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MOT to focus on new markets

Mulling plans to introduce a new promotional campaign for overseas marketing, Ministry of Tourism is looking to focus on new markets such as China and Japan, while strengthening its presence in traditional ones.

Manas Dwivedi

Sharing the ministry's plans and targets, **Rupinder Brar**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India, said that MOT is mulling plans to make a global marketing and promotional plan to promote India as a popular and affordable destination for global tourists, especially after the recent steps

taken by the government such as reduction in e-Visa fee, corporate tax rate and GST on hotels.

Sharing details on the plans, Brar, who also looks after the publicity (domestic and international) and overseas marketing of India Tourism, said, "Work is in progress on the new plan, but to brief on some of the key features, we are going to be

“China and Japan, in particular, have remained relatively untapped markets for us; they have got good potential”

focusing on new market areas. We think that China and Japan, in particular, have remained relatively untapped markets for us. Both these destinations have got good potential to attract tourists to India. We, of course, would also be working on traditional markets such as continental Europe, UK, Canada and the US.”

Stressing on the need to be more focused in the marketing

and promotional approach, Brar said, "We are looking to pitch our promotional campaign in the way those markets are organised and function to suit their understanding. So, we would like to be more specific in our content that goes in the promotional campaigns. We want to keep the focus, depending on the need that the market has, for tourist amenities."



77% think 'a loan' option is viable

A recent poll conducted by TRAVTALK has revealed that 77 per cent people think that the loan option provided by the travel trade for travellers is viable. The remaining 23 per cent, however, think that it is not a viable option. In recent times, the finance scheme, which includes providing loans and an EMI option to customers for their travel, is gaining momentum, especially among young professionals and millennials. Earlier, tour operators used to take full payment in advance, but now the poll indicates a change in pattern.

23%

77%

Not Viable

Viable

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Minar Group honoured with TRAVTALK-WTM award

Minar Group received the TRAVTALK-WTM World Travel Leaders award at the recently-held World Travel Market in London, as recognition of the group's contribution to the industry in offering authentic experiential travel.



TT Bureau

The World Travel Leaders award honours companies and individuals for their outstanding contribution to the industry over the last 24



HS Duggal
Managing Director
Minar Group

months, voted for by the WTM partners. Speaking on the occasion, **Gren Pacheco**, VP, Business Development, Minar Group, said, "It's an honour to be recognised on a global



(L-R) Charlotte Alderslade, WTM Portfolio; Nikhil Jeet, Director, DDP Publications; and award winner Gren Pacheco, Vice President – Business Development, Minar Group

platform for our work. We hope to keep innovating and positively impacting all those attached to Minar."

Over two decades, Minar Group prides itself in creating remarkable journeys and experiences for its clients. Minar has earned priceless associations that are prospering

till date, numerous honours, as well as illustrious national and international awards.

HS Duggal, MD, Minar Group, says, "It's an honour! Since Minar is the only company from Asia selected for the World Travel Leaders Award '19, our team is delighted. The credit for this goes to our diverse team

across the globe who believe in our vision of authentic experiential travel. With our curated journeys, we've been able to showcase the people and stories of India to our clients. Not only that, we've been able to uplift our experience providers as well – weavers, artists, musicians, yoga instructors, chefs, etc. When we envisaged these journeys, we had a 3P framework in mind – Protect, Preserve & Promote the culture and heritage of India. With our initiative, we are now bringing in other dynamic industries to collaborate with the travel industry. It gives us immense joy when we are able to change the narrative of what India is capable of offering. We take pride in our culture which is more than 5,000 years old and showcasing it to the world, Minar style, of course! Our motto is our core belief: sight-seeing not sight-seeing."

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Revving up the RevPAR for hotels

Browse through any hospitality magazine and you'll come to know that prominent hotel chains are planning to open new properties in India. The buoyant hospitality industry in India is riding high and along with tourism, continues to be one of the key segments driving the growth of the services sector.

In FY19, the overall occupancy rates (ORs) witnessed an increase of about 100 basis points y-o-y to 66.7 per cent. However, this jump was largely due to the increase in domestic tourist arrivals, as foreign tourist arrivals witnessed a very tepid growth of about 2 per cent y-o-y. Riding on the back of this domestic tourist surge, the average room rates (ARRs) increased by about 3.6 per cent to `5,973 per day.

Consequently, the all-India revenue per available room (RevPAR) performance of major markets recorded a growth of about 3.8 per cent over the preceding fiscal and reached `3,981 per day in FY19. However, according to an HVS report, 2018, in many ways, has been the hotel industry's inflection point. Explaining it further, the report says that average rates grew by approximately 6.25 per cent in 2018, unlike in 2017 and 2016 where occupancy was the main driver of growth in RevPAR.

But, at a time when every hotel chain is looking to expand in India, the hurdle in the way of the hospitality industry is that the hotel supply continues to be consistent with the rising demand. Over the last two years, hotel supply grew by 3.7 per cent in 2017 and 3.5 per cent in 2018, whilst demand grew by 7 per cent and 6.8 per cent in the respective years. Only recently has demand outpaced supply.

At a time when domestic tourism is surging, and with the return of a stable government to power and most importantly, lowering of GST rates for hotels, can we expect the hospitality industry to grow by leaps and bounds? In 2020, the hotel industry expects to record its highest occupancy. Will we able to witness this for real? Our fingers are crossed!

Guwahati travel trade meet

A first-of-its-kind travel trade meet was organised in Guwahati, which turned out to be a concerted effort to bring together a diverse lot of organisations and agencies, to promote tourism in the Eastern region of India. SM

Gani, Regional Director, Government of India Tourist Office, Calcutta, addressed the attendees at the event.

After deliberations, many issues were identified for greater attention and

action. A heartening feature of the meet was the great support from the media. It was said that with such a level of cooperation, rapid changes for the better could be expected in the region, which was opening up for tourists.

Frankly Said ...



"Don't be silly, of course you're not keeping us up."

Then (1994)



Ramesh Marwah
Area Manager
Air Canada

From the Archive

In 1994, **Ramesh Marwah** became the Area Manager at Air Canada, after serving as the General Manager for Kuwait Airways.

A travel and aviation expert for the last 25 years, today he is the Director of Dex Group, which is well-known in the travel, hospitality and aviation industries. Marwah is also the Secretary General of Universal Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA).

Now (2019)



Ramesh Marwah
Director
Dex Group

Statue of Unity stands tall

After being unveiled on October 31, 2018, the Statue of Unity — world's tallest statue — has seen an unsurpassed number of tourists in one year, recording a total of 27,17,468 tourist arrivals till October 31, 2019.



Ever since the Statue of Unity was dedicated to the nation last year on the eve of the 143rd birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, there has been a constant rush of tourists to the attraction, according to a report by Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam. A total of 27,17,468 tourists visited Statue of Unity during its first year from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019. The number had escalated to 29,32,220 tourists till November 10 this year.

In fact, a total of 2,91,640 tourists out of the total, which is approximately 10 per cent, visited during the recent Diwali festival alone. An average number of tourists per day during Diwali holidays has been recorded at 22,434 as against the 14,918 per day during last year's Diwali season.



Owing to the development of more sites and attractions in the area including Sardar Sarovar Dam, Valley of Flowers, Butterfly Park, Wall of Unity, as well as a laser light and sound show on Sardar Patel, the destination is seeing an increase of 50.4 per cent tourists per day. Overall, the average number of tourists is recorded as 9,063 per day, whereas on normal working days, it is 7,030 per day and on weekends, it is 13,071 per

day. The aggregate income generated so far has been `80.65 crore.

Recently, new adventure activities like river rafting, cycling, and boating have been developed at Kevadia, and have received an overwhelming response from the youth, as thousands enjoy benefits of the same. In addition to these, activities like night trekking, wall climbing, a two-way zip line, etc.,

have also been developed at Zarwani eco-tourism site.

The main road and all the projects are illuminated at night with colourful and theme-based lighting. A unique 'Glow Garden' with illuminated plants and animals has become a major attraction and, on an average, 4000 to 5000 people visit to see its beauty. As a result, Kevadia has been become an unmatched destination for tourists.

Fact File

Height of base:
58 metres

Statue of Unity height:
182 metres (597 ft)

Total height:
240 metres

Statue of Unity cost:
`3,050 crore

Time for completion:
33 months

Goa redefines tourism

Goa Tourism Development Corporation has a two-pronged strategy for the growth of numbers – more tourist facilities at beaches and promotion of health tourism and its hinterland areas.



Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) is now looking to promote the state beyond its beaches, and Dayanand Raghunath Sopte, Chairman, GTDC, says that the team is working hard to promote tourism to the state. "Our vision is totally different when it comes to tourism. We are trying our best with the help of the Central government to provide all services and not just beaches. Hinterland tourism and health tourism will also be our focus now to provide a more comprehensive package to those visiting," he shares.

