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India's rate cuts in spotlight

At WTM 2019, India is sure to pack a punch with a bigger, stronger delegation. A lower visa fee and reduced GST on hotels, which have made travel to India more affordable, will set the ball rolling for tourism growth.

Nisha Verma

The positive atmosphere created for tourism in India, owing to a lowered visa fee and rationalisation of the Goods & Services Tax (GST), would certainly help boost the number of inbound travellers, believes **Yogendra Tripathi**, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India. He says that these developments and policy changes

should be promoted at a global stage, and Ministry of Tourism (MOT) will be doing the same at World Travel Market 2019 in London. "The government has taken a major step by reducing the visa fee. Our delegation at WTM this year would be bigger than what it has always been, and would include representatives from MOT, state governments, and other stakeholders," he adds.

“Our delegation at WTM will be bigger, with representatives from MOT, state governments, and other stakeholders”

Several steps are being taken by MOT to promote domestic tourism as well. While infrastructure development at tourist sites is being carried out under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD schemes, the government is

also promoting the Northeast region of the country. Tripathi adds, "In order to facilitate domestic tourist visits, the government has also reduced GST at hotels, thereby reducing the cost of accommodation and

making the whole experience affordable and pleasant."

He rightly believes that both public and private sectors need to join hands and make use of this opportunity to ensure that benefits get passed on to the final consumer. "It is only then that the trade would become more competitive, in turn promoting both inbound and domestic tourism," he shares.



Yogendra Tripathi
Secretary, Tourism
Government of India

Infrastructure for M!CE in Odisha

Though Odisha holds much potential for tourism, key initiatives such as a five-fold increase in the tourism budget, a world-class convention centre, and addition of at least 5,000 rooms can help drive numbers.



JK Mohanty
CMD, Swosti Group and Chairman
HRAO & IATO Eastern Region

Kanchan Nath

Addressing a gathering at the recently-concluded HRAO (Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha) Conclave, **JK Mohanty**, CMD, Swosti Group and Chairman, HRAO & IATO Eastern Region, said that Odisha needed at least 5,000

more hotel rooms to boost tourist numbers. "Every state in the country has been adding 10,000-15,000 rooms every year. Until our state has more classified hotels, we cannot increase foreign tourist footfalls here," he shared. Post the devastating Cyclone Fani, a lot of

Contd on page 8 ▶

'Find the Incredible You' at WTM

Representing India at WTM London, **Rupinder Brar**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, shares details about the Indian pavilion at the event.



Rupinder Brar
Additional Director General, MOT
Government of India

Manas Dwivedi

The theme for the Indian pavilion this year at WTM will be 'Find the Incredible You', inspired by the award-winning 'Incredible India' campaign of the Ministry of Tourism and released globally a few months back. The campaign

focuses on digital and social media and the promotion of niche tourism products of the country. **Rupinder Brar** says, "It focuses on transformative experiences, brought alive through unique storytelling in the form of autobiographies of travellers."

Contd on page 8 ▶

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PATA India elects new team

Chaired by **Yogendra Tripathi**, Secretary — Tourism, the newly-elected team of PATA India Chapter has a busy year ahead. Its upcoming events include the Update & Outlook Meeting and Tourism Powerhouse.

 Nisha Verma

PATA India Chapter recently held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at The Park New Delhi, where it elected its new Executive Committee and shared plans for the future. **Yogendra Tripathi** remains the Chairman of PATA India Chapter, while **Jatinder Taneja**, MD,

Addressing the gathering, Tripathi said, "PATA India Chapter has been very active in the last one year, conducting roadshows, B2B meetings, and conferences. I am sure that next year, which will be the 50th year of PATA India Chapter, we would be able to make even more concrete programmes and increase the activities."



Travel Spirit International, has been elected Vice Chairman. **Vikram Madhok**, MD, Abercrombie & Kent India, is now the Honorary Secretary and **SanJeet**, Director, DDP Publications, has been elected Honorary Treasurer. **Runeep Sangha** remains the Executive Director.

The new team plans to conduct more educational seminars for members and aims to bring the PATA Travel Mart back to India within the next few years. The chapter's upcoming events include the eighth Update and Outlook Meeting for PATA members and the tourism fraternity

PATA Executive Committee 2019-20

Active Government Category

Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary, Tourism and **Chairman**, PATA India Chapter
Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Tourism

Associate Government Category

Piyush Tiwari, CMD, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)
Sunil Mathur, Additional Member - T&C, Railway Board

International Carrier

Melwin D'Silva, GM - Commercial, Air India

Domestic Carrier

MP Mall, CMD, IRCTC

Travel Agents/Tour Operators Category

Vikram Madhok, MD, Abercrombie & Kent India and **Hony. Secretary**, PATA India Chapter

Sunirmol Ghosh, Director, Indo Asia Tours

Anoop Kanuga, Director, Bathija Travels

Jatinder Taneja, MD, Travel Spirit International and **Vice Chairman**, PATA India Chapter

Hotels/ Associate Hotels Category

Renu Basu, Sr VP - Global Sales & Marketing, IHCL

Arjun Sharma, MD, Select Holiday Resorts

Rohit Arora, GM, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels

Sustaining Member Category

SanJeet, Director, DDP Publications and **Hony. Treasurer**, PATA India Chapter

on November 21, for which **Meenakshi Sharma**, Director General - Tourism, Govt of India, has been invited. On

December 6, the chapter will host the second edition of Tourism Powerhouse, themed 'The Big Leap Forward'.

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VIEWPOINT

It's time to deliver the magic number!

The present year has been a very productive one for India tourism as far as the policies in place are concerned. The most important of all being reduction in e-Visa fee and cuts in GST rates of hotels. Both these points had been a long-standing demand of the tourism and hospitality industry stakeholders.

But the initiatives by the government do not end here; recently, India tourism has announced a slew of measures to promote tourism in the country amongst foreign as well as domestic tourists.

The e-Conference visa for the private sector, the opening of peaks to foreigners for climbing or trekking, extension of monument timings and lighting up of monuments to promote night tourism are some really concrete steps taken to promote tourism.

Paryatan Parv 2019 was dedicated to the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and was organised with the objective of drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of 'Tourism for All'.

A Gandhi Gramin Circuit has also been launched with 11 itineraries that will trace the life of Mahatma Gandhi. These locations are directly connected with Mahatma Gandhi, and include places that he worked at, lived in, or visited. And it's not just circuits or policies, MOT understands the importance of safety and security and has also announced no-crime zones within one kilometre of tourist sites. It has also introduced a grievance-redressal scheme on Twitter.

Having laid such a smooth road for the stakeholders, the accountability is now on the private sector to deliver on what the MOT has so carefully built with such attention. The associations should work diligently to deliver the right number of tourists to the country. With these policies in place, we can no longer blame the government for not doing enough. If we are still not able to get the desired number of tourists to the country, it means that we have failed the government as well as the facilities that have been granted to us. Time to work our way!

Cruising from India grows 28%

Asia-sourced cruise passenger numbers hit another record high in 2018 with 4.24 million taking an ocean cruise, up 4.6 per cent from 2017. Passenger volume from India showed 28.1 per cent growth.

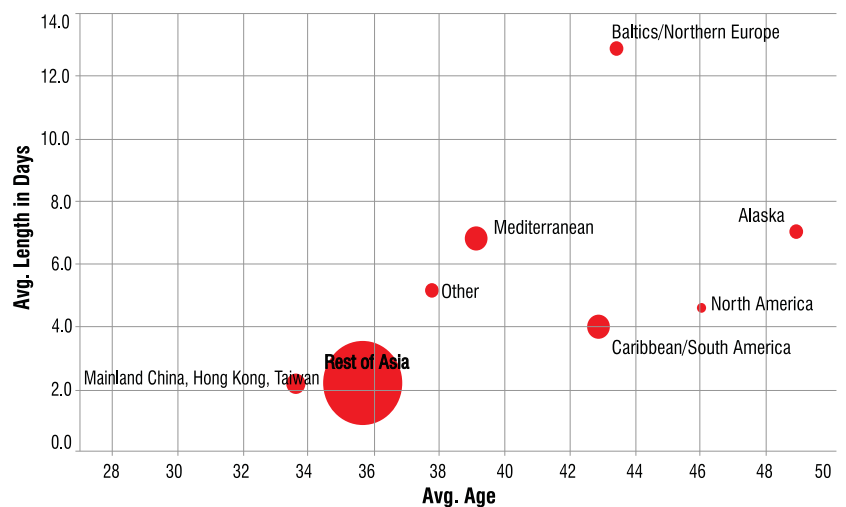
Passenger Percentages by Destination/Trade Route

	2016	2017	2018
Rest of Asia	71.9%	71.5%	76.2%
Mediterranean	7.6%	8.0%	6.2%
Caribbean/South America	9.3%	7.2%	5.6%
Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan	1.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Alaska	2.5%	2.0%	2.3%
Baltics/Northern Europe	1.6%	2.4%	2.2%
North America	2.5%	1.5%	1.1%
Other	1.9%	2.7%	2.2%

According to Cruise Line International Association's Asia Cruise Industry Ocean Source Market Report, in 2018, global ocean passenger volume was 28.5 million and Asia accounted for 14.8 per cent (versus 15.1 per cent in 2017). While still dominant, mainland China's share of all Asian passenger volume dropped to 55.8 per cent from 59.3 per cent in 2017. India accounted for 5.2 per cent of all Asian passenger volume. Overall, passenger volume from India had double-digit growth.

India, Average Age and Cruise Length by Destination/Trade Route, 2018

What is also interesting to note is that while Asian cruise passengers are found across the age spectrum with an estimated average age of 45.4 years, India is one of only three markets that showed real divergence, with Indian passengers remaining the youngest in the region at 37 years. There is also interest in more distant destinations with 8.4 per cent sailing in Europe.



Data Points with Values Below 2,000 Passengers are not Displayed in the above Visuals and Tables. Some Data Points in the following dimensions were not captured, and were ignored from the corresponding tables and visuals: Age Group, Duration Group, and Trade Name; these exclusions account for, on average, 1% of each display.

Passenger Volume & YOY Change by Destination/Trade Route

	Passenger in K			Variance		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Rest of Asia	107	123	168		15%	37%
Mediterranean	11	14	14		22%	-2%
Caribbean/South America	14	12	12		-10%	-1%
Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan	3	7	8		145%	27%
Alaska	4	4	5		-7%	43%
Baltics/Northern Europe	2	4	5		67%	21%
North America	4	3	2		-28%	-8%
Other	3	5	5		63%	5%

As one of the most populated countries in the world and with a low cruise penetration, the India source market is expected to carry on an upward trajectory. The report states that 80 per cent of Indians cruise in Asia, with considerable fly-cruise market out of the island nation of Singapore.

Looking ahead, cruising in Asia is expected to continue growing in popularity with the arrival of new ships in 2019-2020, including from Genting Cruise Lines and MSC Cruises. Several Asian destinations are also building new infrastructure to support cruise development.

Source: Cruise Line International Association



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Maharashtra lays int'l trail

The state aims to tap overseas markets by promoting products that appeal to them, such as wildlife, heritage, and cruises. Its World Heritage sites and Tadoba National Park, known for its tigers, are already popular in the European travel community.



Hazel Jain

Dilip Gawade, IAS, Director of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra, was recently part of a ministry delegation that visited The Netherlands and Belgium for a roadshow to meet about 50 local tour operators. The three-city visit was organised in September 2019 by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, to promote the country. The delegation visited the cities of Amsterdam, Brussels, and Antwerp.

Speaking about the targeted approach his department is taking to attract international tourists, Gawade says, "We educated tour operators about specific products that Maharashtra has to offer that we think will appeal to them. They

“Tour operators show interest in Ajanta Ellora, the crater of Lonar, the Sahyadri hills, even scuba-diving at Tarkali beach in Sindhudurg”

showed interest in wildlife tourism here, particularly Tadoba National Park that is famous for its tigers. They were also keen on our UNESCO heritage sites of Ajanta Ellora, the second-largest crater of Lonar, and the Sahyadri hills which is also a UNESCO site. The operators specifically inquired about trekking here. Even scuba-diving at Tarkali beach in Sindhudurg was an exciting proposition for them. We have invited them for a hosted familiarisation trip to the state."


He added that his team will be attending international shows including WTM London where they have booked stall space as well as a hall for a roadshow for which they have invited 50 tour operators from the UK. It will be led by Vinita Vaid Singal, IAS, Secy. (Tourism & Cultural Affairs), Government

of Maharashtra, along with two Deputy Directors.

Spots for cruise terminals
At the behest of **Sanjay Bhatia**, Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra, is

looking for spots on the state's coastline that can be developed as a cruise terminal or a jetty. Gawade shared this development and said, "In a meeting with Sanjay Bhatia recently, he said that to further develop cruising from the state, we

need to identify some places in Maharashtra which can be used as small cruise terminals in the future. Mumbai is a port and every international cruise today stops only in Mumbai. In the future, we could make them halt at these smaller terminals.

So far, we have zeroed in on Malvan in Sindhudurg, Bhagwati Bunder in Ratnagiri, and Dighi in Raigad. Once these are finalised, we can create itineraries around these spots where the cruise passengers can visit on a four to five-hour halt." 



Dilip Gawade
Director of Tourism
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'Bigger budget, more rooms'

► Contd from page 3

damage was caused all around the state. Mohanty shared that the number of rooms required in Odisha now, beyond the cities of Bhubaneswar and Puri, is 2000 in the three-star category, 500 in the five-star category, and around 4000 in the two-star category.

₹ 1000 crore tourism budget

Mohanty also shared that the main issue of concern for Odisha was airline connectivity. "We don't have many international airlines and we are not even connected with major cities of India," he added.

“We want a world-class convention centre in Bhubaneswar; if the right infrastructure is created, more people come for an event”

According to him, the state must focus on promotion of its temple architecture, tribal areas, water sports, wildlife and eco-tourism, while the state's tourism budget must increase five-fold, taking it from the current ₹ 200 crore to ₹ 1000 crore. He said, "The minister and secretary are fully in agreement with us. We request connectivity

with Jeypore in Koraput district under the UDAN scheme, to include the Konark Temple and the Buddhist circuit under the 'Iconic Sites' list, and construct the 480 km coastal highway ring road and one around Lake Chilika as well."

World-class convention centre

Mohanty feels that a world-class convention centre can really up the ante for the state's MICE tourism. "We wanted a world-class convention centre in Bhubaneswar; our neighbouring state has the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre, which can accommodate 4000-5000 people. It's a big attraction in Kolkata, with major conferences being hosted there. I believe that if the right infrastructure is created, more people come for an event," he said. ↴

Suggestions taken into account by the government

- ❖ Revamp of digital marketing strategy of Odisha
- ❖ Optimisation of Odisha Tourism website
- ❖ Promotion of eco-tourism jointly with the forest department
- ❖ Conducting domestic roadshows almost every month
- ❖ Single-window clearance for operation of tourism projects
- ❖ Special promotion campaigns at destinations connected by air
- ❖ Allotment of land for hotel projects to attract investments to the state

What's new with India?

► Contd from page 3

Brar goes on to explain that this shift is essentially reflected in the philosophy of India. "There are just so many things that we feel tourists from all over the world should come and discover about themselves, be it in the realm of Yoga and wellness or adventure and heritage,

“We are going to promote new destinations such as Statue of Unity in Gujarat; we are trying to convey the diversity of India at WTM London”

or just disappearing into the 1,000-year-old history that our country is able to showcase," she explains.

The department is also celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi this year, and this is going to be a significant part of the Indian pavilion at WTM London. Brar adds, "We are also going to promote new destinations such as Statue of Unity in Gujarat, which is

the tallest statue in the world. There are other tourism destinations developing around the statue, which would also remain a key focus at our pavilion. What we are trying to convey is the diversity of India, the layers and layers of beauty that we see in India. We would like to convey that as a message."

Besides the different stakeholders of the industry such as state governments, wellness organisations, tour operators and hotels are also participating in WTM London along with Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Sharing her expectations from the show regarding promoting India at a global stage, especially after the recent steps taken by the government to boost the number of tourists coming to India by

reducing the visa fee and GST on hotels, Brar says that "India has now become a lucrative destination for global travellers."

