge to protect tourism assets

The PATA Annual Summit 2019 opened in Cebu, Philippines, on the theme ‘Progress with a Purpose’. The event highlighted the fundamental challenges and opportunities of the travel and tourism industry.

 **Seema Datt**

Hosted by Department of Tourism, Philippines, PATA Annual Summit (PAS) 2019 included the association’s executive and advisory board meetings, annual general meeting (AGM), PATA Youth Symposium, PATA Insights Lounge, the UNWTO/PATA Leaders Debate and a one-day conference. 383 delegates from 194 organisations and 43 destinations attended the four-day event. Delegates also included local and international students, as well as student chapter representatives, from 21 educational institutions hailing from 18 destinations.

“The need for demonstrated leadership in the travel and tourism industry has never been more critical. As an industry, we are grappling with large scale global and regional challenges including climate change, overtourism and the resulting strain on infrastructure, as well as social and economic inequality in many destinations, which will require a new type of leadership from truly progressive entities,” said **Dr Mario Hardy**, CEO, PATA. “This year’s Summit not only examined the issues and challenges affecting our industry but also challenged our delegates to take action and address these problems directly,” he said.

The conference featured opinion leaders from both public and private sectors, including the co-founder of Airbnb and leaders of five tourism boards worldwide, among many other influencers in the travel and tourism industry within Asia Pacific and beyond. Delegates also heard from a diverse line-up of international thought leaders and industry shapers on various topics including ‘The Current and Future State of Travel and Tourism in Asia Pacific’, ‘Navigating the Numbers’, ‘Travelling the Unknown to Find Yourself’, ‘Destination Management in Times of Uncertainty’, ‘Mainstreaming Sustainable Tourism’, ‘The Power of Data and Insights for Responsible Development’, ‘Accessible Tourism for All’, and ‘The Future of Sustainable Destination Branding’.

For the closing keynote, Maja Pak, Director General, Slovenian Tourist Board shares Slovenia’s national model for sustainability and how they have incorporated it into their branding and marketing activities, highlighting how DMOs and their market partners can better align their positioning along sustainable

dimensions while maintaining distinctiveness.

The event’s many hosted social functions included Reception and Dinner hosted by the Beijing Municipal Culture and Tourism Bureau. The Beijing delegation was led by Zhang Hongyi, Associate Consultant

of Legislative Affairs Division to promote Beijing’s 144-hour transit visa-free, departure tax rebate and MICE potential. PATA is set to organise the PATA Annual Summit 2020 from May 15-18 in Ras Al Khaimah, one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).




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IGH on expansion spree

With a current portfolio of 19 hotels in India under 'ibis' brand, InterGlobe Hotels is set to come up with another six in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Thane and Goa.

Manas Dwivedi

Headed on an aggressive growth path, InterGlobe Hotels (IGH) is growing at the rate of more than 20 per cent. "We have been adding capacity at the rate of almost 27 per cent at a CAGR rate. We now have 18 ibis hotels in India and if we look at the entire InterGlobe group along with our joint venture partners, we have almost 24 hotels now up and running. We have got another six hotels in the pipeline and we are looking at more acquisitions," informed **JB Singh**, President and CEO, InterGlobe Hotels.

For 2019, Singh shared that there might not be any openings on the ownership front but new hotels will be introduced from the joint venture. "2019 is a big year for us; we are planning new designs and revisiting



JB Singh
President and CEO
InterGlobe Hotels

our entire model. This year will feature a lot of planning along with the start of new projects, one in Goa and another one in Pune. We have got two sites running in Bengaluru, one in Thane while another two are under construction in Mumbai," he revealed.

Singh feels the need to create a robust dialogue on sustainability between the industry and the government. "All the industry stakeholders should

extend dialogues and must be able to hold each other accountable. We cannot have a situation where the industry demands investments but with a lack of accountability by stakeholders. We must get proactive by initiating discussions with financial institutions and governments," he mentioned.

Elaborating on the current scenario of the Indian hospitality industry, Singh said that the industry is currently on an upswing. He explained, "The increasing demand and prevalence of better rates come from the growth in the aviation sector that is further creating mobility. There has been a slowdown in supply because of lagging investments. The government needs to create demand drivers to boost the industry and focus on robust infrastructure in rail and road transport." ✈

A summer welcome

With three new hotels in the pipeline and an overwhelming response for the inbound season, WelcomHeritage gears up to attract domestic travellers in the summer.

TT Bureau

For **Sanjeev K Nayar**, MIH, General Manager, WelcomHeritage (WH), the current focus is the launch of the group's three new properties. "We will be launching Tadoba Vanyavillas Resort & Spa in the forest reserve of Tadoba near Nagpur, Badi Kothi in Prayagraj and Inderpura Resort in Udaipurwati, Shekhawati region of Rajasthan. We are hopeful that these will be flagged in the coming months. The nature resort in Tadoba will be our first property in the state of Maharashtra and we are quite upbeat about it," he said.

With the summer season in full swing, WelcomHeritage is witnessing great response from the domestic market. "Friends and families love to spend time together during summers. Till now, the summer season has



Sanjeev K Nayar
MIH, General Manager
WelcomHeritage

been really rewarding and we have had many sold-out nights, especially in our hill properties. We expect the number of domestic guests to increase since the summer vacations have just begun," claimed Nayar.

In fact, he shared details about the special summer package they have curated for guests to book WH hotels at special tariffs. "We run special monthly promotions through social media and email marketing,

specific to some property or destination. Apart from that, we also run a loyalty programme under which we provide discounts to our membership holders for guests to feel connected to us," he revealed.

With regards to the inbound market, Nayar said, "Inbound response always gets better for us with every year. Due to this new trend of getting more than just a hotel in your travel, we have guests who seek something different, and this is what our USP is. We provide a 'Unique Experience'. Guests can experience the architecture of a 200-year-old palace, take a walk amidst lush green gardens, enjoy a view of waterfall or enjoy a stroll on the hills of the Himalayas. So, be it the digitisation or word of mouth, our inbound response is increasing at a reasonably good rate." ✈

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Under starry nights in Jaipur

Mercury – A Luxury Initiative of Ebix Cash organised an evening of cocktails and dinner for the trade in Jaipur on the occasion of its 70th anniversary. Leading travel agents and tour operators networked, interacted and made merry.





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Kerala as global tourism destination

Kerala Tourism's latest brand campaign, 'Human by Nature', aims to further firm up Kerala's position in the itinerary of international travellers as one of the most fancied global destinations.



TT Bureau

'Human by Nature' encapsulates the Kerala's spectacular charm in dramatic visuals and offers refreshing insights into the interconnectedness of its people and the bountiful nature, has received wide acclaim in international markets. The three-minute destination campaign film, part of a marketing blitzkrieg to refurbish Kerala's tourist appeal beyond the Indian shores, depicts authentic human stories that travellers rummage through this land for a liberating experience.