Sopte adds that though in the last two years the number of international arrivals to Goa has reduced, the last six months have witnessed a rise



Dayanand Raghunath Sopte
Chairman
GTDC

in both domestic and international arrivals to the state. "We have already started working on offering them various services and facilities that are required at beaches, such as public conveniences and changing rooms," he claims.

With a decline in the number of Russian tourists to Goa in the last few years because of a reduced number of charter flights, Sopte says that this could also be because of facilities given by other countries like Thailand and Malaysia, which are not as expensive as those in Goa. "We are working on that issue and trying to bring in more tourists from Russia this year. Our tourist season has already begun and will continue till March. We are hoping that a relaxation in visa fee and the GST slab

“We are trying to bring in more tourists from Russia this year; we are hoping that a relaxation in visa fee and the GST slab would help revive numbers”

would help revive numbers,” he says. Sopte also reveals that they are adopting a plastic-free policy in their department, a practice that began at the GTDC office and will soon be followed in all GTDC hotels.

Mumbai-London direct again



Virgin Atlantic has relaunched its daily direct operations between Mumbai and London Heathrow on October 28, 2019, complementing its long-established route between London and Delhi. The Mumbai flights operate on Boeing 787-9 offering customers the Upper Class and Premium cabins along with three ways to fly Economy – Light, Classic and Delight. The daily service will depart and arrive in the morning at London Heathrow, offering seamless connections between India and the US.



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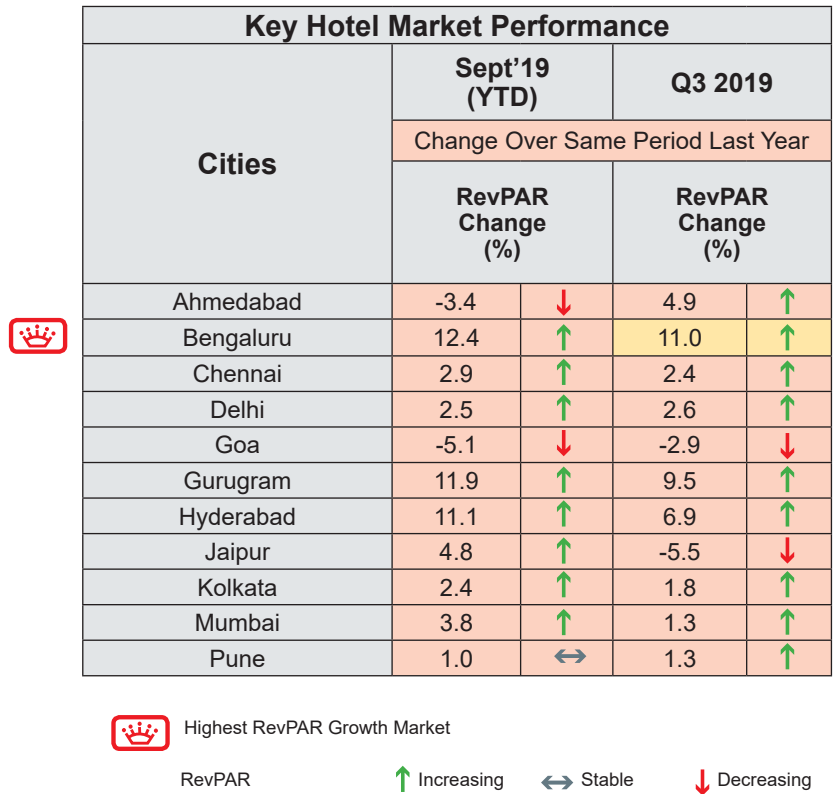
Big cities are hospitality hubs

A majority of cities across India have recorded a growth in RevPAR in the third quarter of 2019 over the same period last year, in all categories of hotels. This certainly indicates that Indian cities are offering a variety of accommodation options, with takers from both the international and domestic markets.

Bengaluru tops charts

- Occupancy in most cities in India is on a rise. The Hotel Momentum India (HMI) report for Q3 2019 by JLL has revealed that 9 out of 10 markets in India recorded an increase in RevPAR performance over the same period last year.
- Mumbai came out to be the winner when it came to RevPAR in absolute terms, while Bengaluru turned out to be the leader in RevPAR % change in Q3 as well as YTD September 2019 over the same period last year.
- Gurugram turned out to be the topper in occupancy growth change for Q3 2019.
- In Quarter 3, eight out of 11 markets witnessed an increase in ADRs. Bengaluru turned out to be the leader in ADR % change in this period over the same period last year.

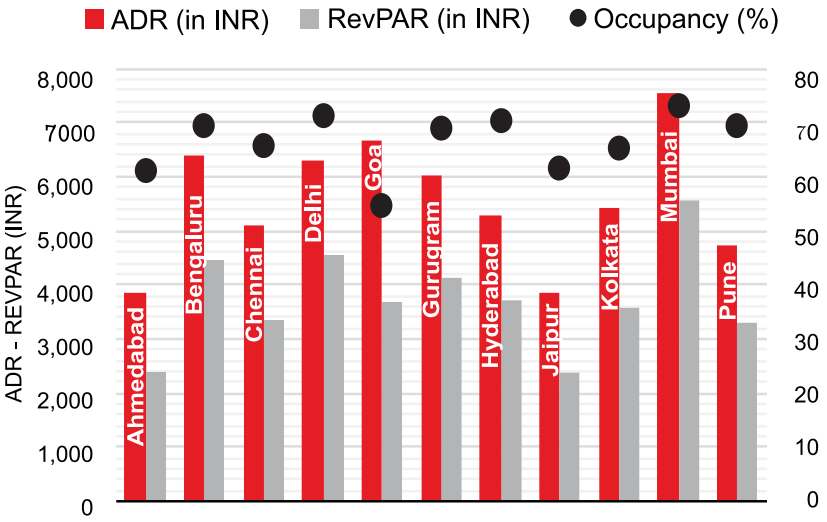
Quarterly Hospitality Monitor



Gujarat gets most hotels

- When it comes to new signings of hotels, domestic hotel operators lead the way over international operators with the ratio of 67:33.
- Gujarat was at the top when it comes to brand signings as well as hotel openings in Q3 2019.
- Around 15% of new signings are conversions of old hotels.

Q3 2019 Performance Trend Chart



Classification-wise Breakup for Q3 2019

Category	Branded Hotel Openings		Branded Hotel Signings	
	Hotels	Keys	Hotels	Keys
Luxury	4	282	1	88
Upper Upscale	1	35	5	605
Upscale	0	0	3	356
Midscale	13	918	19	1,260
Budget	4	239	8	558

Source: JLL

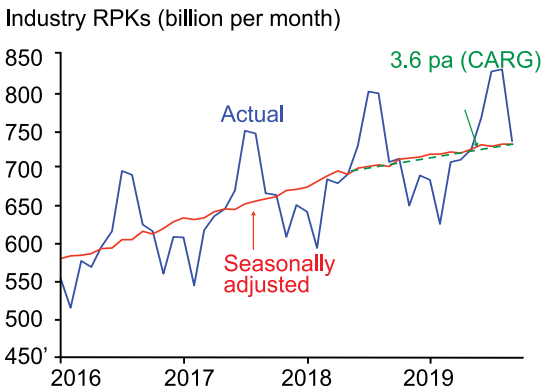
RPKs witness substantial growth

The Air Passenger Market Analysis by International Air Transport Association (IATA) has revealed that airlines across the globe are showing an upward trend in Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPKs). India showed an increase of 1.6 per cent in RPKs domestically over the corresponding period last year.

Global view

- RPKs across the industry were up by 3.8% over the year to September, a broadly unchanged pace from August.
- Demand growth continues to outpace that of capacity, leading to an all-time September high industry load factor. Europe (86.6%), North America (82.8%) and Latin America (81.9%) were best performers.

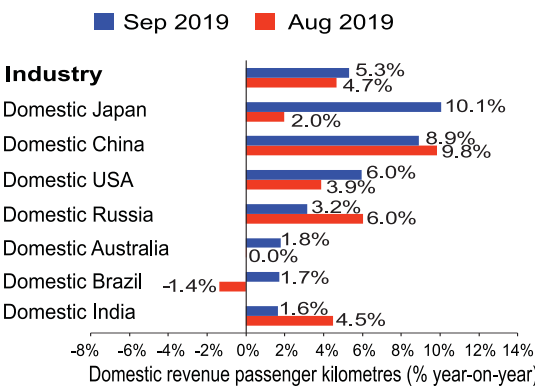
Air passenger volumes and latest trend



India growth

- Domestic RPKs for India, Brazil and Australia grew by 1.6-1.8% y-o-y in Sept.
- Growth in domestic India RPKs eased to 1.6% year-on-year from 4.5% observed in August. The pace has slowed significantly throughout 2019 owing to market disruptions like weaker economic activity.

Domestic RPK growth by market



Maharashtra aims big

Maharashtra has the potential to attract tourists from around the world, and the state's tourism department is presently focused on attracting more visitors from the US and China.



