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SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

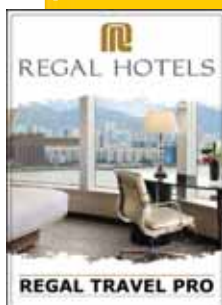
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Plane delay? Your rights...

The recently-released passenger charter by Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) enlists the passenger rights against airlines, especially in case of a delay or cancellation of a flight.



Nisha Verma

Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, along with **Jayant Sinha**, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, have released the passenger charter at Aviation Conclave 2019 jointly organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation and Confederation of Indian Industry in Delhi. The passenger charter defines the rights of the passengers.

Some of the key highlights of the charter include that if a

domestic flight is expected to be delayed by more than six hours, the airline would offer an option of 'alternate flight' to the passenger within that time

If a passenger is informed of the cancellation of a flight in less than two weeks before departure, the airline needs to give an alternate flight to the passenger or refund the ticket completely

or it will refund the full price of the ticket. The charter also stated that if the passenger is informed of a flight cancella-

tion in less than two weeks before departure, the airline needs to give an alternate flight to passenger or refund the ticket completely.

In fact, at the time of booking, the airline clearly needs to indicate the amount of refund money that will be given to



Suresh Prabhu
Union Minister
of Civil Aviation

passenger in case of cancellation. In case a passenger is denied boarding due to over

booking of a flight, the passenger shall not hold the airline liable for compensation in case he was given an alternate flight within an hour of the original flight's departure. The charter also states that passengers can cancel tickets without having to pay any amount within a day of the booking and can also claim enhanced compensation for loss of baggage from airlines. However, the new charter states that zero cancellation charge won't apply if the tickets are booked less than seven days before

the scheduled departure time of the flight.

The charter also states that in case a flight is diverted to a different destination, the staff needs to communicate to all the queries of the passenger constantly. In this scenario, if the waiting time is over two hours, the airline should make immediate arrangement to disembark at the nearest airport. The facilitation for the same or the refreshments during the waiting time have to be provided by the airline. ➔

Industry mourns Alwin Zecha

Tourism industry veteran and founder of Pacific Leisure Group (PLG) **Alwin Zecha** passed away on March 12 in Bangkok after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Alwin Zecha, Executive Chairman and Founder, Pacific Leisure Group, contributed enormously to the ASEAN travel and tourism industry through his close involvement with PATA whilst assisting to

bring numerous PATA events such as PATA Travel Mart and Annual Conference to Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand. In his career spanning over 50 years, Zecha founded PLG in 1961,

built up network offices across the globe and quickly gained a reputation as one of the leading DMCs worldwide. He was born in Sukabumi West Java, Indonesia on April 4, 1936.

Tributes pour in
Extending his tribute, **Eckard Kremer**, Group Managing Director, PLG said, "We lost a friend, mentor and our PLG father today. His legacy will live on."

Al Merschen, Managing Director, Myriad Travel Marketing said, "To a man with zest of life, and a life well lived. Rest in peace my fellow AL."

Contd on page 8 ➔



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ITB in Mumbai in 2020

The debut ITB India, a three-day B2B travel trade show and convention, is expected to witness exhibitors from every sector of the industry, including travel agencies, NTOs, MiCE, hotels and travel tech companies.



TT Bureau

Messe Berlin is set to organise the inaugural ITB India in 2020 at Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai from April 15-17, 2020. The three-day business-to-business travel trade

show will bring together key travel industry leaders and buyers from cities across India and international exhibitors from the MiCE, leisure and corporate sectors. ITB India will also have a Hosted Buyers' Programme that will cater to buyers from first, second and third tier cities in India.

"In recent years we have given the ITB brand an increasingly international

market for the travel industry with a huge growth potential. We are delighted that ITB India will in future complement the trio of ITB Berlin, ITB Asia and ITB China, making it a quartet and strengthening the global ITB brand."

"Having successfully run 11 editions of ITB Asia, it is logical for us to progress to the next frontier of travel in Asia. We are optimistic that ITB

"We're proud to be supporting Messe Berlin in organising its premier event in the Indian market. As ITB is a renowned international brand, we're delighted to be a key partner and together, make ITB India the leading travel trade event for the India market," commented **Bernhard Steinrücke**, Director General, Indo-German Chamber of Commerce.

Of the buyers at ITB India, 50 per cent are expected to focus on leisure travel, with MiCE and corporate travel buyers making up the remainder with 25 per cent respectively. Almost a third of all buyers at ITB India are expected to have a purchasing power of more than US\$1 million. Key decision makers are expected to make the bulk of buyers at ITB India. 86 per cent of expected buyers at ITB India will also be from the western and northern parts of India. 🇮🇳

“Having successfully run 11 editions of ITB Asia, we are optimistic that ITB India will be a prominent platform for attendees to come together to grow the travel market”

dimension," said **Dr Christian Göke**, Chief Executive Officer, Messe Berlin. "From a global and regional perspective, India is a vast source

India will be a prominent platform for attendees to come together to further grow the Indian travel market," said **Katrina Leung**, Managing Director, Messe Berlin (Singapore), the organiser of ITB India.



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VIEWPOINT

ITB makes inroads in India

One of the biggest travel trade shows in the world—ITB—has now obtained its Indian counterpart. ITB India will be held in Mumbai in 2020. While we can analyse why the India market is an opportunity for the entire world, it is only natural to have a global show for the country. A UNWTO report has suggested that the Indian travel industry is expected to be valued at US\$56 billion with 50 million outbound travellers by 2020. According to Messe Berlin, the organisers of the event, ITB India represents a major opportunity for National Tourist Offices (NTOs), travel and hospitality companies to be part of this dramatically expanding market opportunity. While we do expect many international destinations to attend the event, the presence of Ministry of Tourism and states would be in big numbers too. However, MOT, in association with FAITH, started its inbound show—India Tourism Mart (ITM) last year. Besides, there already exist privately owned shows too which witness huge participation from both India and outside. How the launch of ITB India affects the standing of other major travel trade events in the country still remains to be seen, both in terms of participation of exhibitors as well as buyers.

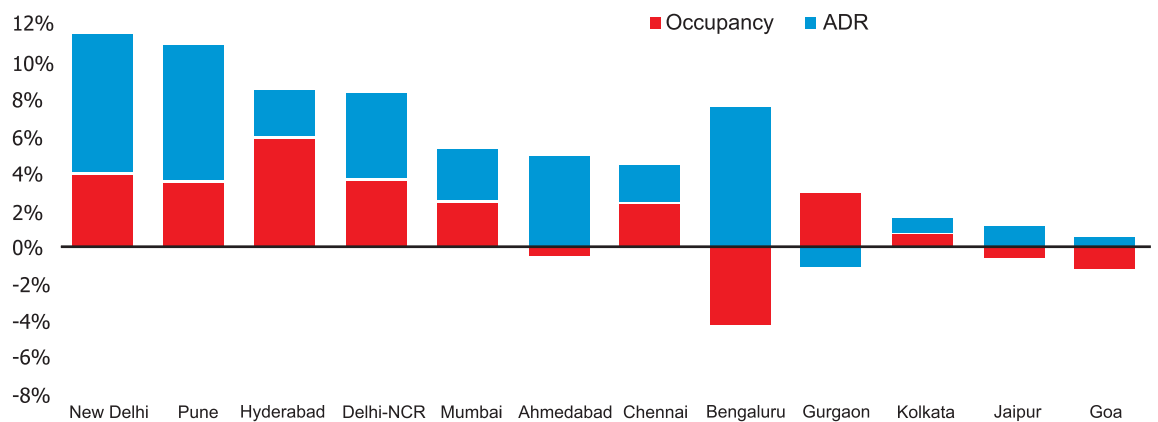
Summer holidays

With the onset of spring, what we eagerly look forward to is summer holidays and the big Indian outbound movement that it powers. While India is traditionally considered a late booking market, outbound tour operators vouch that frequent travellers around the country have already made their bookings or are contemplating on destinations to visit. In 2017, according to CAPA statistics, 76 per cent of international leisure traffic was from metro cities while Tier-II contributed around 24 per cent travellers. Today, this number has increased, especially with NTOs training agents in these markets. India is one of the focused markets for luxury holidays for destinations around the world, and it is in summer that people spend the most and opt for long-haul destinations. While seasoned travellers are looking for new places to go, first-time travellers are exploring popular destinations in a whole new way, especially with focused offerings for Indian guests.

Delhi, Pune top in occupancy

Hotel occupancy in Delhi and Pune crossed 70 per cent, according to a latest report by Horwath on 'India Hotel Market Review 2018'.