The global brand campaign, recently launched by Kerala Tourism Minister **Kadakampally Surendran** in New Delhi, packs soul-stirring images of the state where life moves at a leisurely pace in tranquil environs, where culture flourishes in syncretic traditions, where tradition complements modernity in the context of everyday life, all strung together in a visual tapestry. In essence, 'Human by Nature' presents Kerala as 'the courtyard of the world', where no one is an outsider, not even the traveller; where the land and the people create a fabric of tolerance and interconnectedness.

Describing the latest campaign as a powerful multi-media outreach, Surendran said, "I am sure it will strike an emotive chord with travellers and position Kerala as an essential fixture on the international travel circuit. It will appeal to both high spenders and backpackers. Tourism is a major contributor to Kerala's economy. The increase in footfalls can have transformative effect on the lives of our people," he added.

The film, which was shown as part of Kerala Tourism's road-show in the American cities of New Jersey, Chicago, Houston and Los Angeles, drew an enthusiastic response. The film was shot in Kumarakom, Alappuzha, Arthungal, Chellanam, Fort Kochi, Munambam, Wayanad, Kannur and Thaliparambu. The 360-degree integrated campaign also has a strong print component, and it was shot by the renowned



New York-based Canadian photographer Joey L, who is known

for his work that straddles the worlds of photojournalism and commercial photography. The campaign would run in Kerala Tourism's key markets such as the USA, the UK, Gulf countries, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium.



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OYO engages with partners

In an endeavour to further improve relationships with asset owners and support growth, OYO has launched OYO Partner Engagement Network (OPEN).



Kanchan Nath

OYO claims that it is the sixth largest hotel company in the world and the largest hotel brand in the world already. Elaborating on the growth and promise of the brand, **Aditya Ghosh**, CEO—India & South Asia, OYO says, "We have been able to create quality living spaces, using cost efficiency in the sub 100 room category using technology. For our customers, we have given access at a fantastically different price point. Today there are 176,000 OYO rooms in India and 322,000 OYO rooms in China. OYO rooms are now present in 10 countries. Currently, we are operating in 259+ cities in India, even though we are not five years old yet. 93 per cent of our business comes from repeat customers. One out of six asset owners has more than one asset with OYO. In March



Aditya Ghosh
CEO—India & South Asia
OYO

alone, we added 60,000 rooms across the world."

The launch of OPEN lays the foundations of a structured way of exchanging ideas, further engaging with partners, supporting in growth, recognising partners and building the core spirit of entrepreneurship. Ghosh explained, "We are making six promises to our asset owners with OPEN. These include transparent payment protocols where asset

owners will receive 18 per cent interest on delayed payments and resolution for exceptions will be done before the due date. Financing support entails partners looking to make improvements through banks and other financial institutions with which it has forged partnerships. OYO has launched a central response hotline for multiple touch points to connect. This channel is in addition to existing access to the on-ground teams to address all queries. Further, OYO's technology capabilities are geared towards helping asset owners stay ahead of the curve with leading technology solutions such as OYO OS, property management system and other technology-led interventions. OYO shall provide asset owners prominence and assistance in leveraging various marketing channels including content and design support." 📌

Eyes on Indian market

Ariyana Tourism Complex Danang has signed on IRIS Reps India Company in a bid to expand its network and connect with the growing Indian market.



TT Bureau

Ariyana Tourism Complex Danang, comprising Furama Resort and Villas, Ariyana Convention Centre and Ariyana Beach Resort & Suites Danang, has recently signed on IRIS Reps India Company in a bid to expand its network and connect with the growing Indian market. This move also aims to attract more visitors from India, which is regarded as a market with great potential.

Headed by **Sumit Banerji**, Director, IRIS Reps India Company will collaborate to promote the Ariyana Tourism Complex. It will be providing administrative and sales support, professional services regarding distribution channels, marketing plans as well as acting as Ariyana Tourism Complex's representatives in India.

Nguyen Duc Quynh, Deputy General Director, Ariyana Tourism Complex, opined, "We have been conducting

Danang have also taken part in key activities to promote Vietnam and Danang tourism in the Indian market, includ-



market research and making business plans in order to approach the Indian market. So, having an official representative office in India is inevitable and an essential step to build awareness about us in the Indian market. Ariyana Tourism Complex and Furama Resort

ing our participation in the international travel and tourism trade shows like SATTE 2018, hosting FAM trips from India, organising the 'Indian Cuisine Week' as well as Vietnamese culinary exchanges at Cilantro Restaurant in the luxurious Trident Hotel in Gurgaon." 📌

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Time for providential Provence

There is no better time than now for tour operators to explore newer aspects of France. Provence, Alpes and Cote D'Azur have shown that they can have wide appeal for the Indian outbound.



Manish Kriplani
Chief Executive Officer
Baywatch Travels (Chennai)

“I had a packed day with 25-28 meetings in a day, meeting people from the Alps region and mountain resorts. Skiing and winter destinations are becoming popular in South India. So far, it's only been Paris and the immediate surrounds. But I see huge potential in places like Briançon which is up in the Alps. I'm already creating itineraries in my mind and will soon start selling this. It is beautiful and the hotels are affordable.”



Ashutosh Mehre
COO – Alliances
Cox & Kings (Mumbai)

“Rendezvous en France allows us to interact with partners beyond Paris. Most of the time, the Indian outbound traveller is exposed only to Paris. It's not only about various geographical regions of France but also experiences it has to offer – wine regions, old towns, skiing. We are marketing Chamonix since the last 10 years and now we want to focus on segments like culinary, shopping, wine.”



Bilkish Tejani
Owner
Equino Fun Holidays
(Mumbai)

“This is a great platform to meet the actual people who are servicing programmes for your clients. You get to meet the people who are at the end of the chain face-to-face – they are the end-provider of services. While we are already doing Paris, Nice, Monte Carlo, and Bordeaux, and have also included Chamonix and Champagne region, clients are still doing day trips based in Paris.”



Neena Parikh
Director
Uniglobe (Ahmedabad)

“I have met some of the regional tourism boards, DMCs and hoteliers and combined with the FAM, it has given me an insight into the various aspects of France. Now I have a few new regions with new ways of promoting the same. Most of my clients are very evolved. I visited Nancy which has great architecture so we could do a group of architects, or tours for architect students, or even Rouen.”



Aman Sharma
Manager – Operations &
Sales Support, The Intrepid
Club, (New Delhi)

“We like to incorporate interesting experiences in the itinerary rather than add touristy things. I met interesting companies and activities such as perfume and chocolate factory visits, cheese-making, etc. which are great for FITs and families. I interacted with Champagne region which is also my post-tour destination. We already work with hotels so the main focus was on experiences and activities.”