Nisha Verma

Jayakumar Jitendrasinh Rawal explains how Maharashtra has many dimensions for tourism just like any other part of India. Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur and Nashik are international cities, offering a plethora of things to do for tourists. The state has around 720 kms of shoreline which allows tourists to see dolphins all around the year. Other sites include the wildlife sanctuary in Nagpur, world heritage sites like Ajanta and Ellora caves, Bibi Ka Maqbara (mausoleum built by 6th Mughal emperor Aurangzeb) and heritage cities like Aurangabad which tourists can explore.

Rawal claims that Maharashtra is quite vibrant, and the state will have many tourists. He says, "We have been working on attracting more people from

“The Prime Minister himself is promoting India tourism in every speech. India can become a trillion-dollar economy”

are good, but the state governments are not moving with great speed on them," he feels. Rawal adds that the state government, under the PRASAD scheme,

is developing the *vyotirlingas* in Maharashtra. Other sites covered under the scheme are Nashik (pilgrim site) and Trimbakeshwar (one of the 12 *vyotirlingas*).

Ahmedabad celebrates Diwali



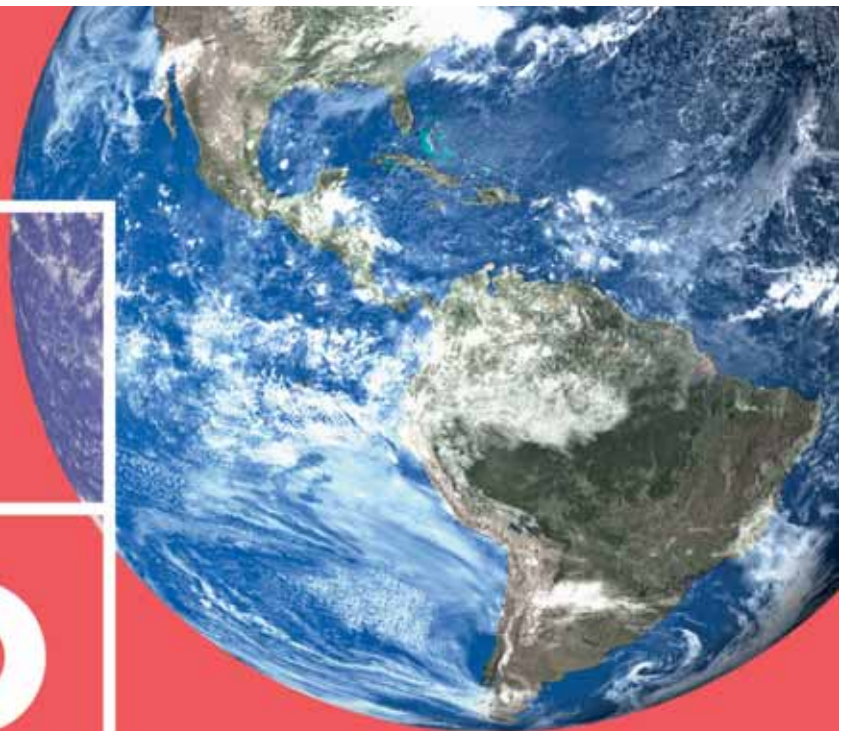
The travel trade of Ahmedabad recently conducted a host of exciting activities for the women in the trade, including a cooking session of healthy recipes, a make-up session, and a lucky draw. Attendees also got some beautiful gifts to take back home.



Jayakumar Jitendrasinh Rawal
Minister of Tourism
Government of Maharashtra

different parts of the world, especially China. I believe the Chinese tourists' emotions can match with the Indians and they will feel more comfortable once they visit us. We have asked the American government to better the relations between India and US, which would further open doors for Americans to visit our country. The Prime Minister himself is promoting India tourism in every speech and claiming how it will provide employment to many people without causing any strain on the resources. I think, India can become a trillion-dollar economy with proper emphasis on the tourism industry."

The image of India that is being portrayed is unrealistic and wrong, and this perception needs to be changed in the international tourists' mind. "Schemes such as Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD



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Tourism Breaking News

■ 7 new international airlines to operate to India during winter schedule

■ EDWIN@
Amazing Thailand to be held from 25-29 November

■ 25% growth in e-Tourist Visa arrivals in India in September 2019 vis-a-vis 2018

■ India's Northeast will be a gateway to Southeast Asia: PM Modi

■ 30 pan-India corporates to meet at Travel MICE Show to be held from December 14-15

New policies, sites for Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand is all set to develop its 13 districts as tourist destinations with government promotion, trainings, and subsidies. Domestic and international tourists can now enjoy homestays, adventure treks and religious circuits, with new regulations ensuring safety of all.

TT Bureau

Uttarakhand government is working towards increasing homestays across the region for boosting tourism in the state. The government has set a target of having 5,000 homestays in the state under the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Grameen Paryatan Yojana.

Satpal Maharaj, Minister of Tourism, Uttarakhand, says, "Homestays in the state would help in enhancing tourism, so we have already completed 1522 homestays across the state and have given loans to people in the state. The tourism department is going to train homestay owners and promote them as well."

Uttarakhand is highly preferred for adventure tourism and the government is making sure



Satpal Maharaj
Minister of Tourism
Government of Uttarakhand

that tourists are safe when they indulge in such activities. "We are working with the Central government to formulate policies for a safer experience for all tourists. We have made our own regulations regarding adventure sports like paragliding, river rafting, as well as trekking," says Maharaj. Wildlife tourism is another highlight of the region which

increased when Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, visited Jim Corbett Park (Nainital, Uttarakhand) on Discovery Channel's Man Vs Wild (survival television series) episode. A 'Modi' trail is made at Jim Corbett Park, featuring spots that the PM visited which will allow people to

including domestic and foreign tourists, and NRIs. "We also provided helicopter services to visitors. Many Mauritian tourists also came to visit Chaar Dham - Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. Prime Minister Modi visited Kedarnath and promoted tourism for the destination,"

encouraging the film industry to come to Uttarakhand and make more movies." The government has rolled out many schemes for increasing tourism in Uttarakhand. The Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Yojana finances the alpha to omega of tourism in which subsidies are given to people supporting tourism directly or indirectly, such as opening a laundry, bakery, etc. All kinds of tourism, whether it is stargazing or angling, is given a helping hand. The government is also working with the travel industry to bring tourists to Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand has 13 districts which will be developed as tourist destinations, and the government here is making many new investments in the tourism infrastructure within the state. 🐦

“The Uttarakhand government has rolled out schemes such as Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Yojana to provide subsidies for developing tourism in the state”

experience the national park by following his footsteps.

Undoubtedly, the Char Dhaam Yatra has been bringing a large flux of tourists to Uttarakhand. Maharaj claims that around 28 lakh people came for the Chaar Dham Yatra in 2019

he says. The state also won the National Tourism Award for being a film-friendly state, on which Maharaj said, "Uttarakhand has got beautiful sceneries, meadows and valleys, making it a perfect setting for films. We are giving subsidies for film production and hence,

New BLESS Collection

Spanish hotel company, Palladium Hotel Group (PHG), has launched a brand called BLESS Collection Hotels with two new properties this year that are perfect for the Indian market.

Hazel Jain

Sandra Polo, Asia Pacific & MEA, Commercial Director, Palladium Hotel Group, was in India recently to meet key trade partners here and promote the group's new brand called BLESS Collection Hotels. The hotel company is now represented in India through Global Destinations and they will conduct a series of activities here for the next 12 months. Speaking about the new brand, Polo says, "We have



Sandra Polo
Asia Pacific & MEA, Commercial Director,
Palladium Hotel Group (PHG)

Polo is upbeat about the India market which she feels is growing slowly but surely.

"We want to focus more on this region and want to have a well-focused strategy. We are currently planning activities with Global Destinations for the next year. The aim is to inform the trade about what we have to offer and what's new, about our different brands and our properties until 2021. We have new launches every year. For instance, this year we have three new hotels and next year we will have Palladium Hotel Group continuing its international expansion with the announcement of three new hotels for 2020: Grand Palladium Sicilia Resort & Spa and Grand Palladium Garden Beach Resort & Spa are located on the Italian island of Sicily, and Palladium Hotel Menorca is situated on the Balearic Island of Menorca," she reveals. 🐦

“We have two new openings under BLESS Collection Hotels, one in Madrid and the second in Ibiza; both are luxury hotels”

two new openings under this brand. One was in January 2019 in Madrid and the second one is the BLESS Hotel Ibiza that opened in June 2019. However, since Ibiza is seasonal, the hotel will be closed from October 2019

through April 2020. Both hotels are luxury properties.”

Palladium Hotel Group has 50 hotels around the world and most of them are in Spain since it is a Spanish company with headquarters in Ibiza.

A push for sustainability

Amit Kishore, Co-founder, Eastbound Group, claims that sustainability is the way forward for the travel industry, and the group continuously innovates its itineraries to further this goal.