India Hotel Performance by Key Markets – YoY Occupancy & ADR Growth



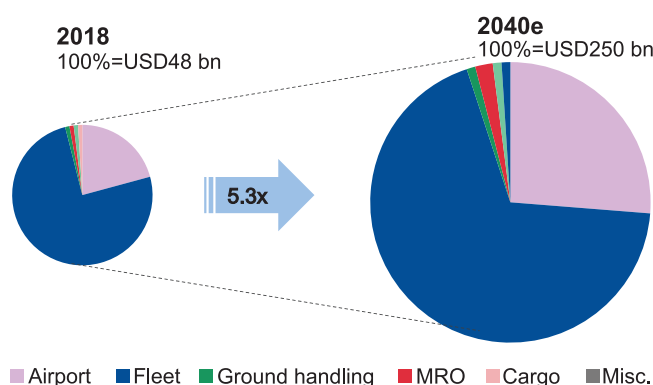
- Delhi has grabbed the opportunity presented by GST replacing a usurious luxury tax with both hands, the report says. It performed well in all the parameters with occupancy rising to 71.7 per cent, ADRs at 7.5 per cent and RevPAR at 11.6 per cent.
- Aerocity hotels have fully dialled in – rooms demand, ADR and banqueting. Corporate, MICE and retail business which chose Gurugram over Delhi because of major tax savings under Luxury tax have shown preference for Delhi once an even playing field was created. Aerocity itself has expanded its commercial spaces.
- Pune, too, had a good year in 2018, crossing 70 per cent occupancy and pushing through over 7 per cent ADR growth to post 11 per cent RevPAR increase. A solid Tier-1 business city, Pune's growth can be attributed to MICE and partly to the shift of some IPL games to this city.

Source: (STR) - India Hotel Market Review 2018

Big investments in the air

The Indian civil aviation industry is set to attract an additional \$250 billion by 2040, according to a latest report by CAPA India.

Indian civil aviation: A USD250 bn investment opportunity



Source: CAPA

- The industry has attracted cumulative investments of \$48 billion during the last 15 years. Over 90 per cent of incremental investments are expected on aircraft acquisition and airport development.
- By FY2040, India is expected to see its fleet increase by around 2,500 aircraft and the construction of more than 50 new airports. Combined with investment in ancillary services such as ground handling, MRO and training, Indian aviation will require over USD250 billion of capital expenditure over this period.

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Air Asia to rationalise network

Having taken over the reins of Air Asia India in late 2018, **Sunil Bhaskaran**, the airline's CEO and MD, talks about his new innings in the aviation industry whilst discussing his plan to oversee the next phase of growth and expansion of the carrier.



Manas Dwivedi

Operating as a CEO for almost six months and witnessing some legal turbulence, low-cost airline Air Asia India has now put everything behind with hopes to have six new aircraft in the next 12 months. Having joined Air Asia India in mid-November as its new boss, TATA Steel veteran Sunil Bhaskaran is enjoying his time in the aviation industry.

"I have completed three months at Air Asia India and it has been a fascinating experience till now. The aviation industry is completely new for me, but of what I have seen till now,



Sunil Bhaskaran
CEO & MD
Air Asia

things look really interesting. The Indian aviation industry is challenging as of now, but the reality is that it has also seen some fantastic growth over the last five years. All the growth in this period has happened with improvement in quality of product, safety, and customer experience. I am very happy to become a part of this industry," says Bhaskaran sharing the joy.

The airline is now looking to rationalising its entire network. "We had some issues in the recent past, because of which there had been a sense of uncertainty. But, I think that is all behind us. We have a lot of experience, which has now come on board with us. Now that TATA has acquired a 51 per cent stake, there is a sense of confidence that this airline is here for the long term. In terms of growth, we are hoping to have six aircraft in the next 12 months. There is this huge issue of airports and slots; we will see how best we can perform," he said at the CAPA

India Aviation Summit 2019 in New Delhi.

The airline, being one of the smaller players in the Indian aviation market with 20 aircraft in its fleet, currently holds a five

per cent market share. Bhaskaran says that Air Asia India differentiates itself from other airlines in many aspects. "In terms of competition, our rivals are much bigger than us but I think we have got a very good

product. Our cost structure is extremely competitive and there is enough differentiation in our customer experience as compared to other airlines, whether it be the quality of seats, the hot meal, or the cheerful reception

of our ground and on-board staff. All of these factors seem to be clear differentiators, and that can make Air Asia India a preferred airline," he asserts.

The low-cost carrier (LCC)

has recently acquired its 20th aircraft in the domestic market. "Going forward, we are very optimistic about starting international operations, once we get the required approvals," shares Bhaskaran.

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Know the other France

Reunion Island Tourist Board has entered into an alliance with Atout France offices in South Africa, China and now India to promote the French region.

Hazel Jain

After being present in the India market through representation, Reunion Island Tourist Board will now operate in India through the Atout France office. **Sheetal Munshaw**, Director, Atout France India, says, "We are delighted to showcase this very-different side of France to the India market. This is an initiative that has been led in three different countries – with Atout France in South Africa for the last three or four years, with Atout France in China since last year, and with Atout France in India since the end of 2018. We will now collaborate with them in a more focused manner to promote Réunion Island in India. We are going to kick-start this year with a four-city roadshow and this will happen in early April 2019 in New



Sheetal Munshaw
Director
Atout France India

Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai."

Munshaw visited Réunion Island this February to meet the team to discuss and strategise for the year and see what they would like to do in the various markets that Atout France India has agreed to work in. She adds, "The island has a huge Indian community, and its proximity to India and the visa-on-arrival facility for Indian passport holders

for stays less than 15 days will work well with our market."

Speaking about Atout France, Munshaw adds, "We recently conducted a meeting between the Consul, VFS and ourselves along with the trade, which we do every year. This is basically to revisit the visa procedures. It was also a good opportunity for the new Consul in Mumbai to meet the trade."

The tourism office is getting ready for its annual B2B showcase, Rendez-vous en France, which will take place in Marseille from March 19-20, 2019, where 32 agents from India will travel to France. It will also conduct the third edition of its annual showcase in Mahabalipuram in September this year. Atout France is also working on launching its online training programme in 2019.

Void in travel trade

Contd from page 3

SanJeet, Honorary Vice Chairman, PATA India Chapter said, "A big loss for me personally and all of us here in India. The travel industry has lost an eminent statesman who guided us and more importantly held us all together. He will be missed but his legacy of great work will stay in our hearts forever."

Vikram Madhok, Honorary Treasurer, PATA India Chapter commented, "Sorry to see a true industry leader go. Alwin was an inspiration to many of us. I have lost a friend of more than 20 years since I became involved with PATA. When he spoke, people stopped to listen; such was his charm and persona."

Narzalina Lim, Former Secretary, Department of Tourism (DoT) Philippines, said, "Alwin gave us words of encouragement, assuring us that we could put the

Philippines back in the tourism map. He never stopped encouraging us and gave us every opportunity, through PATA to host many events to keep a high profile in the tourism world. We owe him a lot and we will miss him."

While paying his tribute, **Arjun Sharma**, Chairman, Select Group and Member, Executive Committee, PATA India Chapter said, "Zecha was a pillar of the Asia-Pacific travel and tourism industry. I have had the pleasure of working closely with him in PATA. He had the capacity to think big with out-of-the-box ideas. We pray to the Almighty for peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear this irreparable loss."

Alison Cryer, MD, Representation Plus said, "We will all miss Alwin's determination, positiveness and cheerful disposition. Nick and my thoughts are with you Gek and the children."

"Alwin has touched so many people in the travel and tourism industry of the Pacific Asia region, including myself. He selflessly shared his experience and knowledge, and for me he was not only a business partner but also a mentor and a friend who led by example. He will be very much missed by all who knew him well, including those in PATA and Skal," shared **Tunku Iskandar Tunku Abdullah**, Group Executive Chairman, Melewar Group.

Elly Hutabarat, Vice Chairperson, Industry Council, PATA, commented, "Alwin had introduced me to PATA more than 20 years ago and he continued 'lecturing' me about this great organisation since then. I and anyone of us in the tourism industry will miss him tremendously. Goodbye my brother, have a great journey back home. We will always remember and love you."

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With 44 acres of lush landscaped gardens, Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram features 157 chalets, villas, bungalows and suites, most of which offer unparalleled views of the Bay of Bengal.

 TT Bureau

Boasting of breathtaking views of Bay of Bengal, Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram is one of the most prime beach resorts on the East Coast Road (ECR) with South East Asia's largest swimming pool. The 27,000 sq ft pool is also the second largest in the world. Talking more about the property, **Ameet Kundu**, Director—Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram says that the management is working hard to make the property



Ameet Kundu
Director—Sales & Marketing, Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram

a prime destination and a popular hotspot for tourists around the world.