Apart from the government initiative of reducing the e-Tourist Visa fee, increasing the validity of visa and introducing a one-month visa is also a good move. Brar says, "This is a very exciting time for tourism in India. World Economic Forum has also recently rated India at the 34th rank, which is a significant improvement from our rank in 2014. The parameters they have rated us very high on is the business environment in India and price competitiveness. Now, with the reduction in GST rates on hotels, India is only going to become more and more attractive as a destination, and we would like to use this as a major selling point in the global market. We are looking forward to a magnified response from tourists all over the world." ↴



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The sand is exactly as white as shown in this picture.
The ocean of white sand stands out stark and pristine in its
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MICE at MP's heritage sites

Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) has restored Minto Hall in Bhopal, a heritage building, as a convention centre in keeping with its two-pronged focus on promoting the state as a MICE destination as well as maintaining heritage monuments.

TT Bureau

There are two things that Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation is currently focusing on – maintaining its heritage monuments and promoting the state as a MICE destination. It has been doing this by restoring these structures as MICE venues. Sharing an example is **Sonia Meena**, Additional Managing Director, MPSTDC, who says, “We have restored Minto Hall in Bhopal which is in the Old Vidhan Sabha, a beautiful landmark heritage building built in 1909, to its original glory, as a state-of-the-art international convention centre. Our focus is on promoting Minto Hall as Central India’s popular MICE destination.”

The monument boasts of seven halls with a capac-



Sonia Meena
Additional Managing Director
MPSTDC

ity ranging from 30 to 1200 pax. The composition of the building includes two meeting rooms, two committee rooms, a boardroom, a theatre hall, and a media centre. There is a rooftop restaurant as well.

She adds that this is also one of its biggest steps towards

maintaining a heritage site like Minto Hall. “This was our major initiative to maintain our heritage sites and to promote it as a MICE destination in the domestic as well as international market. There are two more convention centres coming up; one at Khajuraho and the other one at Sanchi which are iconic World Heritage sites. These

“There is a lot of scope to explore; we have partnered with the best names in the industry to facilitate hospitality and tourism in Madhya Pradesh”

monuments will make Madhya Pradesh a preferred MICE destination on the domestic as well as world map. We are promoting Minto Hall aggressively and are determined to host the

best and the biggest names in the industry, and showcase our organising and hospitality abilities to the world,” Meena shares.

Domestic travellers to the state are expected to grow between 10-15 per cent and FTAs should range between three to five per cent in 2019.

On roping in private players to maintain and manage MPSTDC properties, Meena says that MP Tourism has always encouraged public-private partnership, and has put out

land parcels and properties up for lease as and when the opportunity beckons. “There is a lot of scope to explore the huge tourism potential available for private participation in Madhya Pradesh. The government has chalked out various attractive schemes for private participation. We have partnered with the best names in the industry to facilitate hospitality and tourism in Madhya Pradesh,” she says.

MPSTDC also has 63 well-located and maintained properties across the state. These are further classified into six residencies, 24 resorts, and 33 deluxe hotels. The collective room inventory stands at 1,221. Madhya Pradesh Tourism Hotels & Resorts is going to introduce 36 new rooms at Kalchuri

Public Private Partnership

MP Government is offering several heritage tourist properties to private participants, to develop, maintain and promote tourism activities. The government has already handed over four heritage properties to the private sector, and another five to eight properties have been identified for the next phase.

Residency, Jabalpur, which is a three-star property. “We are also coming up with one property near Kutni dam, Khajuraho, with 10 rooms; a three-star banquet hotel at Indore; and new rooms at Mandu and Sanchi,” Meena adds.

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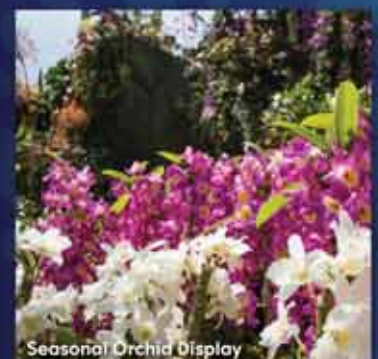
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Tier-II shows potential in UP

At TTAUP Travel Mart, the Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP) successfully showcased the tourism products of the state. With tourism from and to Tier-II markets on the rise, the tourism department is investing in infrastructure, while ensuring that agents are thorough with what's on offer.

 Kanchan Nath

For its third travel mart, TTM 2019, the Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP) received more than 400 online buyer registrations. The mart had 35 exhibitors showcasing the various tourism products they had on offer. On the occasion, **Jitendra Kumar** (IAS), Additional Chief Secretary and Director General - Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh and chief guest for the event, elaborated on the necessity of such regional trade-oriented shows to be organised frequently for promoting tourism awareness as well as overall growth of the sector in Uttar Pradesh.

Sharing more details about the event, **Vivek Pandey**, President, TTAUP, said, "This

year, among new exhibitors, we had the Russian DMC and some visa service providers. Almost 90 per cent of exhibitors who had joined us in 2017 exhibited this year as well, which means they must be getting good business from Uttar Pradesh."

He added that outbound travel from a Tier-II city like Lucknow and its nearby areas has grown in 2019 vis-à-vis 2017, with some stating that business from this market has grown by as much as 70 per cent. "Tier-II markets have a lot of potential and all we need to do is to train and educate agents further, something that we aimed to do through the mart. With new airlines coming in, especially for Southeast Asia and the Middle East, this potential can be further



Jitendra Kumar
Additional Chief Secretary and DG - Tourism
Government of Uttar Pradesh

utilised," he said. It was also shared at the mart that Terminal 3 with over 12 aerobridges will soon be coming up at Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport in Lucknow. MICE movement also continues to grow, while offbeat destinations are becoming popular.



Vivek Pandey
President
TTAUP

On the occasion, Kumar spoke about the state's potential as a destination for inbound tourism. He said, "The Buddhist circuit is one circuit that the whole world is looking to explore; six destinations of the circuit are in Uttar Pradesh itself. We need to educate our tour operators and make them

realise that there is a huge potential to bring tourists from all over the world to the state, to experience this circuit. Saranath, Kaushambi, Kushinagar, Kapilavastu, Sravasti, and Sankisa are all in Uttar Pradesh and in all these places, huge infrastructure has been created. Tourist numbers are also

Pradesh ranks second within India, while in international tourist numbers, the state ranks third as per 2018 data. The minister also said that UP's tourism department now plans to start the 'Shaam-e-Awadh' in Lucknow. "We are working on morning heritage walks in at least 10 places in

“Tier-II markets have witnessed growth in outbound tourism; all we need to do is train and educate agents further, something that we aimed to do through the mart”

Vivek Pandey

increasing, but there are some missing links that need to be connected."

He added that in terms of domestic tourist numbers, Uttar

the state. We are also working on the development of a night bazaar in Agra, which will offer cuisine of the Awadh region and of Uttar Pradesh, as well as their crafts," he added.

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Rajasthan assures safety

Rajasthan has created an extensive framework for tourists to feel safe at all times. It also plans to develop more sites, while ensuring that its B&Bs are in tandem with any and all regulations.



Govind Singh Dotasra, Minister of State, Tourism and Devasthan, Government of Rajasthan, says that their main aim is to promote tourism while ensuring that tourists coming to the state feel safe and secure. "Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot, has taken an initiative under which any person who feels unsafe or has encountered any unfortunate incident can go to the nearest police station and even approach a Special Police Officer and lodge a First Information Report (FIR). Rajasthan is one of the first states to take an initiative like that. Such an effort will make both international and domestic tourists feel safe," he shares.



Govind Singh Dotasra
Minister of State, Tourism and Devasthan
Government of Rajasthan

Rajasthan has plenty to offer and a number of sites that can be developed for tourism. Dotasra, however, says that getting clearances can sometimes be a hindrance and delay the entire process. He adds, "One major problem is that permission for forest land is not given easily. If we wish to develop a ropeway in areas like Sikar, clearance from the forest department doesn't come easy. Even for tribal areas, especially in Chittor which is the birthplace of Maharana Pratap (the 13th king of Rajasthan's Mewar region) and has great temples and places of historical significance, getting a clearance for development work is difficult. We want to bring this forth to Ministry of Tourism, so that all departments can work together to promote the sector." The minister also acknowledges the government's initiative in giving Jaipur the

“B&B facilities have been in Rajasthan for a long time. If there are more guidelines on a national level, we will follow them”

status of a heritage city. At the recent conference of

tourism ministers in New Delhi, Dotasra also expressed

his view on Bed & Breakfast (B&B) establishments, saying that "these facilities have been in existence in Rajasthan for a long time. If there are more guidelines for this on a national level, we will follow them." ↴



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- Israeli carrier Arkia Airlines launches Tel Aviv-Goa route
- AirAsia India launches flights to Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati and Imphal from Agartala

Haryana revisits its history

With the Rakhigarhi village excavations revealing the existence of a civilisation even before the earliest ones known to man, Haryana's prospects as a historical and cultural hub for tourists have only catapulted. The state must now ready itself for the expected boost in numbers.

TT Bureau

Ram Bilas Sharma, Minister - Tourism and Art & Culture Affairs, Government of Haryana, believes that this North Indian state is an important destination for inbound tourists due to its close proximity to national capital New Delhi.

According to him, the state also holds both historic and religious importance for the domestic tourist, being the birthplace of the holy Bhagavad Gita (the 700-verse Sanskrit scripture that is part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata) among other destinations where several events of the Mahabharata are said to have taken place. He adds, "Kurukshetra is also a very important destination to learn and understand more about Hindu mythology. Haryana



Ram Bilas Sharma
Minister - Tourism and Art & Culture Affairs
Government of Haryana

has also witnessed historical battles, including the famous battles of Panipat, and has lent canvas to the epic battle of Mahabharata at Kurukshetra."

Historical sites

In a first-of-its-kind attempt, a team of scientists has investigated and found remains of the Indus Valley civilisation in the Rakhigarhi village of Hisar

district in Haryana, and the minister believes that scientists around the world have now proved that Haryana is the location of the most ancient civilisation in the world. Sharma says, "Scientists have claimed that findings of a civilisation in Rakhigarhi place it even before the Harappa civilisation by almost 900 years. These findings will definitely help boost tourism to the site, in turn attracting history enthusiasts

the Mahabharata war. In order to boost tourism numbers, both inbound and domestic, to these destinations, Haryana Tourism has developed the heritage sites with ethnic grandeur and has created excellent tourist facilities in Panchkula and Palwal.

Arts & culture

Haryana is home to the world's largest arts and crafts fair, the Surajkund

tion with the union ministries of tourism, textiles, culture, and external affairs.


The minister informs that at the 33rd edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela, which was held in February this year, a large number of renowned national and international folk artists and cultural groups were present. "Representatives from 28 countries and all the Indian states participated. In 2020, we are planning to rope in more partners, and the fair will be bigger and better than its previous editions," he claims.

“These findings will definitely help boost tourism to the site, in turn attracting history enthusiasts to the state”

to the state." Findings of pottery, sculpture, and jewellery at Pehowa, Kurukshetra, and Panipat match with Prithudaka (Pehowa), Tilpat (Panipat) and Sonprastha (Sonipat), establishing the occurrence of


International Crafts Mela, which receives visitors from all over the world and from across the country. Every year, the fair is organised by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collabora-

In 2018, Haryana received 5,43,69,873 domestic tourists and 5,13,113 foreign tourists, registering a growth of 12.47 per cent and 14.32 per cent, respectively, in comparison to 2017.




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What next after GST rate cuts?

Now that the Goods & Services Tax (GST) has been revised for hotels - 12 per cent for tariff from ₹ 1000-₹ 7500 and 18 per cent for tariff above ₹ 7500, senior members in the hospitality sector talk about other related issues that still need to be ironed out, including Input Tax Credit and a simpler process.



Sudesh Poddar
EC member
FHRAI

“The recent incentives from the government in terms of corporate tax relief coupled with the GST rate cut are important, but there are still some teething problems that need to be edged out. The highest slab of GST should not exceed 12 per cent in hotels and restaurants keeping in alignment with GST rates in the hospitality industry in neighbouring countries. This will help India’s hospitality industry compete with these countries and

attract more foreign tourists so that more foreign exchange is earned by the country. GST compliance procedure should be simplified and be made more user-friendly. The current system is not friendly for a lot of members of the hospitality sector, especially those in small towns and areas with poor internet connectivity.

For budding entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector, Input Tax Credit should be allowed when they buy the construction materials and other essentials required for the building of a hotel or a restaurant. This will encourage more investments and more employment in the sector.”



Dr M Venkadasubbu
Jt. Hony. Secretary
FHRAI

“An important issue that remains is that the tax on gas for domestic use is five per cent, while for commercial use it is 18 per cent. We have requested that the same should be reduced to five per cent. Tax rate for bakeries needs to be rationalised; the problem with taxes in the bakeries is the slab of a different GST for various products as zero per cent, five per cent, 12 per cent, and 28 per cent. Bakery products are also food items and tax rates must be rationalised.

For savouries, there are two rates - five per cent for unbranded and 12.5 per cent for branded - which need to be rationalised. There are no differential rates in sweets.

Restaurants should be treated on a par with manufacturers and traders, who enjoy threshold exemption upto ₹ 40 lakh per annum for a turnover of ₹ 1.5 crore and GST is just one per cent, whereas for restaurants, exemption is only up to ₹ 20 lakh with a composite levy of five per cent limited to annual turnover. For restaurants, collectable tax rate is five per cent, irrespective of turnover. Another problem we are facing is that if we let out the hall alone, the GST is 18 per cent.”



TS Walia
EC Member
FHRAI

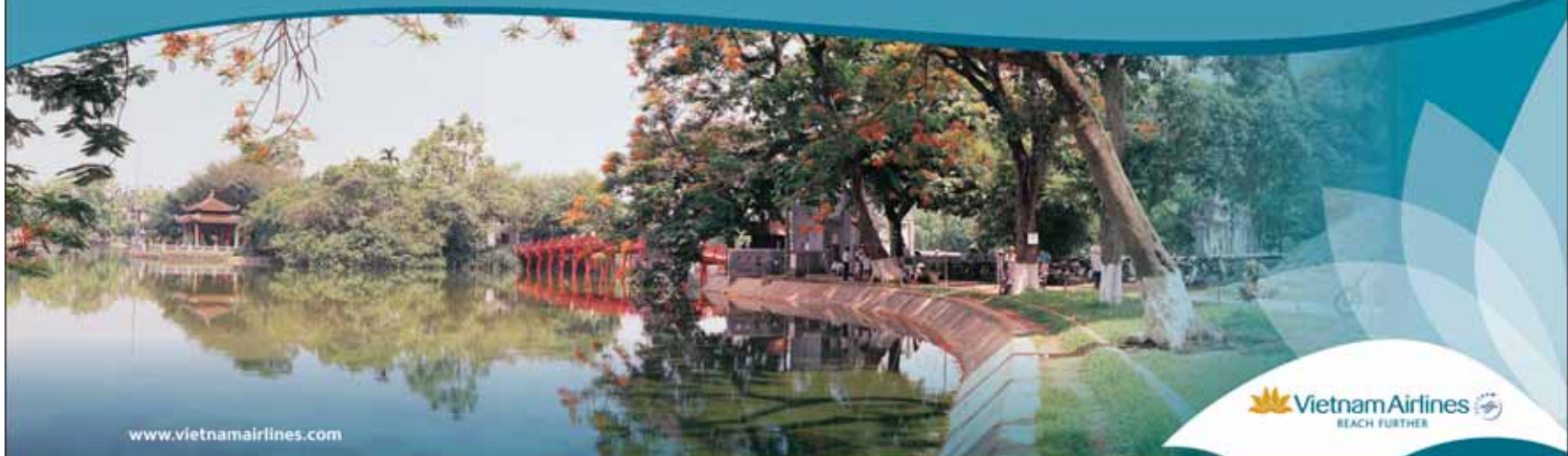
“To be competitive with our neighbouring countries, the maximum indirect tax (GST) that we levy on hotel rooms must be capped at 12 per cent. Though the drop from 18 per cent on more expensive rooms may seem like a drop in government revenue at face value, the quantum gain will actually far outstrip this number. Another aspect is input charge. Measures should be taken to deduct from the payable tax amount money that has been already levied as

tax. When we calculate national income, we take into account only the prices of the final goods and services produced in an economy in a given year. Intermediate products used as inputs for sale at a later stage are not included. Going by that same approach, it is essential to maintain systemic uniformity, and that hospitality business is provided with either only taxation at the final stage or the amount already paid as tax be deducted from the payable amount.