TT Bureau

Today, sustainability in travel is not just a choice, but a need. Amit Kishore agrees that sustainable tourism is a shift in mindset from an individual's benefit to that of the community as a whole. "The new-age traveller is evolved and is aware of his impact on the environment. We, at Eastbound Group, strive to promote eco-tourism in the smallest of details. Not only does every Eastbound employee sign-up to the



Amit Kishore
Co-founder
Eastbound Group

ing depending upon the feasibility study and through spot checks by our ground teams. Based on the demography, interests and specific requirements of the travellers, we determine and select the right kind of product and optimise it from a sustainability point of view. We keep on adding sustainable products and experiences to our list of offerings, and a robust mechanism is in place to review and evaluate these products on an ongoing basis," he adds.

“There are certain states and regions in India that have taken a lead and supported eco-tourism in a big way, like Sikkim, Valley of Flowers National Park, Ladakh, Spiti”

task of a reduced carbon footprint, we also try to engage like-minded partners who are eco-conscious and strongly support sustainability," says Kishore.

The company has a detailed manual on how they promote sustainability through their tourism products. "Each of our products and experiences are given a sustainability rat-

Eastbound Group has done a lot of work to offer responsible/sustainable itineraries. Kishore says, "There are certain states and regions in India that have taken a lead and supported eco-tourism in a big way, like Sikkim, Valley of Flowers National Park, Ladakh, Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Central India and Kerala, and parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat are also in demand." 🐦

India shines at Nur-Sultan

Many saw in the PATA Travel Mart a good opportunity to tap both the inbound and outbound markets for India. Some Indian delegates share insights about the mart in Nur-Sultan, an upcoming tourist destination.



CP Sharma
Managing Director
Neptune Travco

“The PATA Travel Mart was a nice opportunity for buyers to meet quality suppliers from different countries, especially Kazakhstan. It also gave a chance to interact with other buyers. The country has a well-articulated culture based on a nomadic pastoral economy. It is famous for its mineral wealth, and the oil deposits are enormous.”



Runeep Sangha
Executive Director
PATA India

“Due to its venue, the mart evoked curiosity and interest among participants. India was well represented with five State bodies showcasing India to a wide cross-section of buyers. There were several sellers from India with independent booths and they were a part of the MOT pavilion. Some states have shown interest in hosting the mart in India.”



Jatinder Taneja
Managing Director
Travel Spirit India

“The PATA Travel Mart was very well organised and we, as sellers, met many new foreign tour operators. The quality of buyers was quite good and we can expect some positive outcomes. Nur-Sultan is also an upcoming tourist destination, especially for MICE. The city is developing good infrastructure and is not an expensive destination.”



Sini K Mathew
Head, Business Development,
Madras Travels & Tours

“The mart was quite fruitful. We had a chance to meet new buyers, expand our networks, and establish new business relationships with many companies that promote or intend to promote India, especially within the southern part of the country. We found the exhibition to be an effective tool for promoting our products.”

Inputs by Anil Mathur from Nur-Sultan

Unfaltering travel protection ensured

TrawellTag Cover-More protects over 3.8 million travellers globally, with a focus on claims-handling efficiencies.



TT Bureau

Globalisation has led to an increase in the number of working professionals travelling to faraway countries for official commitments, but healthcare facilities at many countries have

added panic and anxiety to the equation. However, TrawellTag Cover-More was there with him every step of the way. When informed, TrawellTag Cover-More's claims assistance team immediately took care of the situation and helped

TrawellTag

Cover-More

failed to catch up with the pace. TrawellTag Cover-More is changing the way people travel around the world.

Recently, when a TrawellTag Cover-More customer, Shail Kumar, was travelling to Ivory Coast, he was absolutely not aware of what fate had in store for him. Halfway through the trip, he started experiencing severe chills and high fever, and being in a remote region of Africa

him with all the necessary information and formalities. Kumar was guided to the best healthcare facility in Ivory Coast. TrawellTag Cover-More constantly kept track of his health and ensured that he recovered completely before returning to India. A grateful Kumar said, “It was TrawellTag Cover-More's unfaltering travel protection services that put me back on my feet.”

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Sri Lanka for M!CE & weddings

Kumar De Silva, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB), claims that Sri Lanka is ready for conferences and weddings. SLCB recently showcased the various M!CE facilities in the island nation to India's M!CE and wedding planners by organising a Fam trip for them to the country.



Nisha Verma

Sri Lanka Convention Bureau (SLCB) recently organised a Fam trip for Indian M!CE agents, weddings planners and the media, to see the M!CE facilities in the island nation. The delegation experienced and visited the hotels and convention facilities in Negombo, Nuwara Eliya, Kandy and Colombo. The trip ended with a B2B session between M!CE service providers, stakeholders and executives of SLCB with the delegation.

Kumar De Silva was heading the SLCB delegation and shared that the idea behind the Fam trip, especially after the April 21 attacks in Colombo, was to showcase that the island is ready to receive tourists and



Kumar De Silva
Chairman
SLCB

there is no issue of safety and security in the island nation.

"India is our largest source market for M!CE. We have a lot more to offer and it is a good time to show the agents the potential and diversity. This way, they can understand that

Sri Lanka is not a one-time M!CE destination, but people keep coming back for different areas and interests, and it also enables agents to understand when the customer comes and asks them for a particular thing and how do they tailor-make it.

“We had a roadshow in Chennai and Bengaluru. We are also going to Kolkata and East India, because we believe that there is a lot of traction we can gain from hosting these events across India”

After the unfortunate incident in April, we thought that it'd be an ideal time to bring in all the agents, so that they go around and understand that there is normalcy and the security situation is stable for anybody

who is travelling to Sri Lanka.” He stressed that they see a lot of untapped potential in the Indian market. “It's not just Mumbai or North India, but we are focusing a lot on southern India as well, which has got great potential. Last month, we

had a roadshow in Chennai and Bengaluru. We are also going to Kolkata and East India, because we believe that there is a lot of traction we can gain from having these events across India,” said De Silva.

Insisting that the primary role of SLCB is to facilitate and support events, he said, “We want to ensure that corporates and agents have confidence and have good experience of the event in Sri Lanka. We primarily offer incentives which we believe could support the events, like a city tour or a dance troupe. Recently, we have introduced a proportional assistant scheme. However, that comes into effect only after the conference is confirmed in Sri Lanka. Otherwise, it becomes a part of the negotiating tool and then it gets diluted. Hence, there is a minimum three-night stay requirement in Sri Lanka. Also, they need to operate through registered agents in Sri Lanka and stay at hotels that are registered as well. After that, we will look at

a reimbursement of the event, which will be around 8-10 per cent of the total accommodation cost, based on the criteria that the event is directly related to M!CE.”

Another highlight is weddings, for which India is a huge market, and De Silva claims that Sri Lanka does become a venue for many of them.

“The wedding industry is primarily being handled by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB), but we are one product and it's kind of seamless. When we have the opportunity of bringing in people to do M!CE as well as weddings, we want to showcase the combination of what they are also marketing,” he said. 🌸

Japan exhibits M!CE potential

Visit Japan Travel & MICE Mart (VJTM) 2019 concluded on a high note at Intex Osaka. It had in attendance around 329 overseas companies as participants, while 363 companies and organisations were local participants. The event was inaugurated with much aplomb at a formal opening ceremony, where **Satoshi Seino**, President, JNTO, addressed the gathering.



Interest for Austria grows

Interest from the India market to Austria and neighbouring regions will only increase with time, claims **Ishvinder Maddh**, Managing Director, Robinville Intech.

 TT Bureau

The recent Robinville Tourism Conclave—The Roadshow, by Robinville Intech in association with its partners, saw the bigwigs of the travel trade industry from three cities in India— Delhi, Mumbai and Jaipur— know more about the destinations on showcase. The three-city roadshow involved presentations highlighting the attractions of



Ishvinder Maddh
Managing Director
Robinville Intech


“Last year, there were 192,000-plus arrivals from the Indian market; there is huge potential because the average stay is 1.8 days at the moment”

Austria, Germany and Hungary as preferred destinations for not only Indian outbound travellers but also Indian film productions. Speaking at the event, **Ishvinder Maddh** said,

“We have a big focus on tourism into Austria and our neighbours Germany, Hungary, Czech, Slovakia, and Croatia. These are the countries we are focusing on from the Indian market, bridging certain gaps

between our European partners and the Indian travel fraternity. We see ourselves as a company which helps our Indian travel fraternity to get the right answers and solutions for their client requirements.”

He added that the roadshow proved to be quite successful for them. “We have got tremendous response with 100 plus participants in Mumbai, 60 in Jaipur and over 100 in Delhi. We are very happy! We had great agents, who were interested in the destinations. There were people with good questions trying to understand the destinations,” he informed.

Maddh shared that over the last four years, Austria has seen a growth of over 100 per cent. “Last year, there were 192,000 plus arrivals from India market; there is huge potential because the average stay is 1.8 days at the moment,” he claimed. 

Le Murraya enters India

Le Murraya Hospitality Group (LMH), based in Koh Samui, has signed up India Sales Associates (ISA Tourism) as its India representative in a bid to tap India's outbound market.