"The tourism sector got a major boost in 2018 with the number of foreign tourist arrivals growing approximately at 13.4 per cent. It helped us achieve a decent growth of 15 per cent in terms of revenue in 2018 in comparison to last year. Continuing our positive approach, we are taking initiatives to enhance the overall occupancy and revenue in 2019. We want to make the hotel a market leader in the ECR stretch as we are looking forward to promote the property as an ideal destination for weddings," said Kundu.



Reunion Island, a French overseas department, is located in the Mascarene archipelago in the Indian Ocean

Did you Know

With a majority of inbound tourists as its guests, Kundu says that the leisure and MICE are the largest source for the domestic and international guests. "Around 70 per cent of guests are foreigners while 30 per cent are domestic tourists. Tamil Nadu has

got an upper hand in MICE due to its strong healthcare, heavy engineering ecosystem and automobile industry. We are proud to launch Asia's largest extravaganza Wedding Expo along with a combination of conferences, awards, fashion show



as well as B2B networking. This will be a huge gathering of the wedding fraternity bringing together people from all over the country. We are also launching WV

Connect from April 15-17."

With 44 acres of lush landscaped gardens, the Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay features 157 chalets, villas, bungalows and suites, most of which offer unparalleled views of the Bay of

Bengal. Each of the chalet and villa features a private patio or balcony as well. With 10,500 square feet pillar less halls, the property is a well-equipped site for MICE activities. The resort is also actively engaged in protecting the Olive Ridley turtles. 



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Saudi Arabia: Open for tourists

While top leaders of India and Saudi Arabia sign an agreement to promote tourism between the two nations, we try and explore some of the lesser-known tourism offerings of the latter.



TT Bureau

Al Ula, located in north-western Saudi Arabia, is a place of extraordinary man-made and natural heritage. The size of Belgium, this region contains a number of archaeological treasures and ancient sites, surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty and magnificent monuments. Exploring tourism opportunities and entering a new space, Al Ula is similar to walking through civilizations and absorbing history, heritage, and culture at its best.

What to sell

Saudi Arabia has introduced 'Winter at Tantora', a music festival in the Kingdom's renowned Al Ula heritage site. A festival like no other in a place like no other, Winter at Tantora is the country's first



Iman Al-Mutairi
Chief Marketing Officer
Royal Commission of Al Ula

step towards attracting tourists. Hosted by the residents of the region, the festival ran for the first time ever from December 20, 2018 to February 23, 2019.

When to sell

With a promise of being back this year, the Winter at Tantora festival is slated to be held from December

2019 till March 2020. The first-ever weekend festival ran for over ten weekends and was completely sold out. "During this series of themed events, festival visitors were able to experience a range of activities including premiere musical performances by some of the world's greatest musicians, a celebration of the winter planting season, weekly cultural events, and spectacular star gazing," says Iman Al-Mutairi, Chief Marketing Officer, Royal Commission of Al Ula.

Why to sell

Developing a destination with the world and for the world, Saudi Arabia Tourism's anchor event, Winter at Tantora received over 5,000 tourists who flew down to the destination and over 30,000 drove to attend it. Foreign

tourists from across the world visited, including Bollywood producers from India.

Investing in tourism, Al Ula is expecting to attract 250,000 visitors by 2021 and two million visitors by 2035.

Who to sell to

Target the luxurious and experienced traveller. The destination promises an experience

to remember forever. Focusing on a psychographic marketing approach, the destination is targeting a personality type which includes the affluent adventure seeker. "Whether you want to be entertained, inspired or wish to experience something new and out-of-the-box, you'll find so much to do at Winter at Tantora that you'll be spoiled for choice," adds Al-Mutairi.

Packages offered

Curating the perfect experience for travellers, packages for the festival range from \$2,000 to \$6,000 and include the visa fee, airline ticket, accommodation, food, and sightseeing.

Trade relations

The Royal Commission of Al Ula was established more than a year ago to preserve the heritage and develop tourism. With tourism being very new to the country, the Commission is exploring global partnerships focused on art, culture, heritage, and nature. For the Winter at Tantora festival, online visas were issued to tourists. Al Ula is focused on further developing its ties in India. It is exploring opportunities for Bollywood collaborations and for hosting Indian weddings. 🇮🇳



Explore the unexplored

Represented by Nijhawan Group, Kempinski Hotels showcased its properties to wedding planners, and MiCE agents in a three-city roadshow across Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai.



Anupriya Bishnoi

Riding high on a 32 per cent growth in 2018 vis-à-vis 2017, this year sure looks bright for Nijhawan Group. On the sidelines of Kempinski Hotels' three-city roadshow across Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai, Ankush Nijhawan, Managing Director, Nijhawan Group, says, "These events are important to meet key hotels and partners across the world. We have been working in partnership with Kempinski Hotels since one-and-a-half years. The Indian traffic to Kempinski Hotels grew by 32 per cent in 2018 vis-à-vis 2017. The first couple of months have started well. Our focus largely remains on leisure and corporate markets. Weddings as well as MiCE are also very important for Kempinski."



Ankush Nijhawan
Managing Director
Nijhawan Group

A lot of new markets will be boosted for 2019 in the Indian market. Speaking on this, Nijhawan mentions, "These include Djibouti, Dead Sea, Cuba, etc, because the traffic to these destinations is minimal due to lack of awareness. I am happy to say the response we got for Dead Sea is overwhelming. People are showing interest and are excited to go there."

Talking about the growth expectations for 2019,

Nijhawan says, "We expect to grow by 30-40 per cent. India is a booming market and fortunately the destinations where Kempinski has its presence, witnessed strong demand from the Indian clientele."

Any destination that's about four to five hours away from home works best for Indians. Thailand, some parts of Europe, China, Middle East and Muscat are gaining popularity while Bali and Singapore continue to remain the top markets for Indians, he informs. 🇮🇳



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Learn more about Beijing culture

Beijing Tourism's Global Distribution Partnership Program for agents will be an important focus area for the next few years. It will allow agents to get more support from the NTO in terms of destination training and familiarisation trips. **Zou Weinan**, Deputy Inspector, Beijing Municipal Culture & Tourism Bureau, shares details.



Hazel Jain

Q What kind of numbers does Beijing receive from India?

The number of arrivals over the last few years has hovered



between 60,000 and 80,000. We all know that the number of Indian outbound travel has increased rapidly in recent years, so this number is not ideal. We don't have a specific target for 2019 but we certainly hope that the number of Indian visitors to Beijing will continue to grow.

Q Is Beijing tourism looking at tapping tier cities in India?

Tourists from big cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou account for a large proportion of tourists travelling from China to overseas. I think India should have the same situation. According to what we hear, Mumbai accounts for half of the Indian outbound

market. Thus, we will start with developing cities like Mumbai and Delhi.

Q What are your focus areas for 2019 with respect to the India market?

As the capital of China, Beijing has great attractions for tourists. Beijing has received nearly 300 million tourists every year in recent years. However, the number of foreign tourists in proportion is not very large and we hope to increase the number of overseas tourists to Beijing. At the same time, Beijing also hopes that the consumption per person of tourists will increase. MiCE is one of the most important focus areas for us. However, all kind of travellers are welcome. At present, we do not know the

Indian tourism market well but we hope that through our efforts, we can provide them with better services and attract more Indians to Beijing. We welcome suggestions and feedback from the Indian travel trade.

Q What kind of engagement do you want to do with the travel trade in India?

With a lot of efficient communication we had during a travel exhibition in India, we want to continue to participate in shows in the future. Moreover, we launched the Global Distribution Partnership Program of Beijing Tourism last year and we hope more Indian travel agents will join the program. This project will be one of the most important tasks for the bureau in the next few years.

To become a partner, overseas tourism enterprises will have close cooperation with Beijing cultural and tourism Bureau, get more support like training and tour routes inspections. For Indian travel agents who are interested in participating in this programme, they can learn more through our website and sign up.

Q What new products are you looking to promote to Indian travellers?

Beijing will host the winter Olympics in 2022, so our latest product is about winter tourism – ice and snow tourism products. At the same time, Beijing has also launched products such as traditional Chinese medicine tourism, study tours and so on in

recent years. Beijing has also launched tax return policy for foreign visitors. There are seven world heritage sites in Beijing where tourists can feel the charm of ancient history as well as modern cities. There is a saying in China, 'It is better to see once than to hear a hundred times.' We hope Indian tourists can come and see Beijing by themselves.