If there could be categorisation or perhaps an exceptional condition for a few industries, it would certainly decrease the filing burden by multiple orders of magnitude.”

Inputs by TT Bureau

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Punjab to invest ` 100 cr

Tourism in Punjab will soon have more on offer. While religious tourism will continue to be promoted by the state, heritage, medical and eco-tourism will also get onto the bandwagon.



TT Bureau

The state of Punjab receives a lot of religious tourists, especially to Amritsar, throughout the year. Charanjit Singh Channi, Cabinet Minister for Tourism & Culture Affairs, Government of Punjab, claims that while the state's tourism department is leaving no stone unturned in promoting religious tourism even further, it is also focusing on promoting heritage, medical, and eco-tourism.

"There are a lot of heritage buildings in Punjab, which



Charanjit Singh Channi
Cabinet Minister for Tourism & Culture Affairs, Government of Punjab

we want to develop to attract tourists. Projects worth about ` 100 crore are being carried out in Punjab for heritage tourism. Apart from that, there are a lot of other initiatives going on in Amritsar, including renovation of all the buildings. Amongst other things, we are developing adventure sports activities in Pinkasia, which is in Ropar district. We are also developing a convention centre here. In Chamkaur Sahib, we are beautifying the façade.

In the coming days, one would see more such projects coming up in the state," he shares.

Channi adds that Punjab sees a huge influx of tourists every year, claiming that last year, the state received as many as 4 crore tourists, both domestic and international. The state now wants to double this figure in the next two years.

"In order to attract more foreign tourists to the state, we are participating in international trade shows in the UK, Ireland, and several

“There are a lot of heritage buildings in Punjab, which we want to develop to attract tourists, Apart from that, there are a lot of other initiatives going on in Amritsar”

other countries." He adds that the Chief Minister also plans to dedicate ` 400 crore

for developmental projects in the state that would boost tourist numbers further.

Knowledge session by ETAA



The Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA) recently conducted a knowledge session for the trade in Mumbai in association with Europamundo and Akbar Holidays. About 45 ETAA members were present.



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More to Goa than beaches

Goa Tourism is offering a panoply of products to foreign and domestic visitors to the state, including adventure sports, new convention facilities, wellness tourism, a family theme park, even a new airport. A boost in tourist arrivals is awaited as the state hopes that they will now be more willing to explore a Goa beyond its beaches.



In a bid to make Goa one of the most coveted destinations in India for tourists, Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) is taking a number of steps. **Nikhil Desai**, Managing Director, GTDC, says that while a number of initiatives have already been taken, most of which are at the implementation stage, some new ones will be

Tourist facilities and services
To make Goa the number one adventure hub in the country, GTDC is offering several adventure sports such as river rafting, scuba diving, parasailing, paragliding, and hot air ballooning. "We have introduced India's second highest bungee jumping facility at Mayem Lake and have tied up with reputed private operators to ensure safety," shares Desai.



Nikhil Desai
Managing Director
GTDC

“In addition to this, a ropeway project will also be underway soon, within the next three to four months”

launched soon. Among them is a world-class convention centre in Dona Paula near Panaji, with a seating capacity for 5,000 people, and a mini expo centre.

A full-fledged family theme park is also in the offing here.

GTDC is also working on developing Farmagudi, near the temple town of Ponda, into a

wellness-cum-spiritual tourism hub, which will also serve as a centre for Yoga. "In addition to this, a ropeway project will also be underway soon, within the next three to four months," he says.

With Colva Beach being selected as an 'Iconic Site',



GTDC is looking forward to implementing the scheme and ensuring that it is counted amongst the best in the world. "We have already introduced lifeguard facilities at our beaches and Goa is the first state to do so. We have about 750 lifeguards, posted on all the beaches in Goa, to ensure that visitors remain safe and secure," adds Desai.

Infrastructure development
Another important development

is construction of Mopa Airport, which is expected to boost regional, domestic, as well as international connectivity. Desai shares that though work has already begun, owing to some legal issues, there is a slight hold up, but the project is still expected to be completed within the time frame stipulated by the government. He adds that even the highway connecting North and South Goa is being increased to six lanes.

"In addition, we are introducing several new tourism facilities like an underwater submarine, giant wheels, and bike tourism circuits that would allow tourists to hire bikes and go to nearby places like Hampi. A hanging restaurant, which would go up to 100 metres in the sky, is also in the offing, and would allow people to get a great view of Goa while enjoying their food," he adds.

Goa has introduced its own taxi hailing App that offers functionalities of renowned taxi operators and where the entire amount is retained by the taxi operator himself. The system began with only 50 taxis in tow and has now grown to almost 90, with more operators joining.

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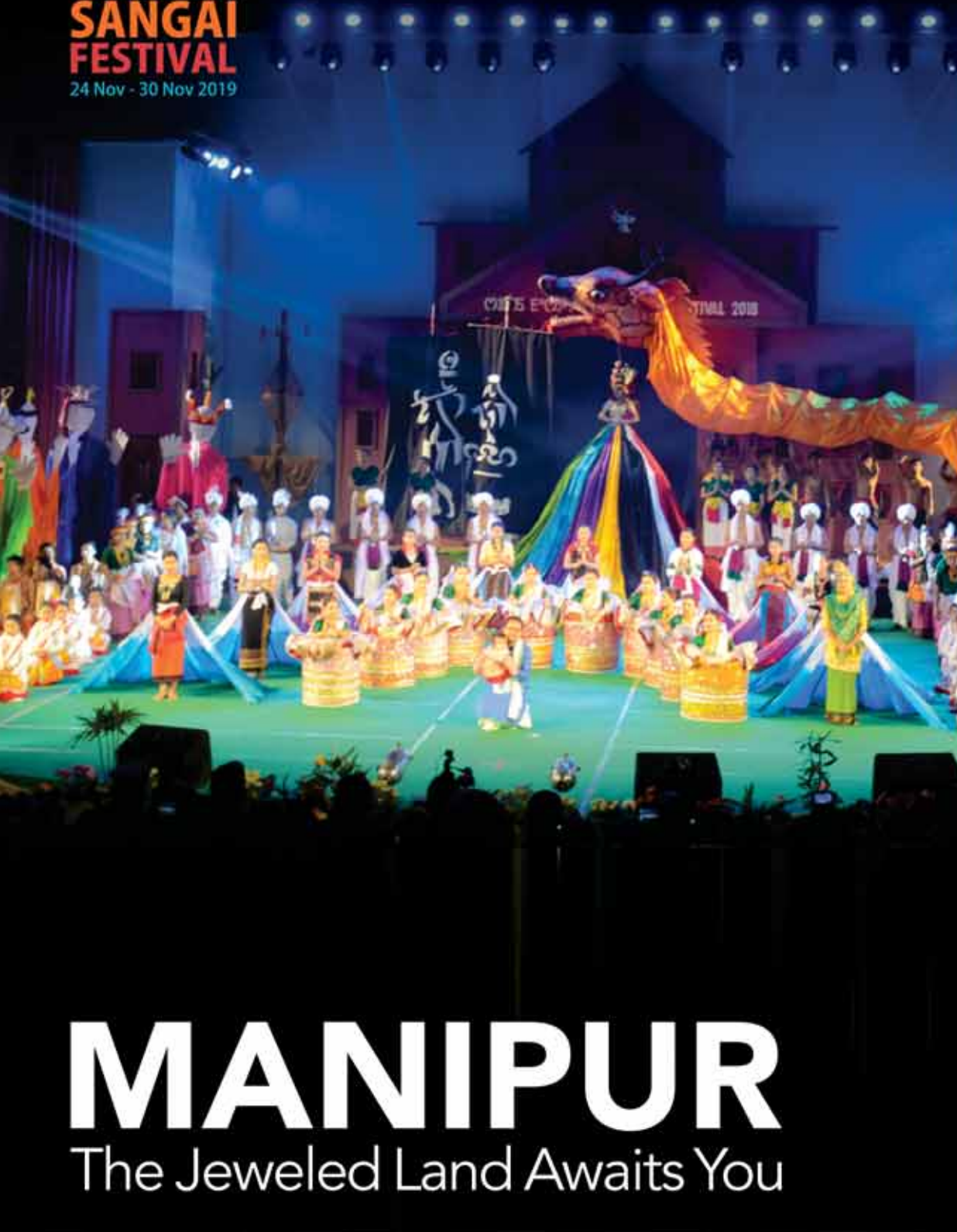


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“There is no defined procedure, however, team members are trained to identify the list of items in a room as a standard. They thereby alert the authorities if anything goes missing or is damaged. **The team comprising Security Manager, Housekeeping Manager and Chief Engineer investigate the missing item or assess the extent of damage, based on which a further call to action is defined.**”




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Million Chinese tourists by 2025

According to a report by China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), the growing Chinese outbound market can spell wonders for India, with the latter expected to receive as many as 1.07 million Chinese travellers by 2025, owing to the year-on-year increase in arrivals.

COTRI, an independent research institute for consulting, research, information, training, and quality assessment relating to the Chinese outbound tourism market, says that for India, the mid-level market and the mass market will grow stronger, fuelled by new travellers from lower-tier cities. The high-end market will have the slowest growth rate for the overall departures from China, as the

top 10 per cent of the Chinese society are already active travellers. However, it can be expected that given a successful branding strategy, this segment will see a stronger-than-average growth, especially if suitable touristic products are offered in fields like health, nature, and special interest which are unique for India.

Forecast Chinese arrivals to India (2019-2025)

Compared to package group Chinese tourists, free individual travellers (FITs) and customised travel visitors are mostly wealthier upper-middle-class Chinese visitors who have already gained more experience in outbound travel. Many FITs and customised travel visitors thus have the potential to stay longer at each location, disperse wider, avoid peak seasons and crowded attractions, while in the same time still purchase tourism services and activities.

Market Potential for Chinese tourism to India up to 2025

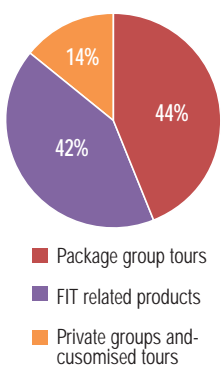
The growth rate for India will outperform the total Chinese outbound growth rate with a cumulative increase of 280 per cent between 2018 and 2025. In 2020, the total arrival numbers would reach more than 410,000 and touch the 500,000 mark in 2021. Year 2023 is expected to see further increase in arrivals, touching 730,000, while in 2025, in keeping with the trend, India is expected to receive as many as 1.07 million Chinese tourists.

Forecast Chinese Arrival to India 2019-2025

Year	Total China Outbound (Million)	Total China Outbound beyond Greater China (Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan) (Million)	China Outbound to India (Thousand)	Market Share India of China Outbound beyond Greater China (Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan) in %
2018	162	83	282	0.34
2019	180	89	341	0.38
2020	194	95	413	0.43
2021	209	104	500	0.48
2022	224	113	604	0.53
2023	241	123	731	0.59
2024	259	134	885	0.66
2025	279	146	1,071	0.73

Source: COTRI Analytics

Consumption behaviour



Source: Ctrip

What plays to India's advantage

- The overall relations between the two governments are better in recent years than before.
- The 'second wave' of Chinese travellers is moving away from sightseeing and shopping at the most famous destinations towards 'exotic' destinations, more authentic experiences and immersion into local culture.
- With the growing levels of English spoken in China, the

fact that India is an English-speaking country helps to attract Chinese visitors.

- The diversity of India's cultures, landscapes, and possible activities makes it possible to cater to the many specific interests of visitors at competitive prices.
- The shorter distance of India to China compared to Europe or Australia and the simplified visa regulations offer an opportunity to 'money-rich but time-poor' Chinese travellers to visit.

Nagaland festivals draw crowds

Over the course of the next two years, the state of Nagaland aims to aggressively promote its natural wonders and festivals, including the Hornbill Festival that received as many as 13,000 tourists last year. It may also add more adventure and tourist sites that hadn't been promoted earlier.

TT Bureau

Nagaland is the land of festivals, claims H Khehovi Yepthomi, Advisor – Tourism, Art & Culture, Nagaland, adding that it is the different festivals celebrated by the different tribes in the state that usually attract tourists.

"We have 16 major tribes; if you include the sub-tribes, the total comes to 40. Every tribe has a different culture and celebrates different festivals, because of which we are used to celebrating festivals throughout the year. The Hornbill Festival is the most popular one, celebrated from



H Khehovi Yepthomi
Advisor – Tourism, Art & Culture
Nagaland

December 1-10. Last year, almost 3000 international visitors and 10,000 domestic visitors came to this festival. This year, we hope to go

beyond those numbers. We have also introduced a Mini Hornbill Festival, which goes on for three days. Apart from that, every district celebrates these festivals as per the ways of their tribe and their history. This has also been a major focus for us for the promotion of tourism."

Other than festivals, Yepthomi insists that Nagaland possesses a lot of natural resources. "Nagaland has been given a natural gift. We have good vegetation, beautiful valleys, rivers, hills, and forests. There are a lot of adventure spots and heritage sites as well. There are a lot of caves and mountains, and people can even try ropeways and paragliding. Visitors to Nagaland have a plethora of activities to indulge in," he says.



That said, the advisor adds that one issue that the state faces is that it could not create many tourism destinations earlier. "We are now trying to promote all this and explore opportunities. I am encouraged by the tourism boards

of other states and we will improve ourselves by making use of the gift of land that has been given to us," he claims. Nagaland has a dedicated department for tourism and through its tour operators,

connects with the travel trade within the country and even outside it. "We have a common website, where one can get all the information about Nagaland and the famous Hornbill Festival," he shares.

“Nagaland has been given a natural gift; there are a lot of caves and mountains, and people can even try ropeways and paragliding”

Skål Delhi plans ahead

Skål Delhi has several activities and CSR initiatives planned for the future. The objective is to become more environmentally friendly, which is the need of the hour.

TT Bureau

Skål Delhi chapter recently held its annual general meeting (AGM) in the capital city to map out its activities and initiatives for the next 12 months. Sharing more details was **Greesh Bindra**, President, Skål Delhi, who said that the chapter had one big event and two CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities planned for the near future. He added that Skål Delhi Club's objective was to become more environmentally friendly which, according to him, was the need of the hour. Bindra also shared that another key focus for the chapter this year would be Young Skål, a division of



Greesh Bindra
President
Skål Delhi

Skål specially created for students and young professionals in the field of tourism. He added, "We need to focus a little more on Young Skål. Ankush Nijhawan was one of our leaders for it and now, with Sanjay Datta at the helm of the Skål Asia team, we have even got the National Director for Young Skål involved. We have already enrolled five members into Young Skål and this year, we plan to enrol even more members into the team. They are the ones who will take over the club in the future."

At the AGM, Bindra also shared his excitement on Datta, Skål Delhi's former president, being elected as the President of Skål Asia and said that this was something that Skål Delhi was extremely proud of. He added, "I think the Delhi club is doing a great job because it is involved in a lot of activities. At

Did you know, in 1934, the "Association International des Skål Clubs" was formed with Florimond Volckaert as its first President.

“I think the Delhi club is doing a great job because it is involved in a lot of activities; at the moment, we are planning a big event outside New Delhi”


the moment, we are planning a big event outside New Delhi. The Executive Committee

is also dedicatedly working towards expanding the club and making it global.”


A Moroccan tryst






Nora Aghmane, Managing Director, Escapes & Co Travel - Morocco, was in Mumbai recently to promote the destination and packages the company offers. Marketed through Global Destinations in India, the DMC is keen on tapping groups from India.



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Assist India, make it Incredible

India Assist, a mobile-based first-call assistance App, intends to make travel in India stress-free for foreign tourists. The App provides verified information over call and eases any distress caused during travelling by allocating a personnel to tourists at their live location anywhere in Delhi-NCR.