Aayushi Yallapurkar
Director
Honeymoon Havens
(Bengaluru)

“I learned a lot about France here, met some of the tourism boards, hotels, ski resorts, and vineyards, and explored new places in France we didn't know about. For instance, we visited a city between Bordeaux and Paris, which would fit well with our itineraries that we make for couples. We usually do a combination of Paris, French Riviera and Bordeaux but now we can include this city too.”

Inputs by Hazel Jain from Marseilles

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A plastic-free resort in Ooty

Glyngarth Resort Ooty is on its way to become another success story. Promoted by Terra Tales, this brand-new, modern resort is earth-friendly and completely free of plastic.



TT Bureau

Shahid Sait, who converted the British Raj time structure called 'Glyngarth Villa' in Ooty into a boutique resort called Glyngarth Resort Ooty is heading towards making another success story. Promoted by Terra Tales in India, Glyngarth Resort Ooty is located on the ninth hairpin bend coming up to Ooty. It is a brand-new, modern resort where sustainable hospitality is the buzzword of its young owner, Sait.

There is no plastic found anywhere on his resort and drinking water, supplied to the rooms, is served in recyclable glass bottles. In fact, when the resort was being built, the architects built the entire structure on the natural geographic contour lines of the land. That means much less disturbance of the five-acre property, which curves and lends itself to the lie of the land.

Resort owner Sait makes a concerted effort to avoid plastic — no stirrers, no cling film, right down to no plastic shower caps. The resort was clear about its sustainable goals. Moreover, since Tamil Nadu has composting units to compost its wet waste only segregated waste at source, it is collected from the residents and resorts by the local municipality. So all the wet waste from the kitchen and restaurant in the resort is collected in drums and locked away till the next morning in a shed to avoid wild animals jumping in to feed on it and mess the area. Wild boar, bison, elephants, even a stray leopard or tiger could be attracted to feed on the waste if left outside, explains Sait.

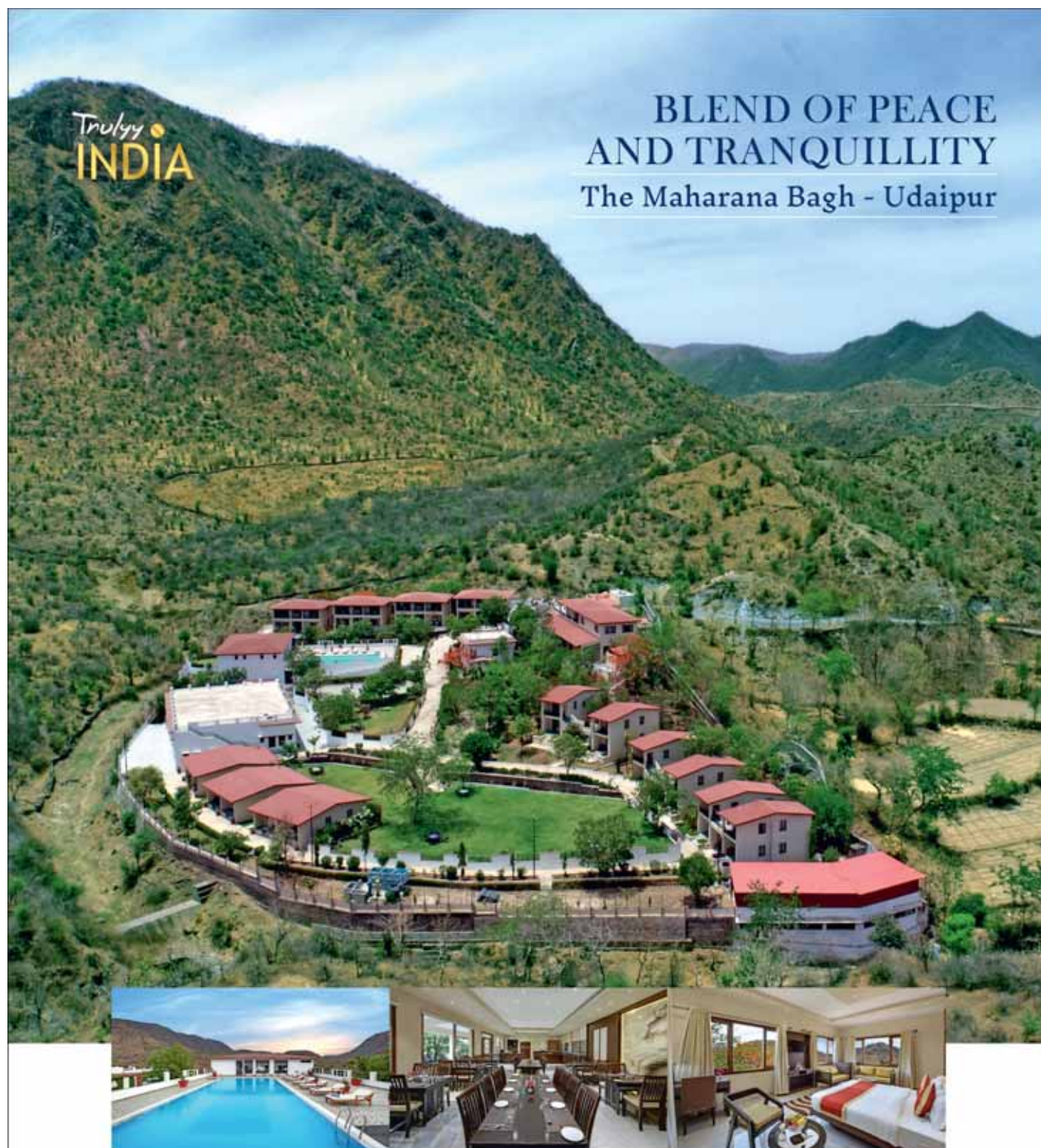
"We also source all our ingredients from organic farms around the property. That way our carbon footprint is minimum as we do not need to bring in supplies from other states. Everything is bought from organic farms including our chicken, so we

support local growers as well. Taste our potato mash and palak paneer, bhindi fry; even our leeks and onions are local," says Sait.

The Botanical Garden which has its famous flower show

in Ooty attracts more than two lakh visitors every year, sending the resort occupancy shooting up. Scenic spots (6th Mile and 9th Mile) where most of the Bollywood and south Indian films shoot their songs

in the locals from the plains. With such high footfalls, the need to be plastic-free is extremely important specially with Tamil Nadu recently facing flash floods with its rivers and drains choked with plastic.



Huddled in the Aravalli Hills, rising skywards from the rocky hills, The Maharana Bagh is surrounded by the wilderness of nature, the resort is the ideal base to rejuvenate and indulge into adventurous as well as leisure activities.