Indian arrivals in to Beijing		
Year	Number from India to Beijing	Growth Rate
2013	72,111	1.8 %
2014	68,863	-4.5
2015	80,482	16.9
2016	74,605	-7.3
2017	75,318	1.0%
2018	67,536	-10.3%

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New campaign on the anvil

Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) is all set to launch a new marketing campaign, which will target both metros and Tier-II cities.



TT Bureau

For a long time now, India has been a major source market for the island nation of Mauritius. "For the past five years, India has been an important reservoir for us. We have experienced natural growth of around 10 per cent on a yearly basis, and 2018 was a testimony to that," said **Arvind Bundhun**, Director, Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). This year is also crucial for MTPA, insisted Bundhun, adding that it is to be quite a competitive and challenging time for MTPA. "Mauritius is very Europe-centric and currently, there are many problems in Europe. Hence, our objective at MTPA is to divert this budget into emerging economies like India and China," he explained.

Bundhun claimed that Mauritius is India-ready. "A



Arvind Bundhun
Director
Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

lot of effort has been put in by the private sector and by the government to encourage Indians to come to Mauritius. This is because firstly, Mauritius is known as 'Little India' and there are natural cultural ties that bind the two countries together. Secondly, Mauritius is not just a beach destination but also has other attributes that really trigger the Indian market," he said.

This year, MTPA is going to launch a massive visibility campaign —Where Else but

Mauritius — inviting Indians to discover the island nation. "We will be kick-starting the massive visibility campaign in Mumbai and Delhi in March and April, respectively. After that we'll target Tier-II cities in May, June, and July. Mauritius is a tour operating country and most of the business generated comes from tour operators. Hence, we try and participate in events to get closer to tour operators and support them, as well as share contacts to enhance the visibility of Mauritius. Also, in terms of accessibility, we are trying to do a lot of joint marketing campaigns with Air Mauritius and other airlines, and even targeting cities like Kolkata and Hyderabad," Bundhun added.

Claiming that Mauritius was different from other beach destinations, he concluded, "Besides beaches, we have a rich cultural heritage, different cuisines, golf and sports."

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Atlas emphasises on cross-selling

With hotels as its focal point, **atlastravelsonline** is now working on cross-selling its products in an effort to change the way travel agents interact with their customers.



TT Bureau

Having established itself in the air ticketing segment, Atlas Travels Online is now aggressively focusing on the air plus hotels segment. And in order to fuel this growth, it is not just tying up with hospitality partners (Treebo in November 2018) but also bringing in Atlas Preferred Hotels on the website apart from a huge emphasis on cross-selling its products, particularly hotels.

Hussain Patel, Director, Atlas Travels Online, says, "Our focus on the hotel segment has increased manifold over the last six months. Similar to our pre-purchase of airline inventory, we also pre-purchase hotel inventories across fast selling and key destinations with which our content and inventory improves and we get a price advantage. We directly contract with hotels and suppliers having access to more than 600,000 hotels worldwide. The aim now is to cross-sell our products on our site. We saw



Hussain Patel
Director
Atlas Travels Online

that customers were visiting our site to get deals and they

also wanted to buy other products they saw on the page."

As soon as customers book a flight, they see hotel options of varying categories, suggestions for transfers with local sightseeing, etc. Of prime interest are hotels in international destinations targeted at the outbound market from April to June. Atlas Travels Online saw international bookings going up phenomenally, particularly for Far East and in Europe. Baku and Georgia were preferred with Turkey also making a huge comeback.

The company currently works with a network of 20,000-odd travel agents pan India. Patel shares, "We have industry specialists joining us and have increased the size of our support team to cater to our hotel product. With our new and improved technology, we have features like automated mid-office process for a quick response and a three-step booking confirmation. To offer our partners a first-hand experience, we will organise promotional schemes and familiarisation trips during the year."

"We want to change how travel agents interact with customers. Instead of them telling us what needs to be booked, the travel agent can make recommendations which will come through us, so he will have more confidence. We are also focusing on making our website mobile-friendly by April 2019. Agents will be able to send quotations to their customers, share itineraries and hotel images on WhatsApp," Patel reveals.

Get specific, get specialised

The Indian outbound market has grown phenomenally in the past few years but agents haven't bothered to segregate it into clear-cut sections. The traffic is mostly in general tours that cover several attractions. Are agents losing out on extra business opportunities by not bothering to be more specific?



Inder Raj Ahluwalia



Guldeep Singh Sahni
Managing Director
Weldon Tours & Travels

"Agents are already offering specific tours like safari and trekking trails, golf, spa and well-being, culinary, shopping tours, etc. But general tours are advertised in their advertisement campaigns as they have become very expensive and for return on investments, agents advertise only general tours which sell more in numbers. If agents start offering special tours, they can become specialists, which in turn will attract customers who want specific tours."



Christine Mukharji
Market Manager—India,
Austrian National Tourist Office

"Indian travel agents are adapting to the need for specialisation. Small agents in various Indian cities are now highly specialised and seem to have got the pulse of the time. Their clients can already feel their agents' passion for niche offers and want to book their holidays with those who are authentic. As generalists, agents risk being seen as a 'Jack or Jill of all trades and master of none.' However, when one is specialised, he is considered an expert. If one specialises in one niche travel market, such as honeymoons, skiing or whatever one is passionate about, one can position himself as the 'go-to' travel agent."



Romit Theophilus
Director—India, German
National Tourist Office

"Indian agents and tour operators are evolving in tune with the Indian travel industry which is now moving towards specialisation. This will be the way forward in the future. In recent times, one sees newer segments in agents' portfolios such as marathon tours, culinary tours, etc. Certain tour operators are now carving up their own niche, offering luxury customised tours revolving on activities like scuba diving, skiing, etc. In Germany, we have seen a demand for tours focusing on automobiles, beer and shopping. This new trend in the Indian outbound market is exciting, even though it is still 'early days'."

"The niche market of specialised tourism should be agents' priority today. It's time for agents to specialise and select a new niche. Recent evolving trends have changed the travel distribution landscape. Currently armed with artificial intelligence and enormous amounts of data, sellers can look forward to personalising offers for higher revenue generation. Tourists are motivated by the desire to go on holidays and take part in a current interest or develop a new interest in a new or familiar location."



Sanjay Narula
Vice President, Travel Agents
Association of India

"The Indian outbound market is at a sort of 'crossroads'. While the market is growing impressively, the time has come for agents to become more enterprising and become 'specialists'. Although agents are offering wildlife tours, we should look at diversifying into other specific areas such as golf, gastronomy, wine and other extreme adventure activities like diving. Most travellers today want to experience something new. As travel agents, we have to be more focused and specific to fulfil such travel requirements."



C P Sharma
Managing Director
Neptune Travco

"Travel agents need to become consultants. They need to charge for their services and provide the best services and specialised products. This is relevant for today's market and is definitely the future. We have to create niche markets and have thorough knowledge of the same. One shoe can't fit all, so we need to create and sell special, tailor-made packages focusing on gastronomy, golf, walking tours, bicycle tours, heritage tours, etc. Agents need to change their old way of working, move to newer pastures and not lose out on new earnings through new opportunities."



Jyoti Mayal
Secretary General, Travel
Agents Association of India



Beena Menon
Representative—India, Tourism Ireland

"The rapidly growing Indian outbound market is creating its own patterns. One of them is the emergence of travellers who are seeking something special in their overseas holidays. This has resulted in the creation and success of bespoke holidays to Ireland that include food and drink tours, literature tours, whiskey trails, screen tourism trails, etc. As Indian travellers mature further and look for experiential holidays, travel agents will do well to adapt and meet their requirements for specialised holidays. This would pertain to several specific areas such as wildlife, food and wine, golf or witnessing sporting events like cricket, tennis or football."



Parmod Sahni
Director, CRM Travel Solutions

"While the Indian outbound travel market has shown very impressive growth, the key to future business success will lie in agents becoming more focused, more specific and more 'specialised'. Considering the fact that today's Indian travellers know exactly what they want from a foreign holiday, the time has come for agents to focus on specific aspects and promote different destinations keeping their uniqueness in mind. This could include anything from the sea, golf, history and heritage or wildlife."

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Wanted: Infrastructure upgrade

Keeping in mind the growing demands of travellers, winners of India Travel Awards and India MiCE Awards share their suggestions on what India needs to develop better tourism infrastructure.