 Peden Doma Bhutia

When we visit a new place, the experience that we have as a traveller helps us shape the image of that place and it kind of stays with us forever.

And at a time when India is pulling all stops to make the country a viable destination for tourists, it is even more important that as hosts we are able to send across the right image of this 'Incredible' country that we live in. This is the basic premise on which India Assist was built. If you are asking what exactly does India Assist do, then **Harish Khatri**, Founder, India Assist Insights, describes it succinctly, "At India Assist, we don't just provide a support system bridging gaps

for travellers, but provide a means for societies to do better than they are, as a part of the tourism industry."

Founded in 2017 with the vision to make travel in India stress-free for foreign tourists, India Assist is an App-based on-call assistance and distress management for foreign tourists. As **Moqierish Tak**, Co-Founder, India Assist Insights, goes on to explain, "We provide assistance by providing verified information over call and ease any distress caused during travelling by allocating a personnel to them at their live location anywhere in Delhi-NCR, and eventually in other cities of India."

The App connects a person in the time of need to the




(L-R) Harish Khatri, Founder, India Assist Insights and Moqierish Tak, Co-Founder, India Assist Insights

right mode of solution in case of theft, medical issues, transit, or during any kind of altercation. Before embarking on the venture, India Assist conducted a study in which 260 foreign tourists participated. The demographic included 30 per

cent of 18-25-year-olds, 31 per cent of 25-40-year-olds, 28 per cent of 40-60-year-olds, and 11 per cent comprised 60-plus year-olds. The survey consisted of group discussions and one-on-one interviews with these foreign tourists across Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai.

With no template to follow, the journey for Khatri and Tak hasn't been an easy one. As Khatri explains, "Without investor support while developing the technology, taking this kind of stand was not easy and we kept struggling to meet our expectations versus cost. We were determined that we would not compromise and give a half-baked product to our customers. Thankfully, once investors started believing in our vision and product, things eased out. It took us almost two years to perfect the technology that we now work with, and are constantly upgrading it for better-user experience."

They are now looking to work closely with stakeholders

from the tourism industry whom they look upon not as competitors, but as partners. Tak rightly says, "All stakeholders like airlines, hotels, travel agents, OTAs, government authorities, media et al need to support the cause of assistance to travellers and we are more than willing to partner with them to take care of their customers whenever they need any assistance. We hope to partner with state and central government agencies and other stakeholder associations to endorse our services. Furthermore, we are also creating affiliate partners and connects in the tourism ecosystem wherein we enable the stakeholders to provide our services to their customers." 

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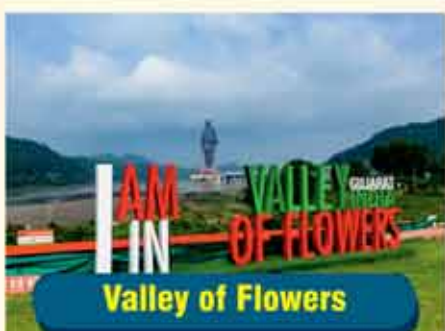
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The site remains closed on Monday, so you can plan your trip accordingly.

For Further Information log on to: www.gujarattourism.com | www.statueofunity.in For Ticket Booking, log on to: www.soutickets.in

Is joint bank guarantee viable?

Travel agents have floated the idea of a joint bank guarantee, taken by travel associations, for an extended credit line in the hospitality sector. Is the proposition a win-win for agents and hoteliers alike?



Pradip Lulla
Acting President and
Vice President, TAFI

“ All travel agents don't have volumes in the hotel business. For group purchases, hotels require deposits or a bank guarantee in lieu of a deposit in order to cover cancellations. We have approached certain hotel chains for joint bank guarantee, which would enable our members to cover cancellations at a lower margin and have better cash flow, but such an agreement is yet to fructify. ”



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

“ Keeping in mind how the industry is being affected by OTAs, the traditional travel agent and hotel partnership would be an interesting option to explore. Based on the above, the range would be around five per cent for individual bookings and up to 15 per cent for larger ones. We would be open to consider a joint bank guarantee, but it would require a prior and complete scrutiny of the terms and conditions. ”



Jyoti Mayal
Honorary Secretary
General, TAAI

“ We support our members who have come out with a scheme for a joint bank guarantee for non-air products covering hospitality. **Becoming a part of the joint bank guarantee with an association will enable them to do business with a pool of suppliers, which the association would get together to deliver volume. I believe, this is a good initiative and will support the cause of smaller agents. ”**



Rishi Puri
SVP, Operations &
Development, Lords Hotels

“ With the best of travel trade partners, there are times when one erring member could spoil the name of an entire fraternity. Though it surely is a Herculean task, **a joint bank guarantee could be the way forward. It will ensure that while the travel agent continues to enjoy seamless credit, the hotelier is also relaxed with the extended credit and assured that his money is safe. ”**



Sunil Ghadiok
Director, Shanti Hospitality
Management Services

“ Any move that enhances ease of doing business is always welcome and I am sure that hotels, in general, would consider it with seriousness. **There would need to be a clear understanding of the content of the bank guarantee with no scope of any ambiguity in respect of deliverables. Contracts would have to be reviewed and possibly revised to incorporate essentials of the guarantee. ”**



Davinder Juj
General Manager
Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place

“ Every project that starts with the good intent of increasing business is always a viable option. **Some important requirements before implementing the joint bank guarantee will be to understand the nature of liability among the guarantors; how money is going to be paid back; and in case there's any default, how the hotel's interests will be safeguarded and who will pay the money. ”**

Inputs by Anupriya Bishnoi

Avoid overcrowding tourist sites

FHRAI regional presidents share how hoteliers can ensure that tourist destinations do not get destroyed by overtourism. They talk about developing lesser-known destinations with the right infrastructure.



Pranav Singh
President
HRAEI

“ There are plenty of destinations that can be developed in eastern India. **Arunachal Pradesh has such natural beauty that it can be turned into the Switzerland of India with proper air, rail and road connectivity. It has pristine natural beauty, unexplored wildlife and also some quaint monasteries. Puri and Gopalpur are also well-known beaches, but Astaranga and Ramchandi could be developed into new destinations. ”**



K Syama Raju
President
SIHRA

“ Due to crowds at such places of interest, many tourists do not get a chance to view the monument or spend as much time as they intended to. The solution is to develop lesser known destinations using the experience that one has gained from seeing the results in popular destinations. **A good infrastructure is key to the development of such places and involving the local population in the efforts is important. ”**



Surendra Kumar Jaiswal
President
HRANI

“ Strong marketing and promotion of lesser-known destinations should be highlighted and promoted by the industry. There is a need for the government and private sector to collaborate towards thematic development of these unexplored destinations. **In North India, a few such regions are Auli, Munisiyari, Binsar, Almora & Tehri in Uttarakhand; Spiti, Kasol and Kaza in Himachal Pradesh ”**

Inputs by TT Bureau

- Cultural Experiences
- Wildlife Holidays
- Adventurous Holidays
- Golf Holidays
- Culinary Experiences
- Family Holidays

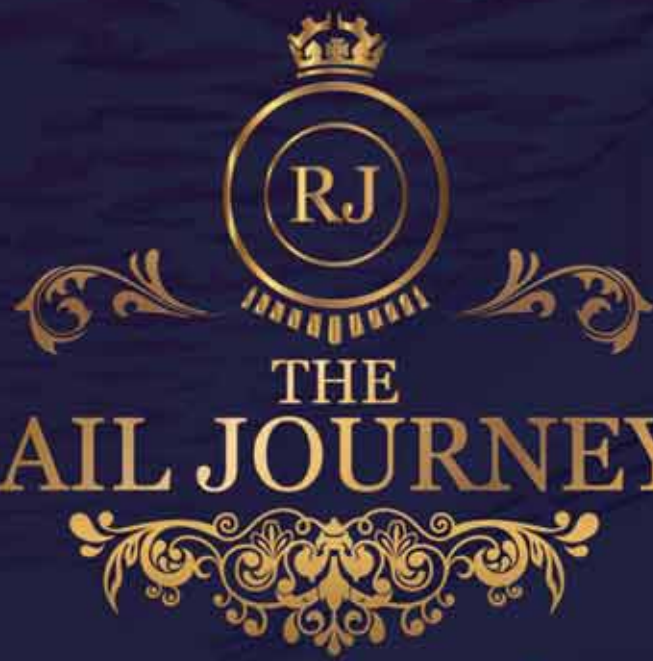
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Industry unites against FSAs

Multiple hotels and F&B associations, including FHRAI and NRAI, have joined forces to participate in the #Logout movement to protest against deep discounting and other predatory policies employed by Food Service Aggregators (FSAs) in the country.

 Hazel Jain

Industry associations around the country have come together to protest against unfair practices by multiple Food Service Aggregators (FSAs) that refuse to cooperate with them. Among them are the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) that comprises HRANI, HRAWI, SIHRA and HRAEI; National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), Indian Hotel & Restaurant Association (AHAR), Thane Hotel Association, Pune Restaurants & Hotel Association (PRAHA), Nainital Hotels & Restaurants Association (NHRA), and Vadodara Food Entrepreneurs (VFE).

All the above associations have extended their whole-



hearted support to the #Logout movement initiated by NRAI in August 2019. They collectively want to send out a strong message to FSAs about their highly-detrimental and predatory trade practices. Several city-based and affiliated bodies joining the campaign strongly indicate that the pain is being felt across the entire industry and everyone is aligned together.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, President, Hotel and Restau-

rant Association of Western India (HRAWI) & Vice President, FHRAI, says, "We recognise the need for peaceful co-existence of the hotel and restaurant industry with e-commerce aggregators. But we are also very clear that the terms of engagement between the two sides have to be equal at all times, that no one can usurp the role of the other, and aggregators cannot dominate the industry or conduct business in a manner that is

detrimental to the industry's growth or profits." The main team leading this movement is in constant dialogue with them. They will soon organise a meeting between the two parties at the earliest possible date.

Anurag Katriar, President, NRAI, adds, "This group also unanimously agreed that Zomato Gold is an extremely detrimental product for the industry and strongly opposes the same. It is clothed in such

Core complaints

- ❖ Deep discounting
- ❖ Lopsided and oppressive contracts with arbitrary rule changes
- ❖ High commissions, high penalties and unilateral changes to them
- ❖ Delayed payments and unreasonable penalties
- ❖ Unreasonable additional charges
- ❖ Unethical practices such as showing a restaurant closed when riders are unavailable
- ❖ Private labels
- ❖ Forced use of delivery services
- ❖ Inconsistency in search algorithms on App
- ❖ Imposed certification
- ❖ Data masking of restaurants' customers from them
- ❖ Breach of promise; Zomato Gold is a classic example
- ❖ Surreptitious attempts to collect customer data through free Wi-Fi, etc.

a manner that it misleads a few gullible members into disastrous consequences. "These aggregators have to recognise that their role

is to merely aggregate services of the industry. They do not represent the hotel and food service industry," adds Kohli. 



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Paryatan Parv aids tourism

Meenakshi Sharma, Director General - Tourism, Government of India, says that in the last three years, Paryatan Parv has made a mark for itself in promoting domestic tourism. At this year's edition, Ministry of Tourism also launched its audio guide facility, Audio Odigos, presently available at 12 sites.

Nisha Verma

Paryatan Parv, the nationwide event, was celebrated with much fervour in every part of the country, claims **Meenakshi Sharma**.



She adds, "With an event like this, for once, tourism became the focus of all destinations, including those that may not necessarily be tourist sites, and that's the major contribution of such an initiative. Last year, almost 3500 events were celebrated

“More and more Indians are travelling to different countries, and we want to encourage them to travel within India”

across India, which means that now various states and districts think about tourism as a lucrative sector. I believe that Paryatan Parv is a

major contributor to the Prime Minister's call for Dekho Apna Desh (see your own country)."

Sharma has been part of all previous editions of Paryatan Parv and looking at the festival for the last three years,

has realised some interesting facts. "The kind of participation and the master craftsmen who want to come here and display their creations is a big contribution. It's not just about selling products, but also about sharing information. All state governments want to put their best foot forward. This way, Ministry of

Tourism (MOT) can bring the arts and crafts of destinations, besides the destination itself, to Indians," she says.

A simulation of Mahatma Gandhi was presented by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at the event, and was appreciated by many. "The idea of walking with the Mahatma gave everyone goosebumps and made them feel part of history," Sharma adds.

MOT has also created facilities for tourists under various budgets. In the PRASAD scheme, which is targeted at domestic tourism, 60 per cent of visitors are pilgrims and hence, facilities ranging from three to five-star hotels as well as Bed & Breakfast options at various destinations have been invested in. "This

makes sure that everybody is taken care of. More and more Indians are travelling to different countries, and we want to encourage them to travel within India as well," Sharma says.

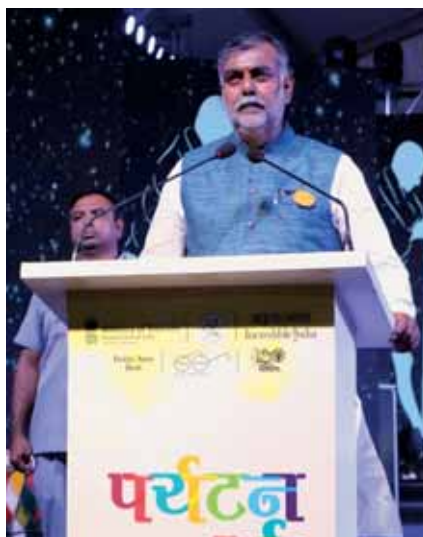
On the occasion of Paryatan Parv, MOT also inaugurated the audio guide facility - Audio Odigos - for 12 sites of India, which includes 'Iconic Sites' as well. History in different mediums and two languages will be available to listeners, in the form of synopsis, detailed history, and podcasts, through these audio guides.

The App was unveiled on the second day of the Parv, and the MoU for the same was exchanged with Resbird Technologies last year as part of the 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme. "This is a very good

example of the PPP model, wherein the government works hand-in-hand with the private sector to enhance products for both international and domestic tourists. Currently, this App offers information in only two languages, but later, more languages will be added to it," Sharma concludes.

Together with tour operators, MOT has introduced 11 itineraries that follow the foot-steps of Mahatma Gandhi. The ministry will be sharing them on its website, while travel operators will encourage people to visit places where Mahatma Gandhi lived or took some groundbreaking decisions. MOT has shared these circuits with its overseas offices and also asked the Ministry of External Affairs to promote them.

Paryatan Parv 2019 was held from October 2-13 across the country, while the Delhi leg was held from October 2-6. The event was inaugurated by **Prakash Javadekar**, Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and I&B and **Dharmendra Pradhan**, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, alongside **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of Tourism and Culture.





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A cultural abode Manipur

From the remains of an erstwhile kingdom to innumerable festivals that celebrate a rich culture, Manipur is the perfect refuge for travellers from all walks of life.



Manipur is strategically located in the North-eastern corner of India bordering Myanmar. Nestled at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas, the state is considered to be the gateway to Southeast Asia. The serene beauty of the state, that India's first Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru once described as the 'Land of Jewels', leaves every traveller spellbound. Least touched and least discovered, the state is a promising tourist destination for adventure and nature lovers alike.



Pakhangba Temple, Kangla, Imphal - Pic by Thou Mangang



Top things to do:

Loktak Lake and Keibul Lamjao

For any visitor, the principal attraction of the state is the Loktak Lake in Bishnupur district. It is a beautiful stretch of water resembling a miniature inland sea. A day spent at Loktak Lake is a lifetime of memories. Visitors can catch a bird's eye view of the lake from Sendra. Fishermen living on the floating islands, called Phumdis, in floating huts known as Phumsangs, are unique sights of this

lake. A part of the lake hosts the Keibul Lamjao National Park, which is home to the brow antlered deer – Sangai, only found in Manipur.

Kangla

A visit to Kangla at the heart of Imphal city unfolds the proud history of the erstwhile Asiatic Kingdom dating back to 33 AD. The British took over in 1891 and buried their influence on architecture. It is the quintessential symbol of the state's culture and heritage. Today, Kangla has developed into a unique archaeological and heritage park. The Ima Market, which is counted as one of the largest women-only markets in Asia, is a stone's throw away from the western gate of Kangla.