 TT Bureau

LMH operates boutique hotels and resorts, with properties under brand names Le Murraya Hotel, Synergy Resort and La Vida Resort and restaurants as well as other hospitality services. Based in Koh Samui, the properties not only offer diverse stay facilities ranging from budget to luxury categories, but also many dining experiences.



Manas Sinha
Director
India Sales Associates

“Koh Samui is steadily growing as a must-visit part of Thailand. It has become a hot favourite among Indian guests looking at wholesome experiences”

Manas Sinha, Director, India Sales Associates, says, “Koh Samui is steadily growing as a must-visit part of Thailand. It has become a hot favourite among Indian guests looking at wholesome experiences.

By presenting these three properties, we are happy to bring a range of options for our valued travel partners. The resorts, on their front, are very keen to customise services, food and other facilities to impart excellent holiday

memories to Indian couples and families.”

Le Murraya Boutique Hotel, Samui, is situated in the heart of Chaweng beach and is just a 15-minute drive from Samui International Airport. Deemed Thailand's hippest new hotel with spacious and serviced residence-like rooms, this property is the perfect choice for long and short-stay accommodation on this vibrant island getaway. Synergy Resort, Samui, on the other hand, has a natural unique theme and is built in the middle of the famous Chaweng beach in the northern part of Samui Island. This all-villa resort combines space, privacy and comfort all in a natural, unique setting that is perfect for all those seeking a getaway. La Vida Resort, Samui, is a calming sanctuary just one-hour by flight from Bangkok and a 10-minute drive from Samui International Airport. 



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India's focus on experiences



With one of the largest delegations of international exhibitors, the Indian pavilion at World Travel Market, London, showcased India as a preferred destination for global tourists. This year, over 30 co-exhibitors comprising state governments, tour operators, hoteliers, wellness centres and other stakeholders were present at the India pavilion. Ministry of Tourism's 'Find the Incredible You' campaign was a key talking point at the mart.



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India market for global players



Ramayana trail in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is home to more than 50 Ramayana sites. The island nation has much to offer by way of religious gems such as the Sigiriya rock; Shri Bhakta Hanuman Temple, nestled amidst scenic Nuwara Eliya; and Dambulla Caves, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Vartik Sethi from Sri Lanka

The scenic island nation of Sri Lanka offers more than beaches and pristine waters. It is home to over 50 sites that play a role in the ancient Indian epic - Ramayana.

Munneswaram Temple, Chilaw

Munneswaram Temple puts forth a really interesting episode from the Ramayana. Lord Rama, after defeating Ravana (a Brahmin), felt he was being chased by a curse. The curse is believed to be a concomitant of the Brahmahathi Dosha (killing of a Brahmin). It was here that Lord Shiva advised Lord Rama to carve and worship four lingams to get rid of the curse.

Dambulla Caves

Amidst Sri Lanka's volatile

history, the Dambulla Golden Cave Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a peaceful refuge. During the reign of Anuradha Pura kings, promoting Buddhism was quintessential to their campaign. They built several monasteries with Buddhist murals enshrined inside.

Sigiriya Rock

The Sigiriya rock is a major tourist attraction in Sri Lanka which is about 20 minutes away from Heritance Kandalama. This gigantic steep rock in the middle of nowhere is a manifestation of nature's miracle.

The deep pools at the entrance appear shallow to the naked eye and had functional fountains installed centuries ago. It is believed that Ravana used these illusions to flood the en-

trance at will, to keep intruders from entering his palace.

Shri Bhakta Hanuman Temple

Nuwara Eliya provides a contrast from the rest of Sri Lanka. Amidst the beautiful weather, scenic hills and tea gardens is a temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman, and marks his search for Sita Devi on the hills of Ramboda.

Ashoka Vatika

According to folklore, Ashoka Vatika (or the pleasure garden of Ravana) is where the demon king is believed to have kept Sita after her abduction. This is a modern form of garden which pleases the eye with its medley of colours.

The cool temperature at this kaleidoscopic paradise fosters



Divurumpola

a variety of roses, orchids, and spices.

the oaths taken here while settling disputes.

Divurumpola

Divurumpola, which means 'a place of oath', is where Sita Devi is believed to have undergone the 'agneya pariksha'. The temple is kept at high regard for oath taking and even the legal system of Sri Lanka has a provision for making and accepting

Kelaniya Temple

Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya is a Buddhist temple linked to the coronation of Vibeeshana by Lakshmana after the death of Ravana. The murals enshrined at this temple are an exquisite example of the sculptor's art that beautifully narrates the story of this place. 🐦



Sigiriya Rock



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A new awaits travellers

NBTC Holland Marketing, India, recently hosted members of the trade to visit and explore Holland, and attend the HollandCity Global Travel Trade Show. Visitors had a chance to explore a different side of The Netherlands, one that went beyond Amsterdam to regions like Rotterdam, Den Haag, and other scenic sites.



Guldeep Singh Sahni
Managing Director
Weldon Tours & Travels

“The itinerary was very well planned, and I appreciate every place we visited. To mention few, market tours, cheese tasting, shopping, speedo tour, visit to Royal Delft, Mauritshuis Museum, Madurodam and of course, Efteling, is perfect for a family overnight stay especially with children. We are recommending all this to our customers. NBTC Holland Marketing has done good work of training the tour operators, but time has come to create demand in the market. With NBTC Holland Marketing, Holland is going to become a long holiday destination.”



Himanshu Patil
Director
Kesari Tours

“NBTC Holland Marketing, India, had invited 11 OTOAI Executive Committee members to visit and explore Holland, and attend the HollandCity Global Travel Trade Show. It was a very good interaction with partners across the country. The itinerary was well planned. Usually, Indian travellers visit Holland for two nights, which majorly involves visiting Amsterdam, but after this trip, I am sure that the Holland itinerary should increase to 4-5 nights. As a group tour operator, we will incorporate different tours.”



Chitra Bhatia
Managing Director
Aashman Air Travels

“Two of my favourite experiences during the trip were the visit to different museums and Efteling Theme Park and Madurodam, both of which are ideal tourist spots for families and kids. I think, Indian travellers going outbound are now evolving in such a manner that they want to try experiences at hand. I have a lot of clients who love doing pottery. So, if Royal Delft can provide a small pottery workshop for tourists, I will be happy to put together an interested group to travel there.”



Gurdeep Singh Gujral
Director
Gujral Tours and Travels

“The best attraction for me during the trip was the visit to Madurodam, a city full of beautiful miniatures, activities and attractions. I think it is an excellent attraction for family and kids. Apart from that, canal cruise was something which fascinated me the most in Amsterdam. All these destinations are ideal for family and MICE travellers from India due to their available amenities. To attract more Indians, NBTC Holland Marketing should do some joint promotional plan with airlines such as KLM. The airlines can offer some combi fares.”



Riaz Munshi
Managing Director
N Chirag Travels

“Out of all destinations we visited in Holland, I would personally recommend staying in Rotterdam for its bustling and vibrant nature and taking day trips to the neighbouring cities and attractions. Rotterdam Walking Tour would be the perfect start to get acquainted with the city followed by the magnificent views from Euromast. Travellers should spend a complete day in The Hague to enjoy the creative Grote Market and Scheveningen Beach. I would also highly recommend the Mauritshuis to art lovers.”



Ajay Sengar
Managing Director
Pawas Tourism

“It was a wonderful experience to learn and know more about lesser-known destinations of Holland during the trip. The highlight about the trip was the itinerary, which helped us explore so many different cities of Holland in a span of six days. Countryside Holland is indeed enchanting and beautiful, with a mesmerising landscape, gothic architecture and serene river canals. We got to know that Holland is not just about Amsterdam. We had a wonderful time bonding and sharing knowledge.”

Delegates explore 14 Dutch cities and sites



- ❖ Grote Market in The Hague for Shopping Tour
- ❖ Scheveningen
- ❖ Rotterdam
- ❖ Euromast Observation Tower
- ❖ Bijenkorf
- ❖ Royal Delft Factory and Museum
- ❖ Mauritshuis Museum
- ❖ Madurodam
- ❖ Museum Prinsenhof, Delft
- ❖ 's-Hertogenbosch
- ❖ Efteling Theme Park
- ❖ Batavia Stad Fashion Outlet, Lelystad
- ❖ Almere City Centre
- ❖ Amsterdam



Siddharth Khanna
Partner
Khanna Enterprises

“During our trip to Holland, I personally enjoyed our visit to Madurodam and Rotterdam. In my view, a number of Indian tourists prefer travelling to Holland via tour operators or DMCS of other markets and not local tour operators, primarily because Amsterdam is considered as the only popular destination in Holland so far in the Indian market. So, people generally prefer working with agents where the travellers are travelling the most. So, I think, Holland should be promoted more as a stand-alone destination in India.”