Best Organiser of Conferences-Domestic
Ice Group India

“Disha Shah, Director, Ice Group India feels that tourism is most attractive if a country has all kinds of alternative transport facilities both in its major and minor mode of travel. “A tourist requires not just access to a region but also easy access in terms of cost, time and comfort levels. In the long run, the improvement of navigation in suitable stretches of rivers like the Brahmaputra could provide immense possibilities for opening new routes,” she said.



Best Venue for Launches- Tier II
Paradise Village Beach Resort, Goa

“Rishi Dandona, Managing Director, Paradise Village Beach Resort, Goa believes that better public transportation like AC buses, trains and good connectivity are required. He said, “We need tourist information centres, proper sign boards at prominent locations and better sanitation facilities at tourist sites. Keeping in mind the safety of travellers, there is a need to develop Apps like Uber and Ola in all government taxis.”



Best MiCE Company
Concept Travel & Conferences

“According to Ashish Jagota, Executive Director, Concept Travel & Conferences, huge investments are required to build world-class infrastructure in the tourism sector so as to bridge the gap between demand and supply of tourism related services like transport, hotels, etc to meet the varied demands of tourists. “It is essential to develop the infrastructure resources of smaller cities to increase the visitor arrivals and promote the country’s rich heritage,” he said.



Best Emerging Travel Management Company
STG Journey India

“We need to ensure better connectivity between all tourist destinations,” believes Arun Prakash Choubey, Managing Director, STG Journey India. He says, “The security of tourists should also be strengthened. The government should campaign for a wide range of awareness about all the tourist places. Capital intensive infra projects like ropeways and upgradation of smaller projects will also usher in opportunities for tourism infrastructure.”

Indian weddings on focus

Roslina Arbak, CEO, Desaru Development Holdings, Desaru Coast, claims that India is a huge market for leisure, conferences as well as weddings.



TT Bureau

Desaru Coast is targeting the Indian market for leisure as well as the MiCE segment, reveals **Roslina Arbak**, CEO, Desaru Development Holdings, Desaru Coast. “We are a new destination for international markets as well as the local market with our products coming in mainstream since last year. Hence, we are now targeting the Indian market for both business and leisure segment. In fact, we are specifically focusing on those arriving out of Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, as our proximity to Singapore is only an hour and a half drive and only a 45-minute flight from Kuala Lumpur,” she shared.

She revealed that they have already launched many products already in operations. “We have two golf courses which have been in operation for the last two years. We also opened



Roslina Arbak
CEO, Desaru Development Holdings,
Desaru Coast

the Desaru Coast Adventure Park for operations. 164-room Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast, open since September 2018, is also looking to increase the inventory of rooms soon. We already opened the Desaru Coast Conference Centre with a capacity of 1000 in a banquet arrangement. We also have a retail village,” she added.

Going forward, more additions are set to come up in the des-

tinuation. “We will be focusing on the MiCE market in India as well as the weddings segment. Our conference centre and the different outdoor venues could offer a different experience of a wedding,” she added. However, for MiCE they can only take groups of not more than 1000 pax.

She claimed that the recent visa fee waiver would further help them get good arrival numbers from India. “We are happy that this has come at the right time and augurs really well with our intentions of bringing in the arrivals of the Indian travellers into Malaysia,” added Arbak.

Desaru Coast works with the Indian travel trade on packaging and marketing, Arbak revealed. “We are also focusing on Tier-II and Tier-III markets in India. I believe that India is a huge opportunity that we cannot ignore.”

8.92 mn visitors by 2023

India, Saudi Arabia and UK top the UAE arrivals, with the number of Indian visitors set to increase at a CAGR of 7 per cent to 3.01 million in 2023.



TT Bureau

Expo 2020 and its legacy, District 2020, are expected to have a positive long-term influence on the growth of inbound arrivals to the UAE from the country’s top five source markets between 2018 and 2023, according to data published ahead of Arabian Travel Market, scheduled to be held at Dubai World Trade Centre from April 28-May 1, 2019. Looking at the country’s top three source markets, the number of Indian visitors travelling to the UAE will increase at a CAGR of 7 per cent to 3.01 million in 2023, while arrivals from Saudi Arabia and the UK will witness an increase of 2 per cent and 1 per cent to 1.76 million and 1.28 million respectively over the same period.

While the UAE’s top source market rankings are expected



Danielle Curtis
Exhibition Director—ME
Arabian Travel Market

to remain mostly unchanged post-Expo 2020 – the latest research from Colliers International, in partnership with ATM, reveals the Russian and Chinese source markets will show above average annual growth rates for inbound arrivals.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director—ME, Arabian Travel Market, said, “Russian tourists travelling to the UAE will

increase at a CAGR of 12 per cent to 1.6 million in 2023, while Chinese tourists visiting the UAE will increase at a CAGR of 8 per cent to 1.27 million over the same period, according to the data.”

Looking to acquire their share of these high-growth markets at ATM 2019, will be the tourism boards from the UAE’s seven emirates with major exhibits from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, Ajman and Fujairah as well as over 93 other UAE exhibitors such as Emirates, Emaar Hospitality Group and Dubai Airports Corporation.

With 20 million annual visitors expected to visit Dubai by 2020, plus an additional five million between October 2020 and April 2021, the overall hospitality supply in the emirate is expected to increase by 39 per cent from 59,561 keys in 2017 to 82,994 in 2021.

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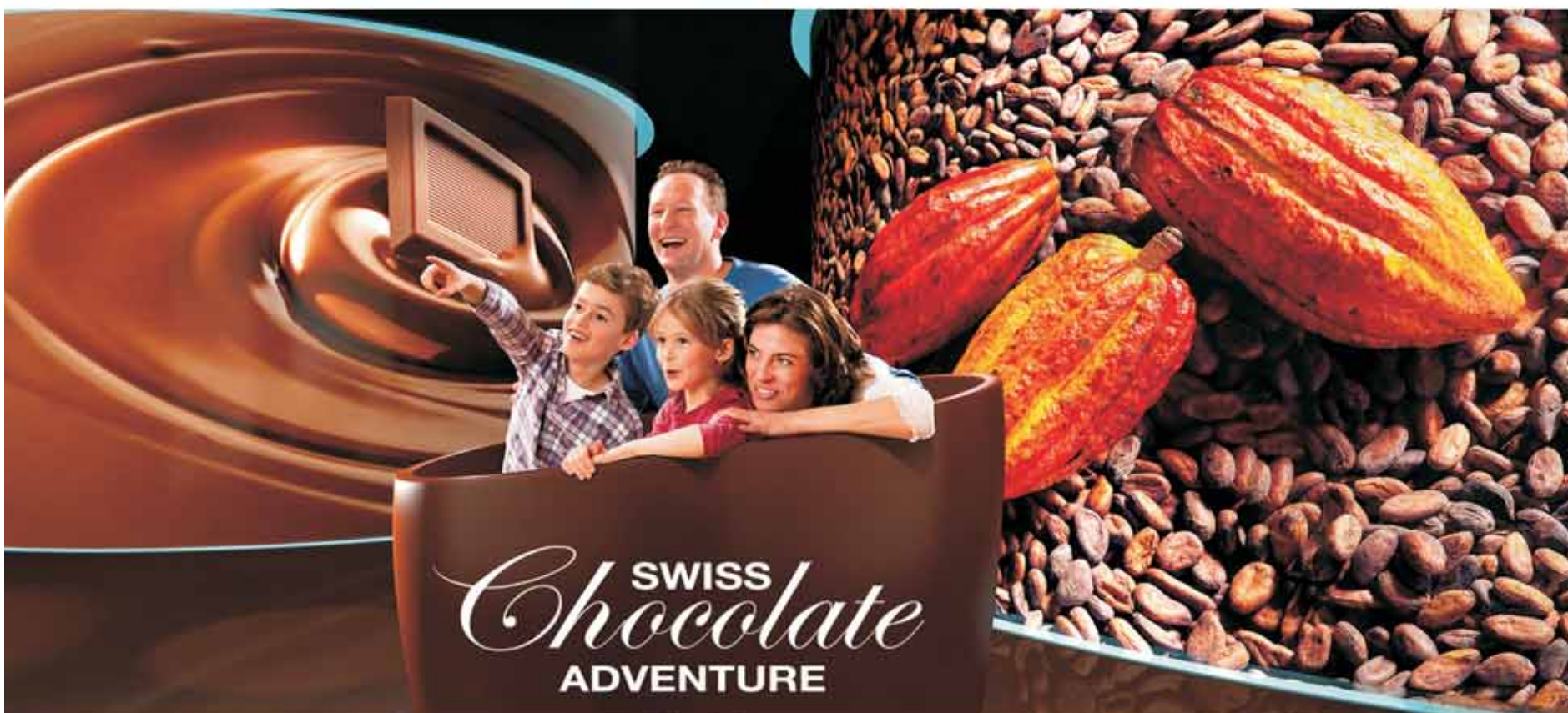
Key trends in Indian aviation

CAPA India Aviation Summit, held in Delhi, witnessed the presence of stalwarts of the aviation industry, including airline heads, airport representatives and stakeholders from around the world. **Peter Harbison**, Executive Chairman, CAPA – Centre for Aviation, welcomed the delegates and stated that the Indian aviation market is one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world.