Escape to the green hills

Head to Ukhrul district and enjoy the company of the locals—the brave and colourful Tangkhul tribe. It is situated 40 miles away from Imphal city and is famous for its Shirui Lily – a species of lily found nowhere else in the world other than the Shirui Hill range. The Dzuko track in Senapati and the Bunning track in Tamenglong also offer a challenge to the intrepid adventurous traveller willing to explore the unexplored.

Shree Govindajee Temple

Shree Govindajee Temple is another historic centre of the Vaishnavites in Manipur. It is a twin-domed temple which attracts a large number of devotees who participate in

various devotional activities. Tourists are welcomed to come and join in the daily festivities at the historic Govindajee temple and other temples in and around Imphal city.

Celebrate festivals with the locals

Manipur is a land of festivals and almost every month, the people of Manipur get together to celebrate various festivals, which reflect the state's rich culture, tradition and religious practices. Yaoshang, Gaan Ngai, Cheiraoba, Lai-Haraoba, Kang, Heikru Hidongba, Kut and Lui Ngaini are just some of the festivals celebrated by different communities in the state. Manipur Sangai Festival, celebrated every year from November 21-30, is a major tourist attraction.



Govindajee Temple at Kangla



Khangkhui Cave, Ukhrul



Kanglasa

'India creates trends in tourism'

Celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, World Travel Market (WTM) London expects to welcome over 50,000 travel professionals from 180 countries, including almost 200 exhibitors from India. **Simon Press**, Director, WTM London, highlights India's powerful impact on the global tourism industry and WTM.



Manas Dwivedi

QHow different will WTM 2019 be from previous years?

WTM London is constantly innovating to make sure the event gives all attendees the best possible experience. This year, as it is the 40th anniversary, we are making the event unlike anything people have seen before. We are offering our visitors the chance to experience the festivities we have crafted to celebrate 40 years of WTM London.

This year, we will also be hosting our first Hackathon as part of Travel Forward. We are continuing to reshape our conference programme to incorporate the expansion of the 'Ideas Arrive Here' theme, as we boast of a conference programme focused on the future of the

tourism industry. On the subject of inspiring stories, our new video concept, #WTMStories, will give viewers an insight into travel trends – as seen through the eyes of key industry figures and consumers.

QCan you shed some light on the buyers and sellers at the mart this year?

We have revamped our 'Buyers Club' programme, meaning that the highest calibre buyers will receive a tailored experience ensuring the arrival of fresh ideas and new possibilities. The top 600 industry buyers will receive invitations to attend. Joining these buyers will be 5,000 exhibitors.

QWhat are your expectations from this year's mart?

We are expecting to see over



Simon Press
Director
WTM London

£3.75 billion worth of business deals made, which will surpass the total from contracts signed in 2018.

Due to these business deals, London becomes the hub of the global travel industry during the week of WTM London, as over 50,000 travel delegates flood in from across the world. As a

result, we broadened the experience, creating a seven-day festival to celebrate this industry.

QWhat about India's representation at WTM this year?

Indian exhibitors have always formed a crucial part of WTM London and we are pleased to welcome back a large contingent from the country this year. Indeed, this year we welcome almost 200 exhibitors from a great range of national provinces, demonstrating the wide variety of travel business opportunities there are in the country.

India has invested in the success of WTM London and in return, the event gives the country the platform to develop yet further in the global travel market.

Brexit to have minimal impact on travel

"Brexit's impact on travel will be minimal going forward. Regardless, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal, there will be no change to inbound visas for those visiting the UK for WTM London 2019 or for any other reason. The UK government and the European Commission have agreed to a transition process that will cover travel to and from the EU if the UK leaves with or without a deal. Global flights will not be affected should Britain leave the EU, and the British aerospace will remain part of the broader European aerospace. Especially for this event, WTM London has prepared a 'No Deal Brexit Q&A', which explains all of the scenarios around Brexit and its possible impact on the travel industry."

QWhat is your view on the growth of tourism from the Indian market?

Tourism in the country has a significant potential considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, the diverse ecology, and exceptional areas of natural beauty across the country. With tourism already proving to be a large employment generator in the country, we cannot wait to

see it grow further. India is also a digitally-advanced traveller nation, with a population that has a great deal of knowledge in using digital tools for planning, booking and experiencing a journey. The presence of exhibitors representing India's tourist sector at WTM London highlights this as a market that will grow and potentially create modern trends in tourism.

End 2 end with EbixCash

The travel arm of EbixCash aims to aggregate the market and facilitate a seamless flow of information which, it says, can be done by making it the largest cohesive travel solution provider.



TT Bureau

Robin Raina, President & CEO, Ebix Inc and EbixCash, has said that the travel vertical of his company is gearing up for aggressive marketing initiatives to promote and popularise itself in the Indian market. During an interaction with industry stakeholders after the conclusion of the company's two-day global conference in New Delhi, Raina said that EbixCash will advertise on radio as well as television.



Robin Raina
President & CEO
Ebix Inc and EbixCash

Sharing his vision on the company's travel business,

“We are not just buying travel agencies, we want to empower them and seamlessly integrate them with technology”

Raina added, “We want to cohesively build an end-to-end travel solution in the industry. We feel there is need for a one-window approach,

We like to aggregate the market and integrate it well; we also value human capital and people who understand the industry. You have

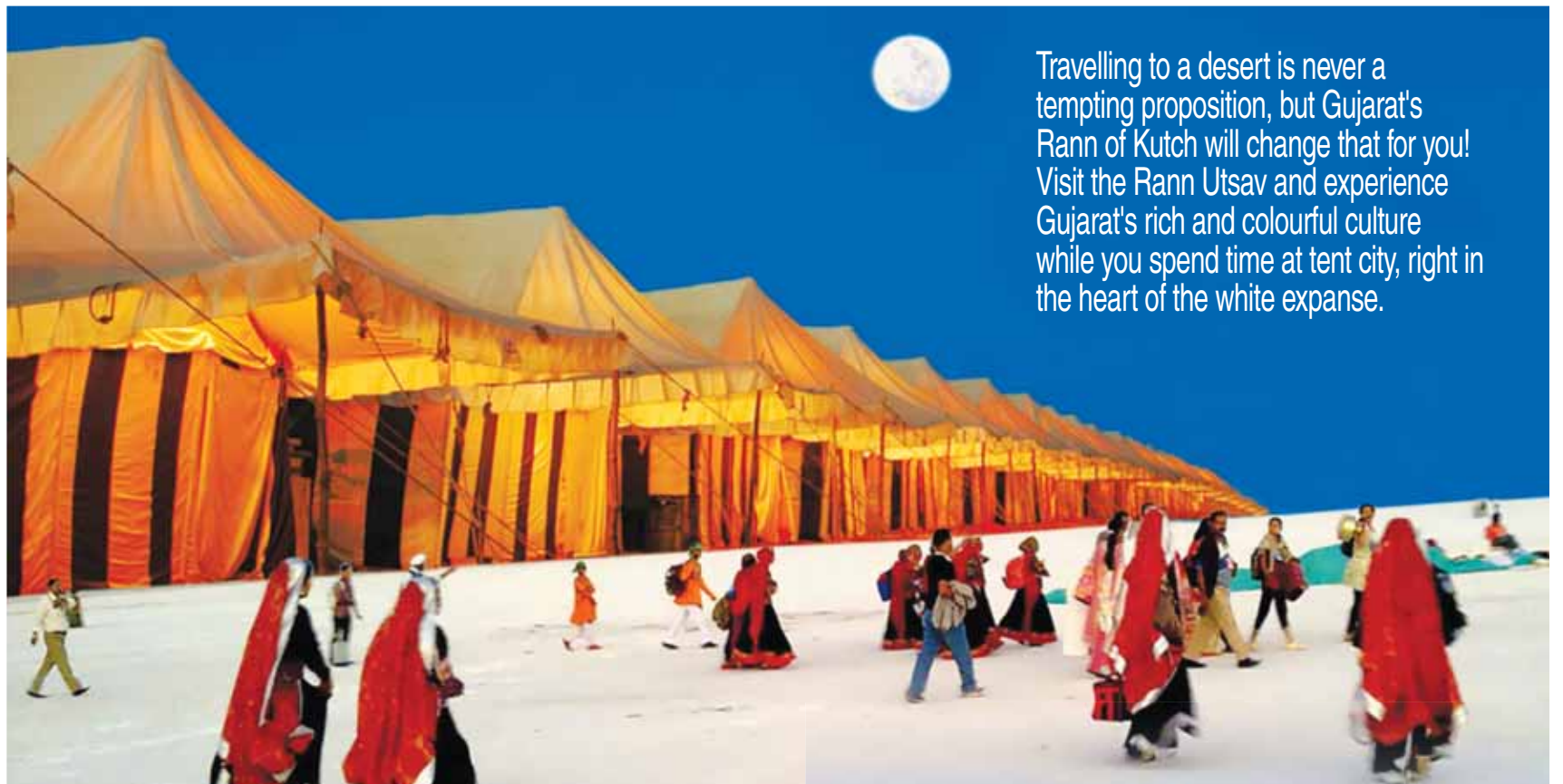
seen us make some recent acquisitions; we are not just buying travel agencies, we are looking to empower them. We want to enable and seamlessly integrate them with technology, while keeping the relationship alive.”

Raina also announced that Arjun Seth, formerly associated with Pearl Travels, will lead B2B operations at EbixCash Travel in India. While Swaminathan Vedaranyam will continue to look after international B2B operations and Via.com (B2C), Naveen Kundu will continue to look after Mercury - A Luxury Initiative by EbixCash and the corporate, luxury and MICE travel business of the company. In the coming days, the company will enter stock broking technology, claims Raina. It has also entered into a joint venture with Bombay Stock Exchange for insurance, and recently received IRDA approval.

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Travelling to a desert is never a tempting proposition, but Gujarat's Rann of Kutch will change that for you! Visit the Rann Utsav and experience Gujarat's rich and colourful culture while you spend time at tent city, right in the heart of the white expanse.

Scintillating white expanse RANN OF KUTCH

The success of heritage tourism is inspiring and encouraging a large number of travellers to make a beeline to desert festival venues to savour good music, dance and food in chilly stillness of the desert nights.

One such emerging global tourism destination is the Rann of Kutch in Saurashtra region of Gujarat, thanks to the innovative initiative of the State Tourism Department to hold 'Rann Utsav'.

The imaginatively packaged carnival is proving to be a big hit with tourists, both domestic and foreign. The carnival depicts the diverse Kutchi culture whose swirling sound and rhythm senses the pulse and heartbeats of tourists, making

it an experience to remember. The Rann of Kutch, like any other desert, sizzles in summer and is harsh. But in winter, this mass of land turns into a glistening sheet of white as if by some mystical magic.

With icy-cool winds blowing through the vast barren landscape, it becomes a visual delight. The festival focusses on those travellers who are culturally sensitive and find ancient ballads and Indian dances dating back to medieval times enthralling. It also offers visitors a vintage opportunity to explore the history, culture, archaeological sites and geography of Rann.

The Rann Utsav has re-invented Kutch as a cultural hub. The vibrant festival shares the stories, songs and the unique Kutchi folk dance and music concepts, showcases artisans at work creating quintessential marvels. The visitors get to experience the rich cultural tradition and heritage of Kutch and a unique exposure to adaptations to the natural environment and of lifestyles, aesthetic expression and social values.

Carnival visitors for once can forget the swanky five-star hotel accommodation and services as they have an option of staying in a tent which is as cozy as can be. Both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned tents are available. Tourists can enjoy camel rides in the



village. The festival begins on a full-moon night amid the awe-inspiring and contrasting landscape.

Creating a mosaic of exquisiteness, the event symbolises the innate spirit of the Kutch region, which is one of the most ecologically and ethnically diverse regions of the state. It is an event where one enjoys the real music and dance transcending any language barrier.

Ever since its launch, the festival has fascinated visitors by scintillating performances in their pulsating vitality. And the visitors return home as brand-

ambassadors of Rann Utsav ever willing to present the glory of Kutch before the world. This is amply reflected in the ever larger number of people flocking to the festival each year.

The Rann Utsav is also a story of how the people of Kutch as custodians of age-old craft and traditions have preserved them with all its authentic Kutchi aesthetics in their pristine glory. Known as a 'cradle of craftsmanship', Kutch has earned the name and fame as the land of weaving, block-printing, bandhini - tie and dye, Rogan-painting and home to

various styles of embroidery, pottery, wood-carving, metal-crafts, shell-work and other handicrafts.

For those with the inclination, the festival is also an opportunity to learn making block prints, door hangings with threads and tiny mirrors and get an insight into Toran embroidery. For musicians, craftsmen, artists, it is time to share know-how, and promote greater cultural diversity.

Rann Utsav began on October 28 and will be continue to February 23, 2020.





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PTM unites 63 destinations

PATA Travel Mart 2019, hosted by Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Tourism National Company, attracted over 1200 delegates from 63 global destinations. The delegate numbers embraced 347 sellers from 180 organisations and 34 destinations, along with 252 buyers from 244 organisations and 48 source markets.



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EHTTOA hosts third convention

The Eastern Himalaya Travel & Tour Operators Association (EHTTOA) hosted its annual convention at Lataguri and Darjeeling in West Bengal, in association with Department of Tourism, Government of India. The main objectives of the convention were improving member interaction, strengthening ties between tourism departments, and highlighting the potential of the region.



Dussehra @ Skål Bombay 144

Skål International Bombay (144) brought out its colourful side when members dressed in their traditional finery. On the occasion, the club extended a warm welcome to **Pierre-Emmanuel Brusselmans**, incoming Consul General of Belgium in Mumbai. The event was co-hosted by Visit Brussels, along with delegates from Atomium and ADAM Brussels Design Museum, Mini Europe.



Hotels go the technology way!

With technology changing the way guests stay in hotels in India, winners of the India Travel Awards talk about how they are innovating and redefining the experience for travellers through technology.



Best Designed Business Hotel

Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park

“ Sunil Shetty, Director of Sales & Marketing, Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park, says that Aloft as a brand has one of its core values based on being technologically ahead of the game. He adds, “We have implemented a few innovations; mobile key is one such feature. The hotel has also implemented high-speed internet and GPS tracking in all its cars. This helps fast-paced guests to have access to their work even when on the go. The GPS tracker also aids in a guest’s safety during times of travel.”

Best Serviced Apartments

Oakwood Hotel & Apartments Kapil Hyderabad

“ Hoshang Garivala, Director of Operations, India, Oakwood Hotel & Apartments Kapil Hyderabad, says, “Guests can find out more about the upcoming activities and on-going events at the property via our social media platforms. When guests are in-house, they have access to digital e-news through more than 5,000 newspapers and magazines in over 60 languages. Upon check-out, guests can share with us their feedback via a review platform.”

Best Business Hotel

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace

“ Kris Reynolds, Director of Sales and Marketing, The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace, feels that in-room technology is crucial for the hospitality industry. He adds, “In order to bolster guest loyalty, we increasingly look for innovative ways to stand out. One important factor in guest experience is Internet of Things, whether it is seamless Wi-Fi connection or controlled temperature panels by the bedside for convenience. With the right technology, hotels can improve traditional amenities.”

Best Leisure and MICE Resort

Hotel Clarks Shiraz, Agra

“ Debasish Bhowmik, Chief Operating Officer, Hotel Clarks Shiraz, Agra, says that the hotel is actively looking at digital marketing with regular engagements on social media. He says, “We have had a total of 90 rooms refurbished. Overall, the hotel has received a new look in all aspects. We have re-launched the menu at ‘The Mughal Room’. We now have a new approach to ‘The Sunset Lounge’ as well, overlooking the Taj Mahal. The hotel has been re-classified to a five-star property, so this is another feather in our cap.”



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That wasn't hard right? Things you love just pop out.
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Alitalia 'Group Connect' for trade

Alitalia is offering a revamped tool for group bookings in India, called 'Group Connect', reveals **Nicola Bonacchi**, Vice President, Leisure Travel Sales, Alitalia. The platform offers increased flexibility, allowing agents to customise the conditions to be chosen based on a customer's characteristics.