Rajeev Sabharwal
Chief Executive Officer
Gaurav Travels

“I liked everything which we did on the Holland trip. The walking tours were excellent. Den Haag is a beautiful city, where we stayed for three nights. We have been selling Holland for the past 20 years, and the country has grown significantly in terms of attractions and destinations. Generally, Indian tourists travel to Holland during their transit to Europe or for a bachelorette trip, but now that we have experienced the new destinations, we can easily sell Holland for 4-5 nights for Indian travellers.”



Shravan Bhalla
Chief Executive Officer
High Flyer

“Indian tourists, who love to shop, can go to Delft as well as the outlet mall. Indians can spend full day at the outlet shopping mall and enjoy great discounts offered. As far as NBTC Holland marketing is concerned, they should organise more educational tours to attract Indians. After our trip, we have understood that Holland has a lot to offer. It is not just a part of a Europe trip with 2-3 nights stay, but has more to offer. We can sell Holland as a single destination with 7-9 nights stay offer to the clients.”



Kaushal Bhuvra
Managing Director
World of Vacations

“The Hague has always been popular. The Cobble Street and shopping at the passage is truly fascinating. The access to Delft, Madurodam and Rotterdam makes The Hague a unique centre for value accommodation and casinos. We are marketing 5 nights/6 days solo Netherlands package with attention to Den Haag, Brabant and Amsterdam. This will always be during Keukenhof period besides Summer. We are also promoting architecture offsite tours to Rotterdam along with Amsterdam. We are also looking at bike tours.”

Inputs by Manas Dwivedi

A busy agenda for FAITH

FAITH is planning to conduct a solidarity meeting with stakeholders of the industry from Kashmir, revealed **Subhash Goyal**, Honorary Secretary, FAITH.



TT Bureau

Subhash Goyal has revealed that FAITH and its Board members will be going to Srinagar to express their solidarity with the travel and hospitality industry of Jammu & Kashmir. "We have circulated the information regarding the same amongst all our members and we are getting a good response," he says.



Subhash Goyal
Honorary Secretary
FAITH

“If tour operators, hotels, and MOT advertise the logo and GST benefits on their website, tourism will grow”

Apart from that FAITH will also launch a new logo for the industry to attract tourists to India. Sharing details of the same, Goyal said, "We have thanked the government on reducing the GST and visa fee, and we are having an urgent meeting with all the hoteliers and

the stakeholders on promoting India as an attractive destination internationally, for which we will be launching a common logo that can be used by everyone in the industry (tour operators and hoteliers) on their websites. The logo will showcase what the government has done to make

India a potential destination for international travellers." He said that the idea is to fulfil the government's vision of doubling the number of tourists in the next few years and that the benefit of reduction in GST is passed on to the final customer, so that the Indian package becomes cheaper than what it is currently. He insisted that if they can achieve these two things, it will be great. "If each of the 1,500 tour operators of IATO advertise the logo and GST benefits on their respective websites and the same is done by hotels and even MOT, it will grow the tourist numbers," claimed Goyal. He also clarified that having a logo for promotion is an initiative of FAITH and an approval from MOT is awaited.

Sharing more news, he said that the Chairman of ITM 2020 will be **Chander Mansharamani**, Vice Chairman of ICPB. The dates will be revealed soon. 🇮🇳

Accident Mitigation Act

The Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) will be coming up with an Accident Mitigation Act that will enlist the protocols required to be followed in case of an accident.



TT Bureau

As many as 212 mountains have been opened by Government of India, and the association is actively considering that these mountains be promoted.

"Fortunately for us, about six mountains are trekking peaks, and more clarity will be coming on that soon. However, the



Capt Swadesh Kumar
President
ATOAI

“We have had multiple meetings and soon, our safety guidelines will be released, which will elaborate on what protocol should be followed”

challenge is convincing the international tour operators about the possibility of what's happening in the country. The perception is very important. In fact, ATOAI, in collaboration with our nodal ministry—the Indian

Mountaineering Foundation, is planning to have a serious Act on accident mitigation and what is happening on the safety front. We have had multiple meetings and soon, our safety guidelines will be released, which will elaborate on what happens in

case of an accident, and what protocol should be followed. Now, we want to ask the stakeholders to come and work with us," says **Capt Swadesh Kumar**, President, ATOAI.

The association is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year, and it will be a big event for them. It is likely to celebrate its 25-year anniversary at its next AGM.

Speaking about the initiatives, Kumar said, "We were recently called by Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog, for a meeting which was attended by the Secretary and Joint Secretary, Tourism, as well as the entire travel and tourism industry. He asked us what we, as an industry, are doing to get business and how we are working as an association."

Kumar also informed that an International Travel Mart is being organised on November 23-25 in Imphal in Manipur. 🇮🇳

Refresh, Refuel and Recharge in Oasia Hotels, Singapore

Oasia Hotel Downtown



The 27-storey 314-room Oasia Hotel Downtown is a breath of fresh air and welcomed greenery in Singapore's Central Business District. The tropical skyscraper is refreshingly sleek inside. The living, breathing vertical garden is a remarkable combination of lush foliage, copper, wood and stone. Filled with picturesque sky gardens, terraces and green screens, the hotel is as inviting to the flora and fauna as it is to visiting guests.

Oasia Hotel Novena



Wood, granite and other natural elements make up the calming landscape in the charming enclave of Novena, located near the Orchard Road and business district. While soothing tones fill the hotel, the epitome of comfort and style is best enjoyed via the Club experience. With Oasia's highly-lauded award-winning Club Lounge and private pool, peace and quiet comes with absolute exclusivity.



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B2B, M!CE@FITUR 2020

With a focus on business and professionalisation, FITUR 2020 has strengthened its agenda of B2B meetings with its sections FITUR B2B MATCH and FITUR MICE.

TT Bureau
Celebrating its 40th anniversary next year, FITUR 2020, the international tourism fair organised by IFEMA from January 22-26 at Feria de Madrid, presents its strongly enhanced

tool, bringing together a large amount of business activity during FITUR's business visitor days. In the last edition, within the scope of these two programmes, more than 9,000 B2B meetings were held with buyers from all over the world.

tourism providers with 120 qualified buyers from around the world. Spain, with 595 international events, is in third position in the ranking of the International Congresses and Conventions Association — ICCA 2019, only behind



B2B meeting programmes. The FITUR B2B MATCH agenda for tour operators' and agencies' international buyers, and FITUR MICE, the agenda specialising in incentive tourism, meetings and business travel, have proved to be an effective

For meetings, incentives and business travel tourism, a growing business segment and key to the tourism industry, the FITUR MICE specialist programme will bring together on January 22-23, representatives of 100 MICE

the United States (947) and Germany (642). Diversification and new business niches will also be well represented at FITUR through its different specialist sections that make up its portfolio. 🇮🇳

70% growth for Slovakia

With a total of three VFS Global's visa application centres in India, Slovakia saw a 70 per cent increase in Indian arrivals in 2018, with leisure tourism on the rise.

Hazel Jain
Ivan Lančarič, Ambassador of Slovakia to India, based in New Delhi, was recently in Mumbai to officially inaugurate VFS Global's Slovakia Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Mumbai's BKC area. This takes the total number

the Ambassador, around 12,000 Indians travelled to Slovakia in 2018. "This was almost a 70 per cent increase in numbers which can be attributed to our campaign that we launched about six months ago to promote tourism in India. We are seeing an increase in leisure

for film or TV production in the Slovak Republic. This cash rebate will increase to 33 per cent from January 1, 2020." **Vinay Malhotra**, Regional Chief Operating Officer — South Asia, Middle East and China, VFS Global, said, "Slovakia's reputa-



of VACs for Slovakia to three in India. the other two are in New Delhi and Bengaluru. This development is an indication of the growing number of travellers to the destination. According to

tourists," he shares. Slovakia is also focusing on tapping film and TV production houses for shoots. He added, "Slovakia offers a 20 per cent cash rebate of certified private expenses spent

tion as an aspirational destination is growing, and we are pleased to provide travellers our best-in-class services to make the first step in their journey comfortable." 🇮🇳

Diwali delight by One Above

One Above, which recently completed 10 months of operations, hosted a Diwali party along with Centara Hotels & Resorts in Mumbai for its partners. Hosts BA Rahim, Vishal Somaiya and Irshad Dadan, along with Moumita Mukherjee Paul, welcomed everyone and insisted that they focus on having fun and not talk shop!



IndiGo code-shares with Qatar

IndiGo has signed a one-way codeshare agreement with Qatar Airways, allowing Qatar to place its code on IndiGo flights between Doha, Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. The agreement may be enhanced in the future.



TT Bureau

The agreement was announced in New Delhi, where **Ronojoy Dutta**, CEO, IndiGo and **Akbar Al Baker**, Group Chief Executive, Qatar Airways, signed the codeshare agreement. However, the two airlines claimed that they are looking at making it a two-way codeshare in the future, and grow the relationship further. Speaking at the event, Dutta said, "Qatar has a great network and track record of success, as well as product excellence. A one-way codeshare is just a small step and I look forward to enhance the relationship with Qatar Airways."