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Network, showcase & crack deals



The Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) witnessed over 11,000 transacting business opportunities that helped promote inbound tourism as well as position India on the itineraries of global travellers. But did this year's edition manage to please the trade? TRAVTALK finds out...



Rohit Arora
General Manager
The Park

“The show has not improved over the years despite the participation of so many states. The quality of buyers has to scale up. If asked to rate them on a scale of one to 10, I'd give a seven pointer on the basis of their performance. The show has its merits where every player is under one roof in a formal manner for two days. Therefore, GITB is a connecting dot for the entire tourism industry.”



Vikas Abbott
Managing Director
Vasco Travel

“The show always clashes with Arabian travel market (ATM) each year, but I'm glad that next year's show will be 10 days prior to ATM. Although the increase in the number of states has resulted in getting new buyers, the show should look at inviting people who are involved in the sub-continental operations and not focusing much on the Indian market to increase arrivals in the country.”



Mario Habig
Managing Director
Le Passage to India Journeys

“GITB shall look to change its approach into an innovative integrated atmosphere by inviting multiple stakeholders. We need to work upon showcasing different destinations that we will be pushing in the market. The criteria of a good show shall not be the number of people attending it but the quality of clients. The quality of buyers has improved from the last year but there is still scope for organisers.”



Digraj Singh Shahpura
Director
Shahpura Hotels

“Every year, GITB has been improving by getting bigger and better with each edition. The event is being witnessed as the biggest inbound show for the Indian market and its presence is reaching new dimensions in the travel trade which is a good sign for the Industry. The praise of GITB is reaching worldwide and the credit of this should be given to its marketing management. I would like to wish good luck to the organisers for all future editions.”



Anil Kumar
Managing Director
SenKay Tours and Travels

“My suggestion to the organisers is to get the right window so that it doesn't clash with other trade shows. The event is organised in such a way that it always clashes with other major events in the tourism industry, thereby affecting the importance of the show in the eyes of Indian participants, who are also giving preference to shows like ATM. Even the timing of such an event is questionable.”



Shoba Mohan
Partner
RARE

“Over the years, the quality of buyers at GITB has improved who are now not afraid of exploring newer markets. I have seen a lot of Chinese buyers around the show. By exploring newer markets, the organisers should also look at empowering tour operators by providing them other services especially in the language, storytelling and narrating aspect. GITB has to evolve and a small online tutorial on how to make the best use of GITB will be a good idea.”

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Vice President & Head—
Inbound FCM Incoming

“GITB has been a pioneer effort with its own clients who respect the show as a brand and want to be associated with it. The highlight of this year has been the participation of 11 states and greater participation of FTOs whose number exceeded 270. I don't think GITB will lose its charm even if other states are organising similar shows, but the time has come where it needs to expand its canvas as more and more people want to be associated with it.”



Dhananjay Kumar
General Manager
The Suryaa New Delhi

“GITB is an excellent platform to meet FTOs who work with us through DMCs. We are also in touch with other hoteliers, business partners and colleagues through this platform. Going forward, I think the show should not clash with ATM. This year, the crowd has reduced as compared to earlier editions but that's a good sign as less people can be more easily managed whilst also indicating that we have a filtered bunch of participants.”



Rajesh Kaushik
Vice President
Trans India Holidays

“Our aim to attend GITB is to meet supplier groups and hotel partners. There is no other show more apt for the inbound market than GITB. It has grown every year, not at best every time but there still remain lots of positives to take home from here. The fact that it is outside Delhi gives me a sigh of relief as when we are out of our respective workplaces, there is a better chance to concentrate our all energies towards useful discussion.”



Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar
Executive Director
HRH Group of Hotels

“GITB is like a good bottle of wine, which is maturing over the years. For the hospitality industry, the show brings up every major stakeholder under one roof. As always, we want successful meetings to take place at such events, which in turn should be converted into good business. We also look for exchange of contacts, networking and expanding horizons through interaction with other clients while learning and growing more at the same time.”

Mumbai-Moscow on Ural Airlines

Ural Airlines is all set to begin operations from India connecting Mumbai and Moscow with four flights weekly. **Marianna Galagura**, the airline's Head of International Relations and Charter Sales Department, reveals more...



Peden Doma Bhutia from Yekaterinburg

Q Ural Airlines' plan to venture into the Indian market with Mumbai-Moscow operations in March 2019 has now been postponed to July. Do you see the July opening happening?

There's been some delay in the aircraft arrivals as we will be operating the new Airbus A321 on this route. With the

Boeing 737 Max issue catching ground, Airbus had a huge order to cater to and so there was a delay in the delivery of aircraft. We will be flying to Mumbai as soon as this problem is resolved. Besides Mumbai, we have plans for other destinations in India too. We plan to operate four flights per week to Mumbai and then subsequently make

it a daily service. Ural is one of the top five Russian airlines with hubs in Sochi, Yekaterinburg, St Petersburg, Krasnodar, Novosibirsk and other Russian cities. Our plan is to operate non-stop flights to Moscow and Yekaterinburg with both flights being connected to other domestic destinations like Sochi, Simferopol, Krasnodar, as well as other European destinations.



Marianna Galagura
Head of International Relations
and Charter Sales Department, Ural Airlines

“ We are in a position to create a hub to connect Mumbai with Europe as we are quite well placed in Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, Prague, Barcelona and London **”**

Q Do you plan to develop Ural Airlines as a hub connecting Mumbai to other European connections?

Yes, of course, we are in a position to create a hub to connect Mumbai with Europe as we are quite well placed in Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, Prague, Barcelona and London. One could either avail the option via Yekaterinburg or Moscow to connect to Europe.

even then, there are many destinations in which we directly compete with Aeroflot. Competition from prominent players is unavoidable, but we are not afraid as we create our own product. The potential of these destinations is so high that every player will have enough space for their operations.

Q How competitively are you pricing yourself?

We are looking for some special sales action in the form of summer and winter sales and we also have some more promotions. 

Q What about the competition from Aeroflot?

Aeroflot flies to Delhi and we are flying to Mumbai, but



Valeriya Sorokina
Head (Touristic Division)
Route Network Development Department,
Koltosovo (Yekaterinburg) Airport

What's in store at Yekaterinburg

Valeriya Sorokina, Head (Touristic Division), Route Network Development Department, Koltosovo (Yekaterinburg) Airport, talks about how Yekaterinburg is well suited to welcome Indian tourists.

- Yekaterinburg has improved its hotels, infrastructure, visa and information services for tourists to enable them with a friendly environment that was earlier lacking.
- The average stay of a tourist in Yekaterinburg is two days (including hospitality

services and hotel stays as well) and the average spend is 15,000 roubles.