TT Bureau

Segmentation remains a key focus for Alitalia's strategy for the India market, claims **Nicola Bonacchi**. "We are continuing our strategy of segmentation of business and leisure travel, and we are continuing the same for the India market as well. We have a dedicated team in the Indian market for corporates and we are focusing on high-end revenues and business travel," he shares.

For the leisure market, Alitalia will continue to focus on the smaller travel agents as most of its business is done through them. In fact, 90 per cent of the business from India is done through the travel trade, claims Bonacchi. "Through Smart Trade, where we have tried to create a dedicated



Nicola Bonacchi
Vice President, Leisure Travel Sales
Alitalia

team for the small travel agent, we offer all the information that they need about Alitalia over phone. Today, we have Smart Trade present in 14 markets, with over 5,000 agents actively involved. We are trying to increase our penetration further and share why they should use Alitalia not only for Italy as a destination, but also

for Rome as a hub to travel to North America and Europe," he adds.

Group Connect

Alitalia recently launched its B2B community platform in Italy, called Alitalia Connect, to offer a personalised relationship between Alitalia and its B2B customers like travel

“Group Connect allows travel agents to request an offer, get the quotation and the contract in real time, monitor terms and conditions, and change the reservation”

agencies, companies, and SMEs. Now, the Italian carrier is set to launch 'Group Connect', a web platform under Alitalia Connect in India on November 13. Bonacchi shares, "Group Connect is aimed to



manage and speed-up quotations and group bookings. It allows travel agents to request an offer, book a group, get the quotation and the contract in real time, monitor the contract

terms and conditions, change the reservation (increasing or decreasing the group), and enter passengers' names in the system. The platform offers increased flexibility, allowing the agent to custom-

ise the conditions to be chosen based on a customer's characteristics."

India remains key

India is an important market for Alitalia, recording a growth of 31 per cent from January to September in terms of passengers and 26 per cent in terms of revenue. "The number one destination for Alitalia passengers from India is Italy (60 per cent), while 40 per cent go to the US and other European destinations. There is an increase in the load factor of the aircraft as well, with 87 per cent overall, 90 per cent in Economy Class and 77 per cent in Business or Magnifica Class. Currently, our target is to increase our penetration in the

Magnifica Class to 90 per cent and for that, we are working with the high-end leisure and corporate sector, while maintaining the load factor in Economy Class," Bonacchi asserts.

Another highlight for the Indian market is the introduction of Bergamo Airport. Explaining why it's feasible for Indians, Bonacchi says, "Bergamo is connected to Rome with three flights a day and is close to many corporate offices of steel companies that are frequented by Indians. There is a huge settlement of Indian community in the region, making the transit through Bergamo appropriate for Indian travellers to Italy. Passengers have access via fast-track to security gates for all classes and a loading bridge for all Alitalia customers at Bergamo airport." 





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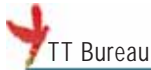
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Hahn Air adds 7 airlines in Q3

Hahn Air has added seven new carriers to its leading network of more than 350 airlines, in the third quarter of 2019. It has also achieved IATA's Level-3 NDC certification.



The new partners of Hahn Air are expanding their distribution reach with its HR-169 product. Travel agents can issue their flights on the insolvency-safe Hahn Air HR-169 ticket, even in markets where airlines are not participating in the local payment

Alaska (7H) and Southern Airways Express (9X).

Hahn Air has also announced that it was granted NDC certification Level-3 status under the NDC (New Distribution Capability) Certification Program provided by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). This means



Christopher Allison
Head of NDC
Hahn Air

We are well on track to make our Hahn Air flights, and the content of our partner airlines, available to travel sellers via NDC in 190 markets worldwide. In the coming months, we will connect additional agencies, aggregators and partner airlines to our platform and introduce new features such as more forms of payment, support for itinerary changes, and ancillary content



“We are well on track to make our Hahn Air flights, and the content of our partner airlines, available to travel sellers via NDC in 190 markets worldwide”

system. The new HR-169 partners include Air Chathams (3C) from New Zealand, Jeju Air (7C) from South Korea, Air Peace (P4) from Nigeria, Amazonas Uruguay (Z7), MAYAir/Aerocuahonte (5G) from Mexico, as well as two regional US carriers - RavnAir

that Hahn Air uses offer-and-order-management messages whose schemes are compliant with the standard NDC message scheme version 17.2.

“We are very proud to announce this important milestone in our NDC journey.

such as additional baggage and seat reservations,” says Christopher Allison, Head of NDC at Hahn Air.

The certification follows the launch of Hahn Air's NDC platform announced in August 2019. The platform allows airlines of any business model

to introduce NDC to their distribution mix and thereby extend their global customer base, while providing travel agencies worldwide with access to content via Hahn Air's NDC APIs (Application Programming Interfaces). It also offers distribution opportunities for airlines that are already NDC-capable.

Yanik Hoyles, IATA's Director for Industry Distribution Programs, adds that Hahn Air has now joined the growing fold of airlines involved in launching a new era of retailing in which travellers have access to all of an airline's products and services.

IFTM Top Resa makes waves

The 41st edition of IFTM Top Resa, France's international B2B tourism exhibition, welcomed a whopping 34,000 tourism professionals. Held between October 1 and 4 at Paris Porte de Versailles, it once again proved its mettle as an ideal platform for networking, doing business, innovating and keeping abreast of market developments.



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A new luxe address in SE Asia

Singapore-based Far East Hospitality is set to launch its 324-room modern luxury hotel, The Clan Hotel Singapore, in the second quarter of 2020. The new property claims to be in line with the new definition of luxury for the modern-day traveller, who places 'seeing the world' as a top priority.

TT Bureau

With India Sales Associates as its Regional Sales Office in India, Far East Hospitality has launched its latest brand, The Clan Hotel, which aims to redefine luxury for the new-age traveller. Announcing the new

venture at ITB Asia 2019, **Arthur Kiong**, Chief Executive Officer, Far East Hospitality, said, "To meet the growing momentum of experience-driven travel, we challenged ourselves to introduce a new perspective on luxury with The Clan Hotel. Through carefully curated touchpoints, we want



Arthur Kiong
Chief Executive Officer
Far East Hospitality

to connect more travellers to unique experiences that deliver both a deeper cultural connection and a strong sense of place—staying true to our customer-centric approach of Singapore-inspired hospitality."



Data for the last six months shows that travellers aged between 25 and 44 years make up an average 41 per cent of international visitor arrivals. This is an up-and-coming generation with 57 per cent placing travelling and seeing the world at the top of their list of aspirations. "Discerning and savvy, they are willing to pay reasonably more to enjoy

unique or memorable experiences. This new generation of travellers defines luxury beyond the traditional sense," Kiong added.

Slated to open in the second quarter of 2020, The Clan Hotel Singapore is a 324-room property that comprises four room types – Superior, Deluxe, Premier, and Grand Premier.

To bring to life the best of local experiences for its guests, The Clan Hotel Singapore will be collaborating with artists to create authentic touchpoints that represent Singapore-inspired hospitality. These include customised in-room dining experiences, personalised precinct tours, photo walks, and food tours, as well as shoe-shining services. ↴



A life less ordinary in the trade

For **Manish Kriplani**, MD, Baywatch Travels, life has not been a cakewalk, but he has ensured that his and his family's dreams come true. His mother has been his hero and her blessings have got him so far.

A luxury travel expert, **Manish Kriplani** hasn't had it easy. At 17, he lost his father who used to have a retail garment store. "It was in 1987, and I had just entered college. My grandfather was very old and we didn't know what happened to the store. We were almost zero at that point of time. My mother wanted me to finish college. Once I passed out of college, I left the next day for Indonesia and started working for an export company. To support the family, my mother started working for Raj Travels and got paid ₹ 3000."

However, Kriplani had to return to Chennai after his grandfather passed away. "My grandmother and mother were alone with my brother, who is 11 years younger than me. It was 1993 when I came back and started working for an export company and supporting my family along with my mother. However, I changed jobs every month and worked

for many companies but couldn't adjust after working in Indonesia. Finally, I told my mom that I wanted to do something on my own. At that time, my mom had left Raj Travels and was working elsewhere. Since she had some experience of the travel industry, and we did not know what to do, we started doing ticketing with another partner as that business was very glamorous at the time. With no calculations, planning and thinking we started the company in the middle of the city with only the two of us. Later, we started hiring people one-by-one and had a team of two to three more people."

It was around the same time that Kriplani got married. Interestingly, he first met his wife, Reshma, while he was in Indonesia, and realised later that she was his neighbour at the time.

"However, we lost touch for five years after I came back to India.



Manish Kriplani
Managing Director
Baywatch Travels

As luck would have it, she came back into my life all of a sudden. She called me to say that she was coming to Chennai for a site inspection on behalf of her company—Sterling Holidays. With only a week in hand, she came and happened to miss her flight back. At that time, Air India had a once-a-week flight from Chennai to Jakarta. However, she never went back. She met my mom and then her parents came and eventually we got married in 1996," shares Kriplani.

However, things took a turn for the worse and they suffered a huge loss after a company bought tickets in bulk from them and disappeared overnight. "Everything we invested in was wiped out in one shot, and my partners didn't want to continue and wanted their money back. We gave back everything and it was only us after that. We started all over again, and fortunately things started looking up and we got into tours and packages. I started travelling and my first Fam tour was in 1999 to Australia. And Australia has been my ace card until today. Anybody wanting to go to Australia wouldn't go anywhere else. We also started doing New Zealand and other countries and started appointing more people. My wife also joined the business and was taking care of the inbound part, I was doing outbound, while my mom was heading everything. At one point we had up to 20

people working for us, and it's been going on well. We are still doing the same thing, but in a different way. Instead of doing just hard work, we are doing smart work and create luxury holidays for people," claims Kriplani.

He also dabbled in imported furniture business for five years. "In 1999, a lot of people from Malaysia used to come and buy tickets from us. At that time, I made friends with people who used to export very good furniture to India. One of them convinced me to open a furniture shop here. In 1991, I was the only one to have imported furniture in Chennai where I used to import furniture from Malaysia, Singapore and even from China and Italy. We did very well till 2004, after which many other people started doing the same business, and since the margin reduced, we wrapped up the business. We have only been dedicatedly doing travel business, as

that's what I know best," he shares. He has two daughters and spends much of his free time at the gym since he is a fitness freak. Apart from that he loves listening to music. He has also done rowing for several years.

"I have also done other adventure sports including sky-diving, bungee jumping and shark-cage diving," he adds. Kriplani was declared DDP Game Changer at South India Travel Awards 2019.

Guldeep Singh Sahni, Managing Director, Weldon Travels, shares a glimpse from the lives of travel professionals, where they indulge in hobbies and interests, away from their professional commitments.



Guldeep Singh Sahni

Life Changing Places: New York

Every place evokes a unique emotion. Opening our minds, revealing our passions, transforming our perspectives. Some places change us forever. Just as New York changed Somnath's life.

New York is a place that stirs a myriad of emotions within. Impulsive, whimsical, unpredictable, it defies definition. And most of all, inclusive and diverse beyond compare.

The pulsating beat of the city immediately captivated Somnath Halder, an IT consultant from India, who spent a few months in the Big Apple.

**“Life is like jazz.
You never know
what comes next.”**

Discovering the magic of jazz

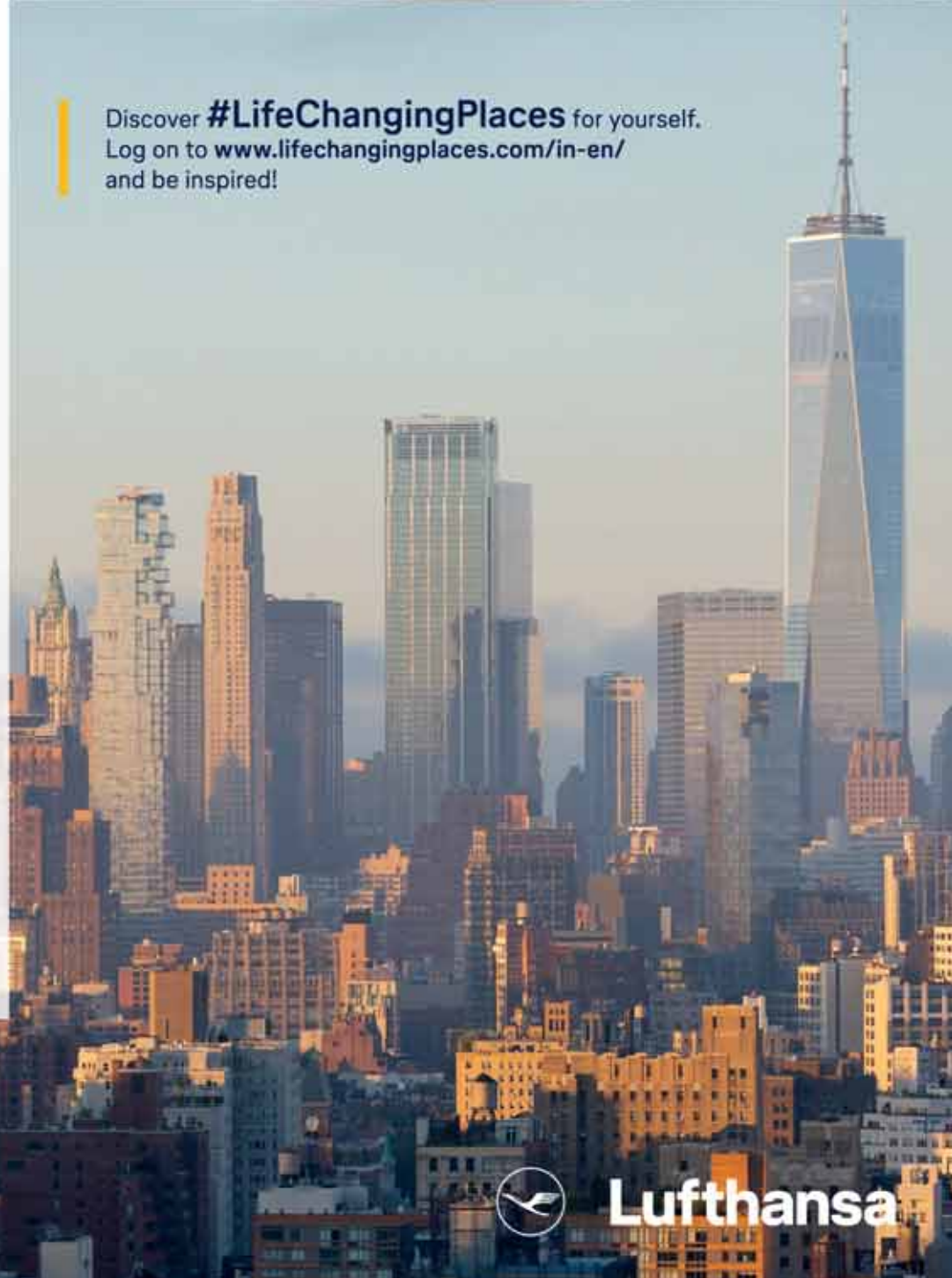
He discovered the magic of jazz in the city. Exploring the wide-open music scene in midtown Brooklyn, he found himself drawn towards the innovative beats of east coast jazz. He always had a penchant for music. But so far, with his long business hours, he just never had the time to really pursue anything other than work. Somnath was enthralled by the music of jazz icon Barry Harris. Its spontaneity and freedom instilled a happiness he had not experienced before.

Welcoming a new rhythm of life

New York had transformed his perspective and his life. He could not think of going back to his earlier existence. He gave up his job and devoted himself fully to jazz. On his return to India, he found work as a music teacher. It made him feel free and kept him close to what he truly loved. He looks back fondly at his time in New York, the city that changed his life. The places and experiences that encouraged him to find what he truly loved, to follow his dream and make it his own. As he says today. “Life is like jazz. You never know what comes next.”