Al Baker agreed, saying, "The agreement between IndiGo and Qatar Airways is an important first step in giving Indian travellers choice to connect to the world through our home and hub



at Hamad International Airport, from where we fly to more than 170 destinations worldwide." The new codeshare agreement will be implemented from December, once the systems of the two airlines are integrated.

Beyond one-way codeshare Dutta claims that the one-way codeshare is a step towards IndiGo's plans to fly international. "We are expanding internationally, and we need

a lot of system work before we do that. Hence, we are starting small, but we do have plans. We started this journey with Turkish Airlines, which is creating a lot of pressure on our system and processes, which is why we want to take this new codeshare with Qatar slowly," he shared.

With IndiGo being an LCC and Qatar a full-service, the question arises as to how

the two would offer the same level of service to passengers. Baker commented, "Passengers that are on IndiGo codeshare with QR will receive the same amenities that we provide in the Economy Class of Qatar Airways."

Agreement with Turkish Airlines

When asked about how IndiGo's new codeshare with Qatar augurs with an existing agreement with Turkish Airlines, Dutta said, "Turkish flies to Istanbul and Qatar flies to Doha, which won't have any conflict. And eventually, when we have a full codeshare with Qatar, our passengers will go beyond Doha, which won't conflict with Turkish Airlines."

Baker claims that Qatar Airways is interested in investing in IndiGo, but will wait for the time being. 🇮🇳

Hahn Air Technologies for airline partners

Hahn Air Technologies is ready to provide distribution services to airlines looking to expand their indirect ticket sales.



TT Bureau

Hahn Air Technologies will also be an innovation centre and think tank for the Hahn Air Group by exploring and developing the potential of new distribution channels such as NDC, blockchain-based providers and mobile solutions.

The first product of Hahn Air Technologies is X1-Air. By using X1-Air, airlines that have limited or no indirect distribution connectivity can immediately make their flights available in various sales channels. Apart from interfaces with major GDSs, such as Amadeus and Sabre and soon Travelport, the service package of Hahn Air Technologies and X1-Air includes scheduling, fare filing, messaging, inventory management as well as

booking, ticketing and settlement. More GDS will be added to the service in the near future. The first partner airlines to use the services of Hahn Air Technologies are Air Panama (7P) from Panama, ASL Airline France (50) from France, Azur Air Ukraine (QU) from Ukraine, Jam Airlink Express (JO) from Jamaica, Mayair (5G) from Mexico, Ulendo



Airlink (W4) from Malawi, Westair Aviation (WV) from Namibia, and Wildcat Touring (WC) from the United States. **Alexander Proschka**, Head of Hahn Air Technologies, says, "X1-Air allows low-cost airlines to outsource their complete indirect distribution in a simple, risk-free and cost-efficient manner." 🇮🇳

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DECEMBER 2019

ILTM Cannes	Cannes	2-5
CAPA World Aviation Outlook Summit	Malta	5-6
Tourism Powerhouse by PATA India Chapter	Delhi	6
IITM	Hyderabad	6-8
Incredible India Roadshow	Singapore	9
Incredible India Roadshow	Kuala Lumpur	10
International Buddhist Travel Mart	Bodh Gaya	10-12
Incredible India Roadshow	Bangkok	12
CII Annual Tourism Summit	Delhi	12
UNWTO World Conference on Tourism and Culture	Kyoto, Japan	12-13
Travel MiCE Show	Chennai	14-15

JANUARY 2020

SATTE	Greater Noida	8-10
IITM	Kochi	9-11
ASEAN Tourism Forum	Brunei	12-16
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
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
BIT Milano	Milan	9-11
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
Aviation Festival Asia	Singapore	19-20
IITM	Kolkata	21-23

MARCH 2020

MITT	Moscow	17-19
PATA Annual Summit 2020	Ras Al Khaimah	31-Apr 3

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

IATO takes up key issues

With its efforts to resolve industry issues and address concerns of members, IATO is actively working on subjects such as group booking facility with railways and withdrawal of airport entry passes to tour operators.



Manas Dwivedi

Withdrawal of airport entry passes for tour operators

The facility of airport entry passes for tour operators is being withdrawn from January 1, 2020, and passes will be issued for the interim period till December 31, 2019. IATO took up the matter with concerned authorities mentioning that airport entry passes are must for tour operators to receive foreign guests at the airport and to ensure their safety and security.

Denial of Kolkata immigration office to acknowledge Darranga checkpoint

The North East India Tour Operators Association informed that Bhutan government will 'freeze visas for tourists exiting via Samdrup Jongkhar', as an interim measure for the exit route from Bhutan connecting Assam. The reason given by Bhutan government is the problem faced by foreign tourists during immigration in Kolkata, as the immigration office there has denied to acknowledge Darranga, Assam entry stamp in the passports. IATO mentioned that it is an important point of entry as it boosts tourism in Northeast India. The association requested that Darranga checkpoint should be recognised as a valid check post for entry/exit so that Bhutan government can lift its order.

Group booking facility with railways for IATO members
Indian tour operators involved in inbound tour business are unable to do bookings through IRCTC's online platform for groups of more than six pax since the existing IRCTC



software doesn't allow it. The average size, however, of a foreign tourist group is of 30-40 persons. So, in one go for groups, tour operators cannot book train tickets for the whole group and they need to do bookings multiple times.

IATO suggested that their members should be allowed to book rail tickets for their foreign groups in a similar way as they do for domestic air booking with group name, ID numbers, passport details and nationality of the passengers mandatorily mentioned. Facility of 360 days advance booking for foreign clients, should be available for IATO members who are recognised by Ministry of Tourism. It also said that for group bookings for foreign tourists, terms and conditions, advance booking period, should be on a par with booking pattern for international booking centres.

Grievance for booking of luxury train billing with IRCTC

IATO members are currently facing issues with IRCTC in respect of invoicing of booking of tour package for Maharajas' Express luxury train for the current season 2018-19. Members of the association are recognised by the Ministry of Tourism as

tour operators. Under the GST regime, they are paying five per cent GST (without availing ITC facility) as tour operators. From the current season 2018-19, IRCTC has abruptly changed its invoicing pattern and has started treating tour operators and sales affiliates as "pure agent" of the end customer or tourist by referring to GST provisions with taking concurrence from tour operators or sales affiliates before changing the billing process. IATO requested that IRCTC should not treat its members as pure agent of foreign tourist(s) and tax invoice should be raised by IRCTC to sales affiliates/

from them on the status of bookings of their clients, but there was no reply from Cox & Kings about the departure of the train and bookings made by them. The matter was taken up with Maharashtra Tourism requesting them to honour the bookings for which advance payments have been made and tickets issued. The association requested that Deccan Odyssey luxury train departures should not be cancelled and operate as scheduled.

Landing time with TUI Airways

TUI Airways is a UK charter flight that operates to Goa from November to April. This year, the preventative

For foreign tourists, terms and conditions as well as advance booking period should be on a par with the booking pattern of international booking centres

tour operators in INR with five per cent GST.

Halt of Vande Bharat Express at Tundla junction

IATO has requested the Railways Minister that 'Vande Bharat Express' between Delhi-Varanasi-Delhi, which halts at Kanpur and Prayagraj, should be given two minutes' halt at Tundla Railway Station, as this will be useful to domestic as well as foreign tourists who would like to travel from Mathura to Varanasi and Prayagraj. They also pitched for introducing this on other tourist sectors.

Bookings on Deccan Odyssey

With the scenario of Cox & Kings, IATO members enquired

maintenance of Goa Airport is scheduled on Saturdays from 07:30 to 12:30 IST. However, these timings disrupt the TUI Airways operations on Saturdays. TUI airways operated on Saturday at 11:30-13:00 IST last season. The airline has very clearly mentioned that due to operational reasons and crew rest, they cannot operate at the timings offered by AAI, Goa and Delhi. The airline has stated that they would be forced to cancel the flight if not permitted to operate as requested. IATO has requested the authorities to kindly look into the matter and revise the naval NOTAM to 06:30-11:30 hours IST, or it should be permitted to operate at 12:30-14:00 LT. 🐦

OBITUARY

Vikram Kodendera

(July 12, 1965 - October 28, 2019)



Vikram Kodendera, COO – Inbound of Trail Blazer Tours India (TBI), passed away due to cardiac arrest on October 28, 2019. He began his career in Travel Corporation India (TCI) in 1989 in Mumbai. He was posted in Frankfurt in 1994 for three years, after which he took over the London office for a further three years. Kodendera returned to India to head the inbound division of TCI. After the sale of TCI to Thomas Cook, he spent a short stint with Cox & Kings. When Trail Blazer Tours India (TBI) was set up, Kodendera rejoined the Katgara family in their new venture.

Kodendera was completely devoted to his work and was known in the industry for his ethics and integrity, besides being a go-getter. He was highly respected and will be sorely missed by all who knew and worked with him. His contribution to the company will not be forgotten. May his soul rest in peace.