- More than a million tourists visit Yekaterinburg in a year.
- The region of Yekaterinburg is mostly industrial, due to which it mostly receives business professionals, but culture is also a very important part of the city.
- We have been working with Moscow already not only in trade and exchange of other services but also sharing an intimate relation in terms of regional and international tourists.



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All work and no play makes

What started as a WhatsApp chat grew to a 153-pax party for and by the travel fraternity of Mumbai. The recent networking event, ideated by **Ajay Chhabria**, Managing Director, Intime Travels, and supported by Aakash Shah, Vikram Kajaria and Rishabh Shah, saw the trade get together in full force to let their hair down and boogie the night away. Attendees were not hosted but they paid an entry fee.



travel trade a dull industry



Inbound takes centre stage at GITB

The who's who of the tourism and hospitality industry flocked the 12th edition of The Great India Travel Bazaar (GITB) held from April 19-21, 2019, at Jaipur Exhibition & Convention Centre. The show offered networking opportunities and relationship building among Indian exhibitors as well as domestic and international buyers to promote the tourism potential of Incredible India in these markets.



Taste of added success in business

Built on a foundation of transparency and customer delight, Truly India Hotels and Resorts doubled its profits in the last one year and has catered to big wedding and events.



TT Bureau

With a boutique chain of properties located in beautiful locations, Truly India Hotels and Resorts lives up to its name in providing travellers an opportunity to explore and dig deeper in preferred locations. **Naresh Arora**, Founder and CEO, Truly India Hotels and Resorts believes in perfection, which reflects in his company's hospitality and services offered to its guests. "All our properties have been designed meticulously to offer the best and delightful settings cradling amidst nature. Our brand is built on a foundation of transparency and customer delight which helps us learn, adapt and develop an array of



Naresh Arora
Founder and CEO
Truly India Hotels and Resorts

services that would benefit our guests providing an unforgettable experience. We value customer experience and satisfaction and the transparency in our workflow has helped us achieve the trust our guests seek. Our colleagues understand what Indian and international tourists might seek and therefore deliver beyond expectations," he said.

After a successful year, Arora has an array of plans for the coming year. He said, "Our growth plans include creating high perceived value for our guests, hosting special events and private functions, taking part in travel trade fairs and roadshows, hosting social media contests along with aggressive sales promotions, upscaling quality and ratings and expanding and emerging in new destinations."

Talking about opportunity of exploring new horizons and expansion, he said that Truly India plans to go global with new segments of hotels whilst

exploring new destinations in North and South India. "The company is taking on the challenge of exploring new opportunities in the hospitality business. We are working hard to achieve mutual goals and setting quality benchmarks for others to follow," he stated.

“Multi-generational travellers have embraced the opportunity to engage with locals and protect endangered lands”

Emphasising on current travel trends in the industry and change in the business scenario, Arora said that travelling

for good is becoming a priority. "Destinations, hotels and itineraries that include ways for travellers to positively

impact local communities are on the rise. Multi-generational travellers have embraced the opportunity to help local infrastructure, protect endangered lands and engage with locals over authentic experiences. Social media is inspiring itineraries, scroll through Instagram and you're likely

to see photos of amazing destinations and dinners, with influencers garnering thousands of likes. Social media has become a conversation starter for travel advisors who receive requests from clients to plan a trip around something they saw on Instagram," he explained.



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focuses on core competency

Currently operating and managing seven properties across Rajasthan and Gujarat, Kanj Hotels & Resorts is one of the youngest and fast-growing mid-market leisure and business segment chains in India.



TT Bureau

Established in 2017, Kanj Hotels & Resorts is a hotel management company



that also operates standalone hotels, resorts and heritage hotels. It maintains a strong presence in the leisure and business segments. The company is proud to have a distinctive portfolio that includes ingeniously-designed resorts and heritage hotels that merge old-world charm with contemporary design and smart, engaging service.

According to **Mahendra Singh Tanwar**, Managing Director, Kanj Hotels & Resorts, it is one of the young and fast-growing, mid-market leisure and

business segment chains in India. It operates in the three and four-star categories and presently operates/manages seven properties across Rajasthan and Gujarat. These locations include Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, Pushkar, Jaisalmer, Rajpura (near Sundha Mata Temple in Jalore district)

“Most of our properties are located in offbeat locations, away from the main city. They are true value resorts where guests can experience a new world of comfort which includes all hi-tech amenities”

in Rajasthan and Sasan Gir in Gujarat. “All our properties are away from the city giving our guests a perfect holiday experience surround-

ed by peace and tranquility,” Tanwar says.

Tanwar adds, “Most of our properties are located in off-beat locations, away from the main city. They are true value resorts where an individual can experience the new world of comfort which includes all

hi-tech amenities along with peace and tranquility.” Most of these properties also have huge banqueting and meeting venues that are ideal for wed-

dings. Kanj Hotels & Resorts is targeting mid-market leisure and business travellers in cities as they are the ones who travel the most to all the destinations where it has its properties.

“The tourism ministry needs to ensure that the hotel and resort operators get more such platforms to interact directly with travellers, agents, and investors. The Indian government should give more emphasis on promoting tourism and creating employment, as it is one of the major resources towards the state revenue and livelihood of the people,” Tanwar adds.

He also touches upon the topic of GST and adds, “The Ministry also needs to relook at the GST percentage that hotels and resorts are charged as it directly affects the travellers thus affecting the hospitality industry at large and our profit margins. The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in today’s competitive world. Increase in room inventory, individual standalone properties with world-class facility and competitive rates on online portals are making it very tough for branded hotels to get the right price.”

Kanj Hotels & Resorts is proud to have a distinctive portfolio that includes ingeniously-designed resorts and heritage hotels that merge old-world charm with contemporary design and smart, engaging service.



Airways thanks trade

Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways recently hosted a networking evening for the travel trade in Mumbai to thank them for their continuous support in making the airline soar in Indian skies. **Rohit Ramachandran**, CEO, Jazeera Airways, specially flew down to meet the stakeholders and make some important announcements, especially for the travel trade.





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Agents ride on a new tech wave

While innovations in travel technology continue to take place, incorporating them in businesses is not everybody's cup of tea. Industry stakeholders reveal the latest technology that they've been developing.



Deepak Narula
Managing Director
GRN Connect

“In the future tourism policies, travel associations need to coordinate closely with the government when key policies are drafted. India has a lot to offer to inbound tourists. So, I think, we have the advantage of numbers as well as of a variety of places to visit in the country. All we need at the moment is a right policy. Our www.GRNconnect.com brought about a major change in how travel agents work. 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.”