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Lufthansa

Europamundo adds products

Looking at the success enjoyed in the Indian market, Europamundo Vacations, the coach tour operator affiliated to the UNWTO, is all set to come up with over 150 new products in the next financial year. With both global and Indian interest levels on the rise, the company aims to add destinations and tours.

TT Bureau

For Europamundo Vacations, India is a market that is doing extremely well and has witnessed almost 100 per cent growth over the previous year. Alejandro de la Osa, Director, Commercial, Europamundo Vacations, informs that for its global products in English,

As it gears up for the next season beginning April 1, 2020 and ending March 30, 2021, Europamundo Vacations will add 150 new products that would make it one of the biggest coach tour offerings in the global market. It is also adding new destinations like Cuba, and focusing on Russian as well as Arabic tours.

India is the first customer. "The sales team in India is doing a great job by continuously training travel agencies across the country, which means more sales and in turn, more passengers. The other thing that is working for this market are the special Indian products we introduced last year, particularly in Europe, that included Indian meals; which is doing extremely well," he shares.

De la Osa says that though they are presently at the top of their production in India, they are not at the end of possibilities in the market. "We can maintain this growth for the next three to four years. The best thing is that the people in India are now starting to know



Alejandro de la Osa
Director - Commercial
Europamundo Vacations

what Europamundo is," he adds.

For Aparna C Basumalik, Country Manager at Europamundo, interest from Tier-II and III cities is also on the rise, with reach in Maharashtra, Karnataka and the Northeast getting better.



Aparna C Basumalik
Country Manager
Europamundo

"The feedback is so good that the agents feel good, which indicates that the brand is coming up very well. I think we are growing more by referral and agent support in India than any other form of publicity. We are conducting extensive trainings across the country, including Tier-II

and III cities. It's not just the big training sessions, but also the more intimate dinners, one-on-one conversations, and hand-holding of smaller agents to explain how things work that are helping us achieve remarkable growth from the market. We even help with visa sup-

port letters and client briefing when required," she says. "This gives a lot of strength to get better airfares and better connectivity for everybody. We are adding new destinations like Cuba. No one in the market has a ready off-the-shelf product for Cuba, and it is going to work. We have amazing

“We are conducting extensive trainings across the country, including Tier-II and III cities; we even help with visa support letters and client briefing when required”

Aparna C Basumalik

port letters and client briefing when required," she says.

Now, Europamundo Vacations is not just increasing the total number of tours, but also

products for Guatemala, Costa Rica and Mexico already on our brochure and last year, we were able to sell that in India as well," Basumalik shares.

JA Resorts redefines luxury

Avant-Garde Consulting, that promotes JA Resorts & Hotels in India, recently organised a three-city roadshow that covered the cities of Mumbai, Ahmedabad, and New Delhi. A networking evening with B2B partners from the luxury travel community was also hosted by the resort chain, which helped strengthen relations among them.



India is key to JA Hotels' growth

Upbeat about the response from the Indian market, JA Hotels & Resorts is aggressively promoting its hotels to garner more business from here. Its properties provide packages and facilities that exclusively cater to Indian travellers, including room upgrades and floating breakfasts.



TT Bureau

JA Hotels & Resorts has six hotels in Dubai and two in the Indian Ocean. The group is now looking predominantly for leisure FITs as well as leisure groups, weddings, and for the small corporate meetings business in the Indian market, says **Christopher Tutty**, Director of Sales and Leisure, JA Hotels & Resorts.

In 2020, the group will digitalise its programmes and create online training courses for travel agent partners. The incentives programme for agents will also be digitalised so that they are able to educate and reward themselves. JA Hotels & Resorts is in the final stages of launching its communication specialist mechanism to help update agents in real time on bookings and availability.

"Our resort property, JA Beach Hotel in Jebel Ali Beach, Dubai, has seen a remarkable increase in the weddings business. We have confirmed and materialised many Indian weddings there. The team is very active and ensures that they properly cater to the Indian wedding segment, especially for vegetarian meals. To promote destination weddings in our hotels, we also recently held an event with wedding planners in Mumbai. The wedding business from India has grown for us by 100 per cent year-on-year," he says.

JA Lake View Hotel is the newest addition to JA The Resort, Dubai, and offers 348 rooms. Tutty shares, "We are offering 40 different experiences ranging from horse riding, shooting, archery and motorised & non-motorised water sports



Christopher Tutty
Director of Sales and Leisure
JA Hotels & Resorts

to spa, golf, mini golf, kids' facilities, fishing trips, boating activities, seaplane tours and much more. We are seeing a lot of interest from the Indian market for the newly-opened hotel."

Elaborating on the culinary offerings, he says, "We



Alexander Kharabadze
Director of Sales & Marketing
JA Manafaru

have teamed up with three internationally-acclaimed chefs across the brand to deliver on our vision of cool and casual restaurants and bars with outstanding F&B and an approachable atmosphere. We have teamed up with China's Chef Da Dong at JA Manafaru Maldives and are also

collaborating with Chef Greg Malouf to launch two Middle East-inspired restaurants in both JA Beach Hotel and JA Oasis Beach Tower. We also have on board Michelin Star

unique location in a part of Maldives that is still untouched, **Alexander Kharabadze**, its Director of Sales & Marketing, says that this allows the property to enjoy the sunniest

"We are offering 40 different experiences ranging from horse riding and shooting to motorised and non-motorised water sports; we are seeing a lot of interest from India"

Christopher Tutty

chef Vikas Khanna, who has recently opened his signature Indian restaurant, Kinara, at JA Lake View Hotel." The hotel will also house '81', a buffet restaurant with live cooking stations and 'Republik', a gastropub with Friday brunches and a rooftop mixology lounge. Speaking of JA Manafaru's

days in the year. "We have 87 villas, half of them are on water and half on the beach. For India market, we have a special add-on, which includes 15 minutes of head and shoulder massage, room upgrade, and a movie under the stars. We also offer a floating breakfast - a romantic experience for honeymooners to enjoy," he adds.

Gold Medal now in India

Gold Medal, the largest travel consolidator in the Middle East, has expanded its operations to India. The company wants to ensure ease of B2B bookings, especially in Tier-II, III and IV.



TT Bureau

Being one of the leading providers of air and non-air products to the travel trade, agents in the country will benefit from Gold Medal's extensive sales, marketing

India, says, "We are thrilled to launch our offering in India, a rapidly growing market where we see excellent business opportunities and strong demand for our quality services. Our broad partnership network and innovative solu-

The services are expected to be up and running by end of the year. Gold Medal in India is also looking to bring in B2B2B and B2B2C models. It will launch its offerings in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad



and operational expertise, an advanced booking and reporting system, and excellent customer service. The company will initially provide its Indian customers with access to flight bookings, offering over 100 airline partners' services at competitive rates.

Preetham Kiron, Managing Director for Gold Medal in

tions enable travel agents to efficiently manage and grow their business, while providing the best possible service to their customers."

The company is planning to launch its full product portfolio, including a hotel, car hire, insurance services, MICE requirements and visas, in the coming months in India.

and Hyderabad, as well as in other strategic locations like Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Shimla, Ambala, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Indore, Bhopal, Surat, Baroda, and Mangaluru. It has been supplying scheduled flights, hotels, holidays, car hire, tours, and excursions to independent travel agents for over 25 years.



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Perspective 2030 is the future

At the second edition of the HollandCity Global Travel Trade Show, **Jos Vranken**, Managing Director, NBTC Holland Marketing, shared details on 'Perspective 2030', a new vision report of the Netherlands as a destination.

Manas Dwivedi

NBTC Holland Marketing had released a report detailing the effects of tourism on the nation and how the tourism landscape will change over the next 10 years. **Jos Vranken** shared that the

report laid out some important goals that international tourism provides, including enhancing the Dutch identity, improving liveability for locals, helping to realise their sustainability objectives, and creating valuable employment opportunities. "It is something we facilitated and

co-created with stakeholders within and outside the industry. We asked them how they would look at a future-proof Holland by 2030; this is how 'Perspective 2030' was born."

Vranken said that while they are keen on promoting a

variety of target groups, one thing they all have in common is the ability to make their own

government is also setting parameters for our mandates. We are in the process of redefining

part and remain the business mix of The Netherlands in terms of our marketing efforts, which will be determined by our new contract and parameters with the government. We are in the process of getting a clear picture on how the next four years will look," Vranken concluded. 

“We are looking at families and smaller groups who, together with the travel trade or independently, make choices on what to do and what to see in The Netherlands”

Key takeaways

- ❖ Tourism needs to be looked at not only as a goal, but also as a transformative power or a driver of change in other areas of society as well. In other words, it must be established what tourism can do as a means to an end rather than the goal itself and how it can contribute to other domains, other challenges that the country is facing.
- ❖ We need to look at shared interests rather than sectoral or economic interests. In other words, we really need to consider the interest of citizens of The Netherlands, employees of companies, and visitors coming to the country. Residents, in particular, have not been involved in planning the future of the destination, and the society's interests must also be kept in mind.
- ❖ The regional and local tourist boards need to change from being promotional bodies to managerial ones. Instead of just promoting the destination, they must work towards managing future growth. They must be more attentive for research and data analyses, more attentive to the development of the destination and to the positioning of The Netherlands, and conduct more targeted promotions to get new destinations on a platform and make them popular.

choice. "We look at FIT travel a lot. We are looking at families and smaller groups who, together with the travel trade or independently, make choices on what to do and what to see in The Netherlands. So, people who are curious and have the ability to go off the beaten track would be ideal," he shared.

Plans for expansion in the Indian market

At the moment, NBTC Holland Marketing is renegotiating its partnership with the national government. "The Dutch

parameters for partnership with the government, which will determine the choices we are going to make in the next few years. In general terms, I can say that we always closely monitor markets that are emerging, from a Dutch perspective. India is one of those markets with huge growth numbers in terms of percentage over the last few years. So, we need to carefully assess where the Indian market can be a



Holland eyes leisure market

Sharing her views on the importance of the Indian market for The Netherlands, **Carola Muller-Van Rijn**, Global Travel Trade Manager, NBTC Holland Marketing, has said that the leisure market from India will be a key focus for the board as it maps out a plan for 2020.

TT Bureau

Elated at the successful conclusion of the second edition of HollandCity Global Travel Trade Show in The Hague, **Carola Muller-Van Rijn** said that this year's show was bigger and better

than last year's edition. "This year, we had a total of 90 buyers and 120 suppliers. From India, 11 buyers participated in the show organised by NBTC Holland Marketing. This shows that participation was certainly more than last year. The setup was also bigger than last year, since we had more space to plan and organise meetings," she added.

On participation from the trade, Rijn said that they had suppliers from all over The Netherlands, including Friesland, North Holland, and southern reaches of The Netherlands among others. "We had a very nice

spread of Dutch suppliers present for the show. From the buyer perspective, we had buyers from 10 different markets and countries globally. These were Germany, Belgium, UK, Spain, US, Russia, Brazil, Japan, China, and India," she added.

Growth from India market

While Germany is by far the biggest source market for the Netherlands followed by Belgium, tourist arrivals from India have also seen growth. "There was an eight per cent growth in the number of tourist arrivals from India in 2018 in comparison to 2017. In 2019, we are forecasting 200,000 visitors from India, a growth from the 178,000 arrivals in 2018," she said. Indian tourist arrivals in The Netherlands registered a growth of 15 per cent in the first half of 2019. The number of Indians travelling to The Netherlands from

January-June was 100,000 as compared to 85,000 during the same period last year. The total number of Indian arrivals last year to The Netherlands was 178,000. The growth from India has been significant in The Netherlands, especially in May and June.

“In 2019, we are forecasting 200,000 visitors from India, a growth from the 178,000 arrivals in 2018; we will focus on leisure visitors”

Leisure and FITs from India

Commenting on NBTC's plan for 2020 for the India market, Rijn said that they are still in the midst of planning strategies for all markets for the next year. NBTC Holland Marketing's focus will be leisure and FITs, and they are not specifically targeting the wedding segment. For the India market, she said, "MICE

is a growth market from India. People are spending more money on international events, but at this stage, we will focus on leisure visitors in partnership with KLM."

NBTC Holland Marketing will aim to promote destinations beyond Amsterdam to the

is one of the better-known castles in The Netherlands and has featured in many television shows set in the Middle Ages. Castles and country houses can be a great product for the wedding segment and also for leisure visitors."

According to her, other cities of significance would be Utrecht, which has a medieval old town, canals, Christian monuments, and a venerable university; and 's-Hertogenbosch, colloquially known as Den Bosch and Eindhoven, a technology & design hub and also the birthplace of Philips electronics. "These cities especially carry touristic significance since they are located in the south of the country and can be interesting products for Indians tourists looking to travel to Germany or Belgium from The Netherlands," Rijn explained. 



Agents in countryside

At HollandCity Global Travel Trade Show in The Hague, 11 outbound specialist buyers from India participated and also experienced the castles and countryside of The Netherlands on a Fam trip organised by NBTC Holland Marketing.



Advantage FITUR: Talent & skill

As the fair gains more representation and a greater global reach, FITUR 2020, to be held in Madrid in January next year, will see the introduction of FITUR TALENT that will focus on people and skills.



FITUR 2020 is being touted as the most updated and dynamic edition yet, with some excellent forecasts and a variety of upgrades in its kitty. The event will also

celebrate its 40th anniversary, with South Korea as partner country. While sustainability, technology and specialisation will continue to be in focus at FITUR 2020, the event will also see the introduction of the monographic area, FITUR TALENT, which will focus on



people, their talent, skills and professional capability, as factors in tourism companies' competitiveness. Apart from that, FITUR TALENT will have

an exhibition area and will seek to analyse, through conferences, workshops, meetings and innovative proposals, the perspective and strategy of tourism companies, management companies, and talent hunting and training



centres, all global leaders in their sector.

Promoting the agenda of B2B meetings as one of the key objectives of this edition, FITUR B2B Match and FITUR MICE (the programme specialising in meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions and business travel) will bring together 100 representatives of the 'offer for meetings tourism' with 120 qualified procurement officers from around the world.

FITUR will continue focusing on specialisation and on the growth of some of the recently-introduced sections, such as FITUR CINE and FITUR FESTIVALS, and it will again offer its consolidated monographic areas such as FITUR GAY (LGBT+) and FITUR HEALTH, as well as the FITURTECHY and FITUR KNOW HOW sections, where technology is shown as an essential tool for the growth of the sector and for progress towards a smart tourism concept.



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About FITUR 2020

- ❖ FITUR 2020 will see the introduction of the monographic area FITUR TALENT, which will focus on people, on their talent, skills and professional capability, as a factor in tourism companies' competitiveness.
- ❖ FITUR MICE will bring together 100 representatives of the 'offer for meetings tourism' with 120 qualified procurement officers from around the world.
- ❖ The FITUR NEXT Observatory will focus its research on how tourism can contribute to local economic development.

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EVENT TALK

Media Partners:



NOVEMBER 2019

Expedia's Explore 2019	Las Vegas	14-15
China International Travel Mart (CITM)	Kunming, China	15-17
IITE	Mangaluru	15-17
Guideline Celebrations & Thanksgiving	Pushkar	16-18
IBTM World	Barcelona	19-21
PATA India Update & Outlook Meeting with MOT	Delhi	21
Travel Technology Summit	Delhi	22
IITM	Hyderabad	22-24
Paryatan Kumbh	Lucknow	25-28
PATA Destination Marketing Forum	Pattaya, Thailand	27-29
IITM	Pune	29-1 Dec

DECEMBER 2019

ILTM Cannes	Cannes	2-5
Tourism Powerhouse by PATA India Chapter	Delhi	6
IITM	Hyderabad	6-8
International Buddhist Travel Mart	Both Gaya	10-12
CII Annual Tourism Summit	Delhi	12
Travel MICE Show	Chennai	14-15

JANUARY 2020

SATTE	Greater Noida	8-10
IITM	Kochi	9-11
Visit Britain Sales Mission	Mumbai	13
South African Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	13
Asia Pacific Tourism & Travel Fair (APTTF)	Bengaluru	13-15
South African Tourism Roadshow	Pune	14
Visit Britain Sales Mission	Delhi	15
South African Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	15-16
IITT	Mumbai	15-17
Destination DC roadshow	Delhi	20-21
Destination DC roadshow	Mumbai	22-23
FITUR	Madrid	22-26
Global Panorama Showcase (GPS)	Nagpur	27-28

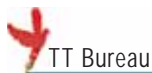
FEBRUARY 2020

OTM	Mumbai	3-5
NYC & Co Sales Mission	Delhi	10-12
Visit Finland Sales Mission	Mumbai	11
PATA Adventure Travel Conference & Mart	Sabah, Malaysia	12-14
Visit Finland Sales Mission	Delhi	13
NYC & Co Sales Mission	Mumbai	13-15
IITM	Kolkata	21-23

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

TAAI sharpens IATA focus

With executive education being a priority for TAAI, the association is taking its trainings right to the agents' door. It is also strengthening its focus on IATA, its 'GoLite' agent model being a key driving force.