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New adventures to watch out for

Content, social media marketing and promotion of new destinations and activities are all that is going to drive South African Tourism in its endeavour to immerse the Indian traveller.



Nisha Verma

South African Tourism recently organised its 16th multi-city roadshow in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata to provide trade partners from India and South Africa an innovative opportunity to interact with each other and discuss popular destinations and activities that South Africa has to offer to the Indian traveller. Explaining the importance of the India market, **Neliswa Nkani**, Hub Head—Middle East, India and Southeast Asia, South African Tourism (SAT), said, "At the state of the nation address, the President of South Africa who was in India for the Republic Day celebrations made a profound announcement, stating that the growth for South Africa will come from India. It has given me a direction to focus on India

and attract Indian travellers by way of unique offerings from a value proposition perspective," she said.

Highlighting the common love for cricket of both the nations, Nkani added, "Considering the immense popularity of cricket in India, we are now looking at a century from here. We closed 2018 with 98,000 Indian arrivals. Achieving 100,000 arrivals from here will be a modest growth. I believe in this market and I value it because of the love it has for South Africa. With over 3000 activities, Indian travellers are the largest adventure consumers in South Africa outside South Africa."

Nkani is very hopeful about 2019, especially with the immense support from both the Indian trade and media.



Neliswa Nkani
Hub Head—Middle East, India and Southeast Asia, South African Tourism (SAT)

"We are going to go on a big social media drive in terms of showcasing South Africa with #nofilterSA, #baeSouthAfrica and #unexpectedSA. We are now going to lay emphasis on providing new offerings and new regions for Indian travellers. We are going to introduce Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Drakensberg as adventure destinations," she shared.

Nkani is going to concentrate on the kind of content they provide whilst depicting the country through the eyes of the Indian traveller. "We've learnt that this market is extremely word-of-mouth driven. Three core factors for us would be content management and integration, social media drive, new region

therefore, don't lie."

Direct connectivity remains a problem between India and South Africa. Nkani believes that this issue too is shortlived. "Our President, who was recently in India, made an announcement that South African Airways will soon start direct operations

“We are now looking at a century from India. We closed 2018 with 98,000 Indian arrivals. Achieving 100,000 arrivals from here will be a modest growth”

hostings and introduction, as well as new activities. We also realised that there is a lot of interest in South Africa as a wedding destination due to its affordability. I always make the analogy—the rupee to the dollar is 72 while the rupee to the rand is 5. Numbers,

between the two countries. From where I come, when the highest authority speaks, we normally deliver. He has sent a message to South African Airways and us, because it's effect will not only be on leisure but also on MICE, which contributes to 28 per cent of

our total travel contribution," she claimed.

On easing the visa regime, Nkani said that while the embassy is doing its part, SAT along with its consular services has started a process of pre-approving the top two operators that are driving numbers. "With the strategic collaboration we have with our embassy as well as our consulates, we are able to tell the top months when visas are issued and top two operators who are moving the visas. With this, we give priority to those who give us numbers so that their business can grow. There is always a value chain. If the tour operators are able to get the visa out faster, they are able to then get more clients into the system. The system then churns out more people for us in terms of arrivals," she concluded.

Ireland wants share in Indian pie

Representatives from established Irish companies showcased the many offerings and attractions of Ireland to Indian travellers at dedicated events in Mumbai and Delhi.



TT Bureau

To position Ireland as one of the most desirable destinations for travellers from India, Tourism Ireland organised India Sales Mission 2019 in Mumbai and Delhi for travel professionals currently selling or those who have the potential to sell the island destination.

Speaking at the occasion, **Siobhan McManamy**, Director of Markets, Tourism Ireland, said that they were committed to growing visitor numbers to Ireland from India and that the sales mission would play a significant role in achieving those numbers. During the workshops, partners from Ireland met around 200 key tour operators from the Indian travel trade.

Stressing on the growing importance of the Indian market for Tourism Ireland,

McManamy said that the island received around 38,000 visitors from India in 2017. "We expect a growth of about 15-20 per cent from the data calculated from visits in 2018. We will expect a similar rise in 2019 as well. Indian visitors are important for us because they travel throughout on their own and they are increasingly utilising the self-drive service. They also travel, at times, during the off season," she said.

Elaborating on the preferences of Indian travellers in Ireland, McManamy said, "Indians really like to discover and get into the heart of Ireland. They like to tour around. Indians traditionally used to travel in groups but with changing trends, we have seen a lot of FIT movement as well. They particularly like self-drive tours as we have a 2500-km coastal road on the Wild Atlantic Way

and the Causeway Coastal Route in Northern Ireland, considered one of the best driving routes in the world. The cities of Dublin and Belfast are popular for dining and shopping, among Indians."

Recently, Irish locations used to film television series such as Game of Thrones (GOT)

“We have created 'Doors of Thrones', a set of 10 intricate doors hung across a variety of locations in Northern Ireland, each telling the story of a Game of Thrones episode”

helped draw huge numbers to Northern Ireland. McManamy added, "To further promote screen tourism around the world, we have partnered with HBO. The popular show is a big theme in India and in our effort to promote it, we have

created 'Doors of Thrones', a set of 10 intricate doors hung across a variety of locations in Northern Ireland, each telling the story of a GOT episode. We also have a giant, medieval-style hand-woven tapestry, which tells the full story of the show from the beginning. We are also working very closely for the upcoming cricket world

cup that is going to be held in the UK later this year."

Paul Carty, Managing Director, Guinness Storehouse, was also in India to promote the most visited tourist attraction in Ireland, which gets around 1.7

million tourists every year. He believes that India is a growing market and in 10 years' time or less, there will be a lot of Indians travelling to Dublin to explore Guinness Storehouse's history and heritage.

Tourism Ireland has launched its first major global campaign since 2011, known as 'Fill your heart with Ireland'. The campaign showcases some of the less-visited regions in Ireland. "Our new campaign is about unexplored destinations. The new video shows parts of the country never seen before globally. It is about finding those hidden gems and spreading the success of tourism throughout Ireland," said McManamy.

To the delight of Indian travellers, the British Irish visa scheme allows for travel to and



Tourism Ireland

around Ireland and the UK on a single visa. The scheme allows visitors from India to travel freely within Ireland and the United Kingdom using either an Irish or UK visa.



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IITE	Bhubaneswar	15-17
IT&CM China	Shanghai	19-21
Karnataka Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	19
Karnataka Tourism Roadshow	Panaji	20
Dhaka Travel Mart	Dhaka	21-23
IBTM Arabia	Abu Dhabi	25-27
UITT	Kiev, Ukraine	27-29

APRIL 2019

TAT Luxury Roadshow	Bengaluru	2
Hotel Investment Conference South-Asia (HICSA)	Mumbai	3-4
WTTC Global Summit	Seville, Spain	3-4
TAT Luxury Roadshow	Mumbai	4
AITF	Baku, Azerbaijan	4-6
The Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)	Perth	6-9
ACTE Global Summit	Chicago	7-9
ILTM Africa	Cape Town	7-9
Digital Travel Summit	California	8-10
Karnataka Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	9
International Travel Roadshow (ITR)	Pune	9
Karnataka Tourism Roadshow	Lucknow	10
Korea Tourism Travel Mart	Mumbai	12
Travel Luxury Show	Mumbai	13-14
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Cambodia	13-15
Incredible India roadshow	Sydney	15
COTTM	Beijing	15-17
Incredible India roadshow	Melbourne	16
KITF	Almaty	17-19
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Laos	17-19
Incredible India roadshow	Auckland	18
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Vietnam	21-24
Asian Destinations Expo 2019	Thailand	26-29
Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB)	Jaipur	28-30
ILTM Arabia	Dubai	28-29
Arabian Travel Market	Dubai	28-May 1

MAY 2019

Africa's Travel Indaba	Durban	6-9
PATA Annual Summit 2019	Cebu, Philippines	9-12
Germany Travel Mart	Wiesbaden	12-14
ILTM Latin America	Sao Paulo	14-17
ITB China	Shanghai	15-17
Travel Allied Show	Jaipur	18-19
IMEX	Frankfurt	21-23
ILTM Asia Pacific	Singapore	27-30
IBTM Americas	Mexico City	29-30

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

Renewed vision of EKTTA

Post its inaugural convention in Bhubaneswar, EKTTA is now gearing up to organise a B2B fair in October 2019. The association aims to promote indigenous art, culture and cuisine by a local in the community.