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

“We have now entered the cruise vertical and recently announced the opening of our new offices in Sri Lanka, Bali and another one in Maldives soon. Eventually all businesses will drift online, which doesn't mean that the offline businesses will collapse, but they will also depend a lot on technology using online systems. Technology is going to be the biggest differentiator for us, whether it is in-house or outsourced. I believe that having a third-party technology is one of the biggest drawback for any company which has big plans. Apart from this, we have introduced a loyalty programme called Platinum for the loyal travel agents.”



Ankush Nijhawan
Founder
Travel Boutique Online

“We will be promoting and establishing TBO Cruises, which brings cruise products online, in a market where there is a kind of exhaustion with cruise liners. The 26,000 travel agents, who work with us on a monthly basis, will be trained on ways to sell cruises. With cruises coming online, we will have an edge over others because the transaction, which probably takes half an hour to close, will only take two minutes to close with TBO. We will be showing real-time inventory of cabins to agents for them to book instantly. The bills, invoices and commissions—everything will be done and settled online.”



Vivek Sanghi
Co-founder
ecare Technology Labs

“We cracked the WhatsApp notification code in the booking engine. Whenever a customer makes a booking, it sends a push notification on WhatsApp, which no one does other than us in travel technology. People are excited with this feature, although there are costs associated with this. We keep doing technological upgrades and have recently added more modules. Now our travel agents can also serve corporate customers. We have added wallet modules which empowers agents to also have cash wallets for their customers. The biggest game changer will be data analytics and AI in the technology world.”



Nikhil Shah
Director & Co-Founder
Multilink

“Technology is going to take over the travel industry because the next generation is going to travel a lot and they will want options at their fingertips. APIs and white labels are going to be the main players. API technology is a requirement for e-commerce companies. The white label website concept is creating a replica of collative features of UI/UX that already exist on some or the other platforms. Depending on the client customisations, a set website design can be implemented on the basis of customer choice of B2B or a B2C or both. This has brought forth other newer technologies such as wallet integration.”



Manoj Samuel
Director
Riya Group

“To make agents' life simpler, we have created an online portal for making all travel bookings, online queue ticketing and a CRM tool to track agent queries. Our agent booking platform- Riya Connect is accessible via web and through downloadable desktop and mobile applications. We will soon be launching online KYC process which will allow an agent to become a part of Riya Connect within a span of an hour. Agents in Tier-II and Tier-III cities have started to accept technology and we encourage them to use these online tools on an ongoing basis.”



Syed A Asim
Director
De Box Global

“Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and Bots are forcing industries to re-write their own value chains. Data Analytics, AI and Machine Learning will help travel companies in predicting and recommending their customers where they want to go, before they know it themselves. Virtual Reality will allow you to experience destinations before visiting it and taking first-hand experience. UX (User Experience) instead of UI (User Interface) will drive technology developments, facilitating end customers to see curated data in the local languages.”



Narayan Mallapur
CEO & Co Founder
Innoway

“The industry is betting high on AI for 2019. The foray into deployment of Artificial Intelligence is gaining momentum and the progression will only increase. Another emerging technology in the travel industry is IoT (Internet of Things), involving internet-based inter-connectivity between every day devices allowing them to both send and receive data. We are harnessing the technology to enable the travel ecosystem and ensuring the end customers get a seamless experience. Currently, we are working on Machine Learning.”



Darryl Ismail
Chief Executive Officer
Instant Travel

“The demand for online solutions and aggregation models for apartments and cruises will be one of the fastest growth verticals. Proof that customers still use travel professionals is backed by the rise of the super agents and OTAs. In the context of an online wholesaler, Holy Grail is the all-in-one, user-friendly, dynamic package and itinerary builder technology. By bundling the solution, it offers the ability to combine the clients expectations of holiday experiences with the ability to create a package whose price cannot be reverse engineered.”



Abdul Hadi Sheikh
Co-founder and CEO
FlyKart and Flyremit

“We are India's first digital remittance platform. This year, we have launched Flyremit-pay. It is a platform, which enables DMCs globally to work with Indian agents, opening up the entire global market for Indian agents to work seamlessly on a single tech platform, i.e. Flyremit pay. Earlier, in the B2B space, the payments to the suppliers was a major issue. People who were receiving the remittances, and the guys who were paying the remittances, both were having a major bottleneck in terms of doing these transactions. It was a lot of heavy paperwork.”



Tirath Shah
Chief Operating Officer
Rezlive.com

“The last one year has been very good for us, both in terms of product enhancements, developments as well as from the business perspective. A lot of innovation is happening on the product front. We are coming up with a lot of value addition from a product perspective. We will be introducing a package module which would allow agents to make a package of their own. While a lot of people have tried this, but unfortunately, they failed. With our experience, we might be able to do a better job. We also launched Rez Rewards, an incentive programme for our bookers who get points for every booking.”



Neelu Singh
CEO & Director
Ezeego1

“Webinars are a key training delivery channel for us. It helps address a large spread of agents across Tier-II, III towns. As an interactive for agents to share their queries and engage with us, it is faster to roll out. Tests and certification follow the webinar. They are preferred by travel agents for training since the last few seasons. It saves the travel agent time and cost of travelling to a centralised location. By making these online sessions interactive, we see an increased interest from agents for this kind of training.”



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EVENT TALK

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JUNE 2019

75th IATA Annual General Meeting	Seoul, South Korea	1-3
TTM+ 2019	Pattaya, Bangkok	5-7
Dubai MICE Workshop	Hyderabad	10
Dubai MICE Workshop	Chennai	11
Dubai MICE Workshop	Bengaluru	13
Dubai MICE Workshop	Kolkata	14
Beijing International Tourism Expo 2019	Beijing	18-20
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Malaysia	21-24
Incredible India Roadshow	Washington DC	24
Incredible India Roadshow	Boston	25
Incredible India Roadshow	Vancouver	26
GPS	Hyderabad	26-27
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Singapore	26-29
Incredible India Roadshow	Seattle	27
Incredible India Roadshow	San Francisco	28

JULY 2019

Incredible India Roadshow	Johannesburg	1
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Indonesia	2-5
Incredible India Roadshow	Durban	3
GPS	Ahmedabad	3-4
International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality (ICTH)	Singapore	4-5
Incredible India Roadshow	Port Louis	5
TTF	Hyderabad	5-6
Kiwi Link India 2019	Mumbai	8-9
Kiwi Link India 2019	Kolkata	11
Kiwi Link India 2019	Delhi	12
TTF	Kolkata	12-14
Travel Wedding Show	Mumbai	13-14
MICE INDIA and Luxury Travel congress	Delhi	17-18
GPS	Chandigarh	17-8
Amazing Thailand Roadshow to India	Ahmedabad	22
MICE INDIA and Luxury Travel congress	Mumbai	23-24
Amazing Thailand Roadshow to India	Pune	24
GPS	Lucknow	24-25
TTH Expo	Vadodara	26-28
TTF	Ahmedabad	30-1 Sept

AUGUST 2019

IITM	Bengaluru	2-4
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	6
GPS	Kochi	6-7
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	7
Qatar Tourism Roadshow	Ahmedabad	8
IITM	Chennai	9-11
ADTOI Convention	Gujarat	16-18
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Mumbai	20
GPS	Kolkata	21-22
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Ahmedabad	21
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Chennai	22
Tourism Fiji Roadshow	Delhi	23
GPS	Pune	29-30

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

ASSOCIATION TALK

Perspectives on tourism

With 54 participants from 30 organisations, PATA India Chapter's inaugural Tourism MasterClass comprising four key knowledge sessions by industry experts was well received by participants.