Training and education have been at the forefront of TAAI's (Travel Agents Association of India's) agenda for the last few months, claims **Sunil Kumar**, President of the association. "TAAI has been most active in the last few months on the subject of imparting executive education. TAAI conclaves have had a huge impact in terms of a lot of 'unlearning' that people had to go through. We are following the concept of push learning, which means that we are taking learning to their homes, rather than asking them to come forward and go through a training process. Those who have been a part of these conclaves, which is around 700 agents, have experienced a positive impact as well. This allowed them to look at their business models and attempt changes. This initiative was launched at a



Sunil Kumar
President
TAAI

very large cost and this effort has been a blockbuster for TAAI," he says.

Another initiative of the association has been pushing for the reduction of GST, in collaboration with FAITH. Kumar shares that it wasn't easy to convince representatives of the GST Council on why this change is a must, and while the push from Ministry of Tourism did help,

at a local or regional level, representatives had to be informed. "Like every association, TAAI also had certain challenges in convincing that it must happen, and we are happy for the industry that it has materialised now," he delightfully adds.

TAAI's focus on IATA is now widening, and Kumar is



forms of credit. Today, India is at the top with 430-plus agents, which is a major chunk of the total number of GoLite agents across

“Today, India is at the top with 430-plus agents, which is a major chunk of the total number of GoLite agents across the world”

all praises for IATA's latest launch - NewGen ISS, which is unfolding all over the world. "Another big change is introduction of the 'GoLite' agent model, where agents are part of IATA without demanding any credit from the air transport association or the airline; they have other

the world," Kumar says, as he anticipates that in a country as large as India, which has more than 50,000 agents and only 3200 of them with IATA, the GoLite model can help boost numbers to a level where TAAI will have to apply a different strategy to educate newcomers.

A bigger ITM in 2020

For **Subhash Goyal**, Chairman, Organising Committee, India Tourism Mart (ITM) and Hony. Secretary, FAITH, the second edition of ITM was largely successful due to the incorporation of learnings from last's year edition.



The second edition of ITM concluded on a high note in New Delhi with 244 foreign buyers attending the event from almost 50 countries around the world. Thanking the trade and decoding the success of the show, **Subhash Goyal** said that while the majority of buyers were first-time visitors to India, every single exhibitor praised the quality of buyers selected. "This year, we didn't allow any influencers or bloggers to interact inside the exhibition hall, so there was no disturbance for the exhibitors and buyers conducting their B2B meetings inside. Overall, there were 160 booths with more than 140 exhibitors showcasing their products. Around 25 states also participated in the show," he shares.

While all participating states have expressed their will to



take bigger booths in the next edition of ITM, claims Goyal, he says that they may just have to change the venue on account of such high demand. "People have already started approaching us for booking booths at the next edition of ITM in 2020: we may have to shift the show to

Greater Noida," he says. Goyal accounts part of the show's success to the many learnings from last year that the organising committee incorporated into this year's edition. "Timely alerts on the ITM mobile App were also appreciated by a lot of people. Throughout the

show, the buyer-seller meetings went well," he said, thanking his team, the chairpersons of various committees, as well as the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for their support. He concluded saying ITM would grow strength to strength in its future editions.



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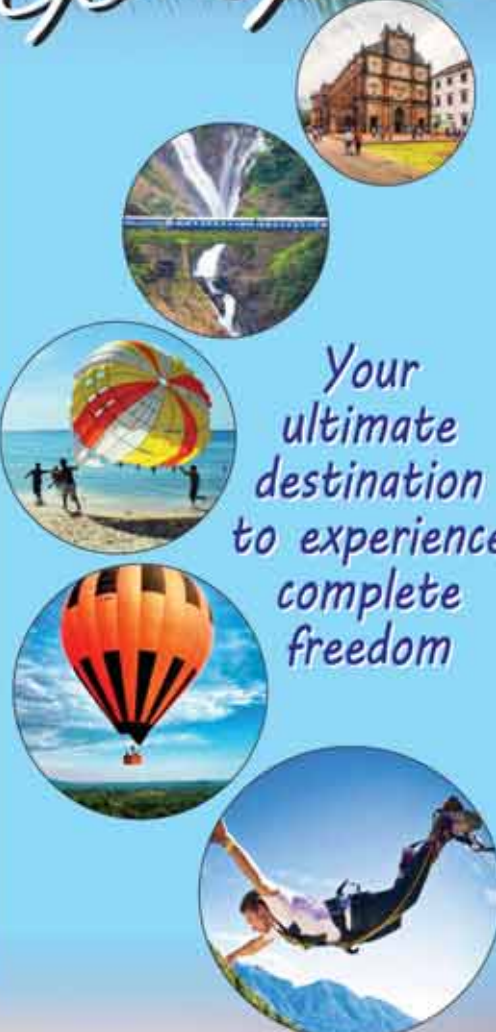

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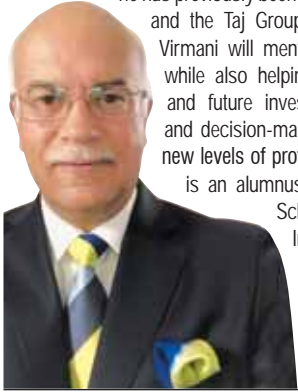
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Signum Hotels & Resorts

Gurugram

Manoj Virmani has been appointed as Strategic Advisor at Signum Hotel & Resorts. An industry veteran with two decades of experience, he has previously been a part of brands like ITC Hotels and the Taj Group of Hotels. In the new role, Virmani will mentor the core leadership team, while also helping the company with growth and future investments. His strategic vision and decision-making will help Signum achieve new levels of profitability and business. Virmani is an alumnus of Cornell University; Indian School of Business, Hyderabad; Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and IHM Pusa.



Sarovar Hotels & Resorts

Delhi-NCR

Sarovar Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Ajoy Balkrishna** as Regional Director - North. An industry-adept professional, he brings with him more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry. In the new role, Balkrishna will be responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of all Sarovar hotels in North India. He has been part of Sarovar Hotels for the last 11 years. Prior to joining the Sarovar family, Balkrishna was also associated with renowned hospitality brands like The Oberoi, The Regent Hotel, Hyatt, and InterContinental Hotels. He possesses strong hotel operations and management skills.



Hyatt Regency

Thrissur, Kerala

Hyatt Regency Thrissur has appointed **Animesh Barat** as the General Manager. He is an alumnus of the IHM Lucknow with a BA in Hospitality. A seasoned hotelier with over two decades of experience in the industry, Barat has previously worked with other renowned hospitality brands as well, such as Marriott International, where he worked for more than 10 years. In the new role at the 77-room property, he will be responsible for the entire operations and will spearhead the growth and development of the hotel. Barat is a skilled food and beverage enthusiast, revenue analyst, and market strategist.



Pride Group of Hotels

Mumbai

Pride Group of Hotels has appointed **Amit Sidana** as Vice President, Sales & Marketing. A seasoned hospitality professional, Sidana has over 19 years of experience in the sector. He comes with a diversified knowledge base of sales as he had worked in other industries like software sales and insurance sales apart from the core hospitality sales. Prior to joining the current position, Sidana worked as National Head (Sales, Marketing & Revenue Distribution) with Orchid Group of Hotels. In his earlier tenures, he has been associated with Accor and IHG.



Marriott Hotel

Jaipur

Rahul Maini has been appointed as General Manager at Jaipur Marriott Hotel. With over 20 years of versatile accomplishments in the hotel and food & beverage operations, Maini is an experienced hospitality professional with a passion for operational excellence and guest engagement. He holds a diploma in hotel management, catering technology and nutrition from the National Council of Hotel Management. In the new role, Maini will ensure excellence in guest satisfaction by maintaining the highest standards of quality and service. Before moving to Jaipur, he was the General Manager of The Westin Kolkata Rajarhat.



The Leela

Mumbai

Himanshu Kumar has been appointed as the new Revenue Manager at The Leela Mumbai. He has over 15 years of global experience in the hospitality sector and in the new role, will help the brand to maintain a trajectory of growth, maximise revenue and identify new business opportunities, while looking after the company's revenue function. Kumar began his career with Marriott Global Sales and later worked with IHG, Savoy Hotel Apartments, and Marco Polo Hotel. He was previously Director of Revenue Management at DoubleTree Pune.



Crowne Plaza

Rohini, New Delhi

Siddharth Mann has been appointed as Director of Sales at Crowne Plaza New Delhi Rohini. He holds a rich and versatile experience of more than a decade in the hospitality industry and began his career in operations with the Oberoi hotels, after which he moved to sales with InterContinental Hotels Group. Mann previously worked with brands like Marriott and Hilton, and over the years, has gained a strong understanding of diverse segments in the industry. He is a graduate in hotel management from IHM Shimla and also holds an MBA from IMT Ghaziabad.



Four Seasons Hotel

Bengaluru

Hardik Shah has been appointed as Director of Food & Beverage at Four Seasons Hotel Bengaluru. A seasoned executive, he first joined the company at Four Seasons Hotel Mumbai in 2010 handling the Asian Restaurant San:Qi and then Café Prato, post which he took on an expanded role of Assistant Director of Food & Beverage in 2016, after a stint in the Middle East. In his current role, his most exciting project will be to position Far & East and Copitas as noteworthy entrants in the country's most talked-about dining circuits.



The Leela

Mumbai

The Leela Mumbai has appointed **Anand Athavale** as the new Director of Sales and Marketing. He has over 14 years of experience and brings in a wealth of expertise in his field. In the new role, Athavale's core responsibilities will include planning and implementing the hotel's sales and marketing strategy. He is a graduate from Institute of Technology & Management, Mumbai. Prior to joining The Leela Mumbai, he worked as the Regional Sales Manager at Trident, Bandra Kurla, Mumbai.





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Travelport to update API suite

Greg Webb, Travelport's new global CEO, shares plans for the upcoming year, which include a number of announcements and new suite capabilities in the marketplace in 2020.



Kanchan Nath

What will be Travelport's strategy for 2020?

We will be investing significantly into moving into our next-generation platform. In some ways, we want people to stop talking about us as a

source and repository for trip data. So, I am quite energised about the next-generation platform and where we are headed with that. Next year, you will see a lot of announcements and capabilities rolling out in the marketplace.

moving consumers who used to do direct business via the phone to direct business via the web. It's not that there has been a major shift in that over the last 20 years.

we provide in the GDS model that provides the ability to reach out to multiple hotels and airlines, multiple car companies, multiple tour operators and multiple cruise lines, all at the same time.

“Year 2020 will lead us to roll out a new capability around our API suite, so our trip services platform will lend itself to our cloud-based point of sale”

GDS because I just look at us as an electronic exchange between the buyers and sellers of travel. So, we will be investing in that. Year 2020 will lead us to roll out a new capability around our API suite, so our trip services platform will lend itself to our cloud-based point of sale. It will lead to a new way of thinking, a broader

With increasing dependence on direct hotel and flight bookings, where does the travel agent stand?

Airlines and hotels have been focused on direct bookings for a long time. The major shift for a direct model was not a shift from a travel agency to a supplier website, it was merely

Reality of the industry is that consumers want choice. So, unless you are in a captive market, one where a single carrier/single hotelier has a dominant position in that market, consumers are looking for choice. They want to understand what is going to be a fair deal and they will continue to shop aggressively to understand which carrier and which hotel provides them the most effective deal. It's not efficient in any way, shape or form, either on the corporate or the leisure side, to spend time going to 30 different websites. It's the aggregation capability



Making GDS easier to use



Sandeep Dwivedi
 Chief Operating Officer
 InterGlobe Technology

“The travel and tourism industry in India is rapidly evolving and responding to new-age technological advancements along with changes in consumer preferences. According to the Global Digital Traveler Research conducted by Travelport this year, Indian travellers came out to be the most digitally advanced among 23,000 travellers across 20 countries analysed. This shows how

technology is making its way into the aviation sector.

According to IATA, India is all set to become the third largest civil aviation market in the world by 2024, and we are committed to be a part of this promising future. Our aim in the coming year would be to continue catering to the diverse needs of the industry; deliver simplified travel selling technological solutions to OTAs, travel consultants, TMCs and hotels that can

leverage it to offer customer-centric services conveniently. With the new capabilities around Travelport's Trip Services API suite, its Smartpoint client-based point of sale and other related products that are equipped with a host of brilliant features to provide customers with exceptional services, we are already moving in the right direction to build a better future for our partners. We are growing towards making the GDS easier to use for the industry.

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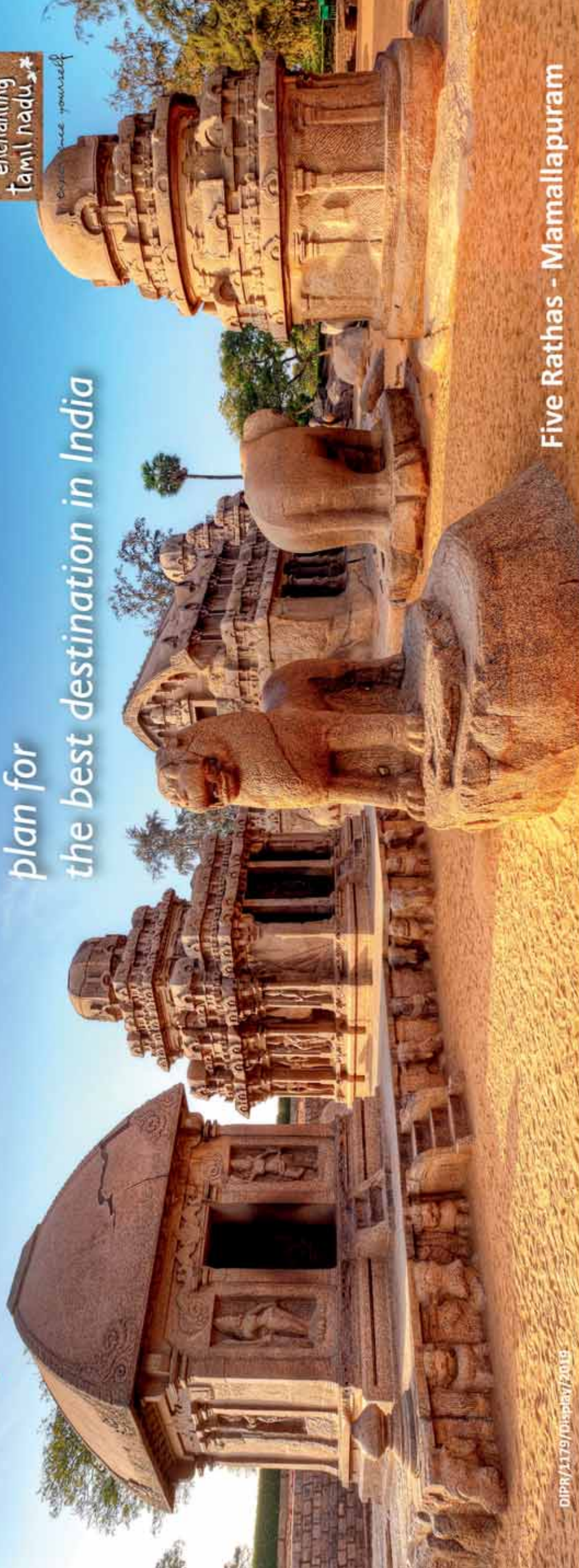
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Shore Temple



Arjuna's Penance




Krishna's butterball

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