TT Bureau

In an endeavour to develop local tourism and bring the unexplored destinations of Odisha into limelight, the Enterprising Knot of Travel & Tourism Associates (EKTTA) organised its inaugural annual convention in Bhubaneswar.

Sanjay Kumar Mohanty, President, EKTTA, recounted the journey of the association and briefed about the activities and initiatives of the association. "EKTTA is set to organise a B2B fair in Bhubaneswar in



October where several suppliers outside of Odisha as well as India are expected to participate. We are also planning to expand our base to other parts of Odisha," he revealed.

Chandi Prasad Patnaik, General Secretary, EKTTA, expressed his satisfaction at the successful conduct of the event. "About 15 suppliers including DMCs exhibited their products

before the delegates along with a presentation. We also had a few panel discussions on key issues of the industry followed by a B2B networking session," he shared.

Welcoming the new kid on the block



One Above, a new DMC, opened its new office in Mumbai recently. Located in Andheri East, it is headed by BA Rahim, Director, along with co-directors Vishal Somaia and Irshad Dadan and already has 15 DMCs in its kitty in countries including Maldives, South Africa, Dubai, Russia, USA, Baku, Cambodia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and Mauritius.

Traveller for life



Manmohan Sadana retired as Joint Director General, Ministry of Tourism. Prior to this, he worked as the Head of India Tourism Offices in Delhi, Tokyo, Stockholm and Paris with additional charge of India Tourism Offices in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Dubai and Johannesburg. He has an in-depth experience of promoting Incredible India in Europe, West Asia and Africa. With 40 years of experience in the tourism sector, Sadana is a discerning traveller and has visited about 200 cities in 50 countries.

Form - IV

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

- Place of publication : 72 Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
- Periodicity of its publication : Fortnightly
- Printer's Name : SanJeet
Nationality : Indian
Address : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
- Publisher's Name : SanJeet
Nationality : Indian
Address : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001
- Editor's Name : SanJeet
Nationality : Indian
Address : 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110001

6. Name and address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital : DDP Publications Pvt. Ltd. Shareholders: 1. SanJeet, 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi-1. 2. Sumati Jeet, 72, Todarmal Road, ND-1. 3. Devika Jeet, 72, Todarmal Road, ND-1.

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Ballabh Saran Sahay, who has been associated with Clarks Shiraz since August 10, 1962 breathed his last on March 6, 2019. Sahay started his career with Clarks Hotel Varanasi at the age of 19. He was then moved to Agra when Clarks opened its first five-star hotel there in 1962. His contribution lies in building up excellent public relations with discerning clients. Sahay was also instrumental in expanding Clarks Groups' hotels at Jaipur and Lucknow. Since 1979, he took over as head of Sales & Marketing at the company's headquarters in Delhi. Sahay is survived by his wife, daughter and two sons.

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FCM Travel Solutions

Delhi

FCM Travel Solutions, Indian subsidiary of Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG), Australia, has appointed **Gaurav Luthra** as its Chief Operating Officer. Luthra is a distinguished industry veteran with over 20 years of experience in managing relationships with airline and hotel partners, key account management, business development, operations management and procurement. At FCM, he has been credited with launching Corporate Traveller as the first SME travel proposition in the India market as well as Flight Centre's first retail brand in India. He has had a 20-year tenure at FCTG India and he has done justice to every challenge that came his way.



The Suryaa New Delhi

Delhi

Dheeraj Pathak has joined The Suryaa New Delhi as Executive Housekeeper. He brings with himself 12 years of significant experience at various positions across brands in pre-opening as well as operations. Having passed out of the Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development, he worked across several Oberoi and Trident hotels before shifting to The Park, New Delhi. His last assignment was with The Imperial, New Delhi. He will be monitoring and overseeing the housekeeping operations at The Suryaa and bring about his additions to The Suryaa motto - Services So Memorable.



With around 30 years of extensive experience in hotel operations and research, **Sanjay Chopra** has joined The Suryaa as Chief Engineer. He is specialised in pre-opening of hotels. He carries thorough knowledge of engineering operations with a strong Electrical background. Chopra has worked with various hotels and engineering colleges in India and have been involved with setting up and operating various outlets. His roles involved market surveys, discussions with interior designers, architects and kitchen consultants for set up. He is also responsible for preparing budgets and managing costs to achieve the desired profits.



Conrad Bengaluru

Bengaluru

Conrad Hotels & Resorts has announced the appointment of **Srijan Vadhera** as General Manager of Conrad Bengaluru. Vadhera is responsible for the operation, management and growth of the 285-room luxury hotel. As a driven and passionate hotelier, Vadhera comes with nearly two decades of experience with expertise in all departments of hospitality and an avid interest for sales and marketing. Most recently, he served as the General Manager of Fairmont Hotel, Jaipur. He began his journey with Taj Mahal Hotel as an industrial trainee and later moved onto be a part of hospitality brands such as Shangri-La, Marriott International, Radisson and Hyatt in different capacities.



Novotel Imagica Khopoli

Mumbai

Novotel Imagica Khopoli announced the appointment of **Sachin Malhotra** as the new General Manager. With over 18 years of experience across a broad spectrum of hospitality functions, Malhotra will spearhead the business operations, overall implementation and business development at Novotel Imagica Khopoli, ensuring its growth and expansion through innovative strategies. He brings with him an extensive array of proficiency and a deep understanding of operational knowledge, especially in pre-opening set ups and managing the financial sustainability of hotels. Prior to this, Malhotra was General Manager of Grand Mercure Mysuru since its opening in April 2016.



Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru

Bengaluru

Shangri-La Hotel, Bengaluru has appointed **Saharsh Vadhera** as Director of Sales and Marketing. In his new role, Vadhera will head the hotel's sales, events, revenue management, reservations and marketing divisions. His key responsibilities will include overseeing all aspects of hotel sales and marketing strategies, optimising the hotel's revenue and market share. At Shangri-La Bengaluru, he will continue to train and manage the hotel's sales team in maximising revenue opportunities and further promoting the property. With over a decade of rich experience, he has held various roles with notable luxury hospitality brands.



Great Destination Hotels and Resorts

Bengaluru

Nishant Kumar has been appointed as General Manager of Great Destination Hotels and Resorts, a Bengaluru based hospitality major. Kumar's previous stint was with Bur Al Hickman Hospitality, Oman, as Chief Operating Officer where he spearheaded four operating brands across two different countries in the Middle East. He brings 19 years of experience in hospitality. Kumar began his career as restaurant manager at Alibaba Grover, Pattaya, Thailand. As Regional F&B Head at Ramada Hotel, he has led the F&B division with four F&B outlets with the launch of 'Terrace Grill', a seafood and continental grill restaurant.



Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel

Bengaluru

Amit Kulkarni has been designated as Director of Sales and Marketing of Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel. Spearheading the sales and marketing operations at the hotel, Kulkarni will be leading the management staff in planning and strategising sales objectives, marketing communications and direct sales-force activities to increase profits and achieve targets. He comes with an array of experience and has always actively participated in forecasting and sales strategy meetings, mentoring department heads at the property and driving the sales force.



The Leela Goa

Goa

R Srijith has been appointed as the new Director of Sales & Marketing of The Leela Goa. His previous assignment was with The Leela Kovalam (A Raviz Hotel) as the Director of Sales and Marketing. Starting his hospitality career with Ginger Hotels in 2008, Srijith has worked determinedly to carve a niche for himself. He has an MBA in Marketing and Hospitality Management from Srinivas Institute of Management Studies, Mangalore University. He carries with him an experience of 11 years in Sales & Marketing, having worked with IHHR Hospitality, Mahindra Namaste and Ginger Hotels prior to joining The Leela Group in 2014.



TALKING PEOPLE

Tejas Parulekar, Co-Founder, SaffronStays, enjoys watching people cook as she is enthralled by their passion and expertise. "Apart from this, I have a keen interest in board games, love swimming, playing basketball and trekking in the monsoons. I also enjoy watching curated films and love spending time with my children. I strongly believe that the devil lies in the details and urge people to embrace nature, especially when they are surrounded by it," she mentioned.



For **Riaz Munshi**, Managing Director, N Chirag Travel, hitting the gym regularly is important. "I am very health conscious, so I try not to miss out on visiting the gym. As an avid traveller, I have travelled extensively around the world. Out of all, Ibiza is my favourite holiday destination to relax and chill. In India, I love travelling to Kerala. One of the most memorable travelling experiences has been doing sky diving in New Zealand," he says.