TT Bureau

The experience and expertise of veteran tourism industry professionals to budding mid-management tourism professionals shared at PATA India Chapter's inau-

Amit Prasad and Malvinder Singh Rikhy.

"This initiative marks the beginning of experiential learning programmes offered by PATA for its membership and sister associations. All the four

insisted that India needs to get more innovative as a destination. "We need to use new practices to promote India as a popular destination. Social media plays a key role here and we need to use it more aptly to improve the current scenario," he said.

catered to. Once that has been understood, every stakeholder brings on his own set of visions and ideas," he said.

Taking a session on 'Managing, Meeting and Exceeding Customer Expectations', Amit Prasad, CEO, Le Passage to India Journeys explained that communication, clarity and keeping clients well informed of what they should expect in managing information and consistently delivering the high standard of service are key.



gural 'Tourism MasterClass' was an encouraging step to train and educate professionals in the industry. Runep Sangha, Executive Director, PATA India Chapter informed that the one-day workshop involved sessions on four key topics delivered by industry professionals including Himmat Anand, Shwetank Singh,

speakers imparted significant practices to all the participants that they themselves have acquired from the industry over the years," said Sangha.

Taking the inaugural session on 'Effective Marketing and Promoting Destination India', Himmat Anand, Founder, Tree of Life, Resorts and Hotels

Shwetank Singh, Vice President—Development & Asset Management, InterGlobe Hotels rather used an interactive method to engage participants in his session on 'Successful Business Partnerships Drive Profits' while laying down key issues on stakeholding patterns. "There is a large ecosystem that needs to be

In the final session by Malvinder Singh Rikhy, Co-founder and Executive Chairman mindyourfleet.com on 'Developing Experiential Tourism Products', he insisted, "Knowing your client and giving them an experience that can be taken along as a memory is important. Second is to give clients a format to act upon, followed by technology." 📌



plans for contingencies

After the Kingfisher Airlines and Jet Airways fiasco, Travel Agents Federation of India plans to come up with a contingency plan with IATA so that its members as well as passengers do not have to suffer again.



Hazel Jain

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is on a warpath to ensure that their members do not have to bear the brunt of another airline going down. Pradip Lulla, Acting President and Vice President, TAFI, has said that the team has had a meeting with representatives of International Air Transport Association (IATA) to come up with a contingency plan. "We have had a bad experience earlier with Kingfisher Airlines and now Jet Airways which was a dominant player in the market. We are talking with IATA to collectively work out an insurance against such an event which affects our refunds."

Speaking about the refunds, he said that TAFI continues to dialogue with IATA and the airline to ensure that the payments



Pradip Lulla
Acting President and Vice President
TAFI

are made. "We are custodians of the interest of our passengers and they should not get affected if an airline gets into trouble. The TAFI team has been liaising with Jet Airways for the refunds of our tickets of our agents and we have also addressed this issue to IATA recently during a meeting in New Delhi to take into account all the refunds which have come because as per

norms, IATA holds a certain deposit of all the airlines. Since the tickets are basically issued on the BSP platform and now since the refunds have to be paid to the passengers by our agents, we have reiterated to IATA that all the refunds should be made to the agents first before any other payments are made," Lulla added.

out of the funds of Jet Airways which is currently held by the State Bank of India which is the main lender," he added.

In other news, TAFI has been busy singling out a destination for its annual convention. "This time due to the sad demise of our president we will not have it this year but in the

“We are talking with IATA to collectively work out an insurance against an event of crisis which affects our refunds”

In terms of credit card payments, Jet Airways used to allow corporate cards for payments. "In this case, the payments technically would be processed through IATA but the payments would be made

beginning of 2020. We have shortlisted three destinations and are working with them on the deliverables and the logistics. We will announce the final venue by June 2019," Lulla revealed. 📌



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Lords Hotels & Resorts

Mumbai

Rakesh Mathur has recently been co-opted as a Director and Principal Advisor to the Lords Hotels and Resorts Group. Mathur would devote substantial time with the Lords Group, and work closely with the promoters and top management, guiding them in areas of product and service quality enhancement, operational efficiency, organisational development, growth within and outside India, and CSR. He is a hospitality industry professional with over 45 years of leadership experience in highly-acclaimed Indian and global hotel groups.



Rishi Puri has been promoted to Senior Vice President—Operations & Development from his earlier position of Vice President. He has been employed with Lords Hotels & Resorts for eight years and has played an instrumental role in various projects including brand sign-ups, operations, projects coordination and later driving them towards profitability. As Senior Vice President, he will direct, administer and coordinate the internal operational activities of the company in accordance with policies, strategies, and objectives of the company. He will also assist the COO in the development of strategic organisation goals that pertain to hotel operations to include evaluating the effectiveness of management practices and processes and activities.



Iris Reps

New Delhi

Sumit Banerji has recently been appointed as the Director for Iris Reps India. In his new role, Banerji will modulate the company's growth plan with regards to the expansion of its representation portfolio and business diversification, as well as offer strategic leadership in sales and marketing to the team in order to strengthen the brand and business of the principle partners in India and South Asia markets. He has a total of 21 years of experience in Sales and Marketing, Business Development and Strategy Planning for globally renowned organisations in cruise, hospitality and DMC sectors.



LOT Polish Airlines

New Delhi

LOT Polish Airlines has appointed **Alan Peter Chacko** as Sales Manager India. Chacko will oversee the commercial activities and key account relationships on behalf of the Polish Star Alliance member. Before joining LOT Polish Airlines, Chacko held various senior positions within the Lufthansa Group in India. For the past four years, he was Senior Manager Sales Products and Programs & Service Provider Coordination with responsibility for the entire South Asian market.



Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau

Mumbai

Kapil Pant, Director, Alfa Destinations Marketing has been appointed as Representation Director—India & Subcontinent of Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB). In this role, he will represent the Bureau and manage travel trade strategy, public relations and industry alignment. He will also enhance the 'Experiences Unfiltered' campaign under PCEB through cooperative strategies with key wholesale, airline and trade partners as well as increase awareness with key media stakeholders. Pant leverages from the relationships he enjoys with the travel industry partners with over two decades of experience in MICE from India and overseas.



The Westin Sohna Resort & Spa

Gurugram

The Westin Sohna Resort and Spa has designated **Anoop Pandey** as General Manager for the resort. Pandey comes with nearly two decades of experience with expertise in all departments of hospitality. During his entire career span, he has played diverse roles in different operations departments including Front Office, Food & Beverage & Rooms Division. Prior to his latest assignment, he served as Resident Manager at The Westin Gurgaon where he was responsible for developing business plans and implementing new ideas to improve guest satisfaction and profitability.



Radisson Blu Atria

Bengaluru

George Bennet Kuruvilla is the new General Manager of Radisson Blu Atria Bengaluru. He comes in with close to 25 years of experience in the luxury hotel segment. In his current role, Kuruvilla will be in-charge of the overall operations of the hotel. Spearheading multiple roles in the industry, he has an in-depth knowledge of every facet of managing a hotel and was General Manager of award-winning hotels besides holding leadership positions at Taj Mahal Palace and Hyatt Regency in Mumbai. He was Regional General Manager with MGM Muthu Hotels, Spain before taking over this position.



The Westin Mumbai Garden City

Mumbai

Clifford Coutinho has been appointed as the Director of Sales at The Westin Mumbai Garden City. He is a seasoned hotelier with over 12 years of industry experience. In his new role, Coutinho will be responsible for leading and further evolving all aspects of the sales, driving revenues and promoting brand strategies. His key focus areas include Revenue Management, Business Development, and Sales with a keen interest in Hotel Management & Operations, training junior sales team members and providing the best hospitality experience to guests at the property.



Hyatt Regency Gurgaon

Gurugram

Rohit Srivastava has joined Hyatt Regency Gurgaon as Sales Manager – MICE & Travel Trade. In his new role, he will be responsible for achieving new milestones for the benefit of Hyatt Regency Gurgaon. He has acquired learning and positive skills at his previous assignments at Country Inn Hotels, Lords Hotels & Resorts, The Leela Palace Hotels & Resorts (The Leela, East Delhi) and Pride Group of Hotels.



TALKing People

"Watching movies is the best stress-buster for me. I also love spending time with my children," reveals **Manoj Singh**, Country Head – India, Norwegian Cruise Line. Being a member of the tourism industry, he has travelled extensively. Yet his most memorable holiday moment was with his family in Dubai. "One of my favourite holiday destinations in India has to be Kashmir. Other than that, I enjoy cruising on any large ship," he adds. Singh also enjoys food and loves Indian and Italian cuisines.



Sunil Mathapati, Country Manager, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA), relaxes by listening to music. He also loves to cook and his favourite cuisine includes all things South Indian, whether it is vegetarian or non-vegetarian. On a long-haul flight, chances are that he would be found sleeping or watching a movie. One of his all-time favourite movie is the Will Smith-starrer 'The Pursuit of Happiness'. One of Mathapati's favourite holiday destinations in India are the interior villages of Kerala.



The best way to de-stress for **Sumit Shah**, General Manager—Sales & Marketing, Indana Hotels, is to watch a good movie from one of the old classics, be it Bollywood or Hollywood, or reading a classic work of fiction. "Alternately, I opt for long walks in a park and keep my phone on silent mode. So, a couple of things come into this passionate spectrum - cinema, books, travelling and of course food! Not many people know that I can cook well. I am particularly fond of Bengali cuisine," he says.





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The time is ripe for

Virgin Atlantic's comeback in Mumbai with a Dreamliner has got the travel community excited. **David Hodges**, Country Manager—India & ME and **Sameer Duggal**, Commercial Manager—India of the airline, share fresh plans.



Nisha Verma

The Mumbai-London flight was long overdue according to **David Hodges**, Country Manager—India, Virgin Atlantic and the time was ripe to restart the service on this route. "The Mumbai-London service will be operational from October 27, 2019 on a Dreamliner (Boeing 787-9), which is our latest aircraft. The flight will be arriving in Mumbai on October 27 and depart at 2:55 am on October 28, offering perfect connections for all our onward US services on Virgin Atlantic or our partner Delta Airlines. It will also connect very well with the European services by our codeshare partners as well as the small European airline that we recently bought- Flybe,



David Hodges
Country Manager—India & ME
Virgin Atlantic

offering connections within the region. We are excited to add more to our Indian network," he informed.

Sharing the configuration for the new flight, Hodges said, "There will be 31 seats



Sameer Duggal
Commercial Manager—India
Virgin Atlantic

in Business Class, 35 in Premium Economy and 192 in Economy. We will also have on board our Economy product that will continue to have 36 seats in economy delight, with extra legroom and premium check-in. Apart from that, we

will offer our latest Bollywood films across all cabins. A variety of Indian food is also on offer, and local crew on board is fluent in Hindi and Punjabi."

Hodges believes that the new flight connecting London to Mumbai will offer more opportunity to boost the corporate and MiCE business from India. "It will be part of our plans in Mumbai to work closely with a focus on business segment, but we will be looking at all the channels including leisure, VFR and corporate. We also work closely with OTAs and the established travel agents," he claimed.

Sameer Duggal, Commercial Manager—India, Virgin Atlantic, agreed, saying, "All our friends from the travel trade industry have been asking us to bring the flight back to Mumbai, and we have been working closely with them with the codeshare we had with Jet Airways for the last year and a half. What happened with Jet Airways is unfortunate. With a gap being created in the market, we thought now is the best time to come back to Mumbai. With the support of our travel industry friends, we hope it's going to be a successful flight."

Duggal shared that they have been in constant engagement with the trade through various channels. "We conduct product awareness sessions with agents. We also have a dedicated website for our trade friends, called vsflyinghub.com, where we encourage agents to register and get all the updated information on Virgin Atlantic at their fingertips." 🐦

TradeTalk



Anoop B Kanuga
Director
Bathija Travels

“In terms of load factors, Virgin has got a lot of traffic for not only the UK but also beyond to the US. The airline flies to around 12 cities in the US. Also, it will help in rationalising the fares because after Jet has shut down, fares have hit the roof. Apart from that, the airline has an excellent product.”



Ajay Prakash
Owner
Nomad Travels

“There was a huge gap in capacity after Jet Airways shut down and I am sure Virgin Atlantic is going to do well and people would be happy to fly them. We do have shortage of capacity on certain routes, and there are not many carriers flying non-stop to London. I extend my best wishes to Virgin.”



Marzbaan Antia
Managing Director
Avesta Travels

“With Virgin Atlantic coming in, passengers are getting a flexibility in choosing the airline. As a result, fares will come down since more airlines result in more competition and offer better choice to customers. Virgin is a fantastic product and a direct flight means a hit to its competitors.”



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