Karan Vakharia, Director—Business Development, Pathfinder Holidays, follows the motto, 'If you don't build your dreams, you will end up building someone else's.' "This is what motivates me to work hard constantly and grow in our business. I have always been inspired by my parents." In his spare time, Vakharia researches extensively, plays cricket or spends time with friends. In terms of travel, he said, "Peru and Amsterdam top my list of international destinations. In India, I loved visiting Sikkim."



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India climbs up Oz chart

As the fastest growing inbound market for Australia, India is now on track to achieve the fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth in arrivals as well as in spend.



Manas Dwivedi

India has once again earned the distinction of being the fastest growing inbound market for Australia. A report released by Tourism Australia revealed that the country welcomed 352,500 Indian visitors by the end of November 2018 and registered 18 per cent growth over the previous year. Holding the Indian market of utmost importance, **John O'Sullivan**, Managing Director, Tourism Australia says that the next big thing in boosting tourism between India and Australia is unlocking the direct point to point flight capacity. "Around 700,000 or 4.5 per cent of the total diaspora living around the world lives in Australia. Indian and Australia also have a great cultural connection through cricket. It's now about unlocking the potential. The way we can do that is through aviation access. The Australian government aims to maximise the economic engagement between India and Australia by 2035. Tourism Australia is constantly working to leverage this potential," he reveals.

Immerse in new experiences

The country has some aggressive marketing activities to raise its appeal among the Indian high-value travellers. Sullivan says, "We have launched the #UnDiscover Australia campaign on television and digital media that showcases unusual experiences Australia has to offer. We have also partnered with ESPN cricinfo with television presenter and model, Shibani Dandekar, visiting five Australian states and interacting with five Australian cricketing talents by showcasing their

hometowns and Australia as a holiday destination to their Indian fans through a series of 22 destination videos. We have also leveraged the popularity of our Friend of Australia — Parineeti Chopra and Harsha Bhogle, and Indian cricketer Shikhar Dhawan, who showcased why there's truly nothing like Australia among their followers. Apart from that, we have launched the fifth iteration of the Airline Marketplace campaign that

we project that India could become one of our top three markets," informs Sullivan.

Tourism Australia is actively working with every Indian state and territory to enhance connectivity between the two countries. Sullivan says, "Passenger capacity is integral to our growth trajectory. It is also about offering a good price to the Indian consumer. Through our airline marketplace, managed online through

tivity through Air India or through other partners such as Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, etc."

Melbourne is the most favourite city among Indian travellers in Australia, Sullivan informs. "We have seen around 165,000 Indian visitors to Victoria in 2018. Almost 163,000 visitors travelled to Sydney and New South Wales. We are also experiencing good growth out of markets like Queensland, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland, which receive about 65,000 Indian visitors every year. In markets like Canberra, we have seen almost 55 per cent growth in the number of Indian visitors," he affirms.

“India is our eighth largest source market in terms of the number of visitors to Australia. Similarly, India is our seventh largest market in terms of expenditure by visitors”

delivered over 16,400 bookings in just three weeks. The launch of Premier Aussie Specialist Program with online webinars and face-to-face training initiatives has helped strengthen our relationship with the travel industry. We are also looking forward to the T20 World Cup scheduled to take place in 2020 in Australia."

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Figures don't lie

According to data released by Tourism Australia, Indian tourists spent \$1.6 billion on their Australia trip during October 2017 to September 2018, a growth of 10 per cent over the previous year. "India is our eighth largest source market in terms of the number of visitors to Australia. Similarly, India is our seventh largest market in terms of expenditure by visitors. We think, by 2030, India can feature in our top five tourist source markets. If the growth rate continues to spur,



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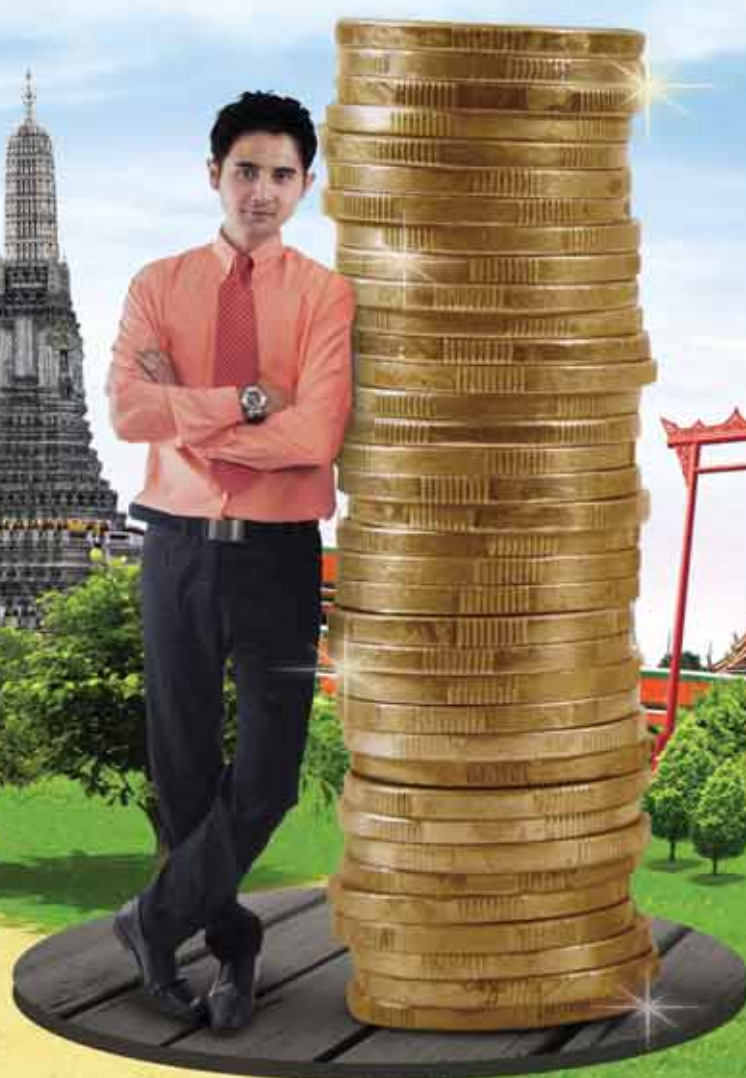
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Arzoo enhances product offering for trade

The company aims to touch ₹1,000 crore this year. It is currently getting ready to launch various promotions for the trade and is busy enhancing its product portfolio to make it more appealing for agents.



Parag Thakker
Managing Director
Arzoo.com

Arzoo.com is on the cusp of a big change. A new management team is led by Parag Thakker, Managing Director, Arzoo.com. With a background in construction, he wanted to diversify into a new business and was drawn to the immense potential that the Indian travel market holds. He forayed into the travel industry with his venture, Shree Mahalaxmi Vacations and buoyed by its success, he decided to take it to the next level by acquiring Arzoo.com. Drawing from his wealth of experience in the construction industry, Thakker plans to build on Arzoo.com's strong foundation and has set his sights on taking it to new heights. He is keen on Arzoo.com playing a part in stimulating the growth of emerging travel regions in India.

Thakker says, "We have a registered agent base that is upwards of 100,000 and the awareness of brand Arzoo is quite high. Increasing our footprint in Tier-II and Tier-III cities is a priority right now. We are therefore expanding our sales team and the first phase will see us add at least 200 sales staff across India." His focus is on ensuring that every partner receives greater returns and unmatched services. Robust technology plays a key role in empowering agents but it is critical to implement it in a user-friendly and seamless manner.

The company aims to touch ₹1,000 crore this year. "We're currently launching many plans and promotions. We want our agents to benefit from low air fares, so we've taken the plunge into pre-purchased air tickets. Our product portfolio is

being enhanced with a number of products that agents are eagerly awaiting such as fixed departures, domestic money transfer (DMT) and Utility payments, among others. In terms of expanding our agent base, IRCTC occupies a place of importance and we are introducing great new schemes for them. We're happy to help power more digital payments through the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS)," Thakker reveals.

The company has also worked out special holiday packages to appeal to travellers who

want to experience great holidays at affordable prices. It plans to add a host of new specialty offerings such as trend-setting holiday packages, themed and specially curated tours that will help promote destinations that have much to discover in terms of photography, thrill, adventure, etc.

Strength in numbers

- Arzoo.com has a registered agent base that is upwards of 100,000
- At least 200 sales staff will be added across India
- The company's priority is increasing its footprint in Tier-II and Tier-III cities now



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