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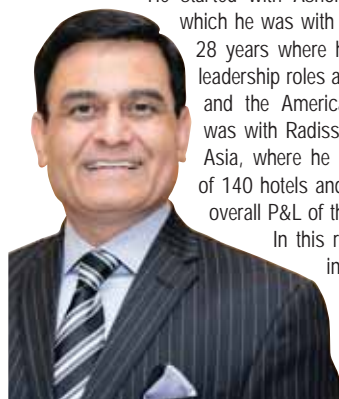
G Kamala Vardhana Rao, IAS, Kerala Cadre, has joined as the Chairman and Managing Director of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Before assuming the office at ITDC, Rao was serving as the Principal Secretary, Government of Kerala. He was also the Secretary of Kerala Tourism from 2014-15. In his career spanning almost three decades, Rao has served multiple positions including Director of Fisheries Department; Director, Department of Tourism and Culture, Government of Andhra Pradesh; and District Collector, Kollam, Kerala, among others.



Citymax Hotels by Landmark Group

Dubai, UAE

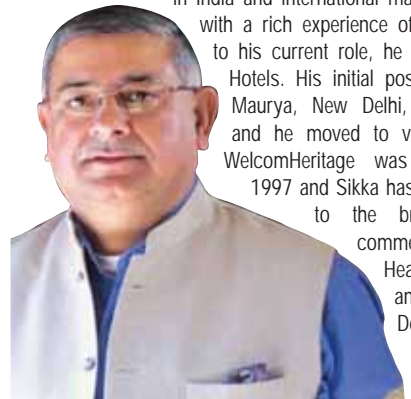
The Landmark Group has appointed **Raj Rana** as CEO, Citymax Hotels. Rana comes with extensive experience in the hotel industry. He started with Ashok Group of Hotels, post which he was with Radisson Hotels for over 28 years where he held various business leadership roles across South Asia, Russia and the Americas. His last assignment was with Radisson Group as CEO, South Asia, where he was handling a portfolio of 140 hotels and was responsible for the overall P&L of the business in the region. In this role, he was instrumental in growing the South Asia business and the launch of multiple new brands.



Signum Hotels & Resorts

New Delhi

Signum Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Sunil Sikka** as Strategic Advisor for the brand. He will be responsible for brand expansion in India and international markets. He comes with a rich experience of 39 years. Prior to his current role, he worked with ITC Hotels. His initial posting was at ITC Maurya, New Delhi, in Front Office and he moved to various positions. WelcomHeritage was established in 1997 and Sikka has been connected to the brand since its commencement as the Head of Marketing and Business Development.



Amritara Hotels & Resorts

New Delhi

Vikrant Sharma has been appointed as Corporate Revenue Manager at Amritara Hotels & Resorts. With an extensive experience of 22 years in the hospitality industry, he has worked with Oberoi Cecil Shimla, Best Western, the Claridges New Delhi, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, Royal Orchid, Premier Inn India, and The Suryaa, to name a few. In his new role, he will be responsible for setting up the revenue culture and laying out strategies to achieve the desired room revenue and RevPAR, and also to position Amritara Hotels & Resorts in a new dimension.



Merlin Entertainments Group

Mumbai

Merlin Entertainments Group has appointed **Gaurav Seth** as its new Head of Trade Sales - India Outbound, focusing on long haul destinations. He will be responsible for driving and delivering Indian trade outbound visitation to the UK, Europe, USA and ANZ regions. He has spent over 16 years working for Thomas Cook India, taking care of their outbound leisure business. Merlin Entertainments offers location-based, family entertainment and has more than 130 attractions, 19 hotels and six holiday villages in 25 countries and across four continents.



DoubleTree by Hilton Chinchwad

Pune

Amit Baxi has been appointed as Director of Business Development at DoubleTree by Hilton Pune - Chinchwad. After having successfully served as Associate Director of Sales at DoubleTree by Hilton Pune - Chinchwad, his immense knowledge about the market enabled the hotel to strategise better against competitors. Baxi will be reporting to the GM on business development, planning and budgeting and brand building. He has a rich experience of 11 years in sales and marketing. Before joining DoubleTree Pune, he was associated with brands like The Leela Palaces Hotels and Resorts and The Pride Hotel.



The Park Hotels

Mumbai

The Park Hotels, Mumbai has appointed **Shahrom Oshtori** as General Manager. In his new role, Oshtori will be providing leadership and strategic planning to all departments in support of the service culture, maximised operations and guest satisfaction. He began his career in hospitality in 2004 at the JW Marriott Mumbai as Food and Beverage Associate. From Lead Associate to Food and Beverage Team Leader at the JW Marriott, Oshtori subsequently moved into various positions. He was Assistant Food and Beverage Manager at the Taj Mahal Palace and Towers Mumbai, and part of the pre-opening team at Sofitel Mumbai BKC.



Crowne Plaza Hotel

Greater Noida

Crowne Plaza Greater Noida has appointed **Barun Gupta** as Director of Sales & Marketing. Gupta is a hospitality and MICE sales professional with over 13 years' experience and a proven track record in sales and marketing, hotel operations, events and special projects. He will be spearheading Sales & Marketing operations for IHG's largest Crowne Plaza in South West Asia. With a focus on customer experience, Gupta's role would be to drive commercial excellence for the property. He has worked for Marriott International, Starwood Hotels & Resorts - Asia Pacific, Accor and Indian Hotels Company.



DoubleTree by Hilton Chinchwad

Pune

DoubleTree by Hilton Pune - Chinchwad has appointed **Aninda Guha** to head their Food and Beverage Service team. In his new role, Guha will be managing the overall operations of the food and beverage department and delivering excellent guest experiences. He brings with him more than two decades of expertise in the hospitality industry. He has previously been associated with hotels such as The Resort, The Orchid, The Lalit, Holiday Inn, The Westin, The Leela Kempinski, Oberoi and Taj.



TALKing People

Radhika Butala, Founder & Director, The Whiteboard Company & Ctrl Visa, likes to live life on the edge. With a background in advertising, she is a self-proclaimed brand addict. She also loves to travel. "I just pack my bags and go on a holiday. One of my most memorable holiday moments was my trek up to a vantage point at 5,000m above the sea level in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. I sat on the edge of the cliff and could see the Himalayas on the left and the Trans-Himalayas on the right," she reminisces.



After a day's work, **Nora Aghmane**, MD, Escapes & Co. Travel - Morocco, de-stresses by visiting the hammam. "For us, a hammam is the best way to relax. That is also one of the reasons why one of my favourite destinations is Turkey, especially Bodrum. There is a beach and it is very relaxing. You have nice resorts there so you can really indulge yourself," she says.



Rahul Maini, General Manager, Jaipur Marriott Hotel, believes that a healthy workplace environment is ideal when it comes to maintaining a positive outcome. "In order to reduce stress, I mostly go for a walk or work out at the gym post office hours. Working in the hospitality industry is not just a job, it's a lifestyle. Passion and genuine interest are crucial components for my success," he says.



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Northern UK attracts many

Indian travellers are now visiting Britain beyond iconic London to see more of Manchester and the UK's northern regions. Manchester is not only popular for sports, but also offers cultural experiences and cuisine.



Kanchan Nath

The cricket world cup proved a great draw for visitors from India to the UK. Sharing statistics on the number of Indians that have visited Manchester, Sheona Southern, Managing Director, Marketing Manchester, said, "India is a really big market for the UK, half a billion pounds are spent by Indian visitors. Nearly half a million Indians visited the UK last year and the majority preferred to go to London. However, more visitors are now coming to Manchester. Last year, our first campaign took off. We attracted 20,000 additional visitors from India."

The main attraction of Manchester remains sports. "There is cricket as well as football; we have two premier football clubs which have got really good tours. Last year was a big year for us with the cricket world cup. The India-Pakistan match was the biggest watched game. The match was a sell-out, with 65,000 people in the stadium;

ing, two-thirds was an Indian audience. It was a billion people watching that match. Lots of eyes were on Manchester. It was awesome in terms of the exposure for Manchester," she added.

Citing the other reasons to visit Manchester, she said, "Culture is also important for

club and open hours at the museum, cooking demonstrations, making gin, football tour and football museum. We are also hopefully going to be in India, bringing our pre-season tour from the Lancashire cricket club to India next year. We spoke to 500 people from the travel trade in India to educate them about our products. My team was here thrice last year, working with Visit Britain. I personally welcomed two lots of 30, really keen travel trade members. This time, we are more focused, so I have just met with the travel trade associations," she said.

"The India-Pakistan world cup was the biggest watched game. It was a sell-out, with 65,000 people in the stadium. 40% of those people were Indian travellers"

40 per cent of those people were Indian travellers. In terms of the people watch-

us, we have great museums and theatres, we get all the west-end shows in Manchester and museums are free. Half an hour away from Manchester is the beautiful countryside. We have got four national parks surrounding Manchester. So, you have the city buzz and a beautiful countryside."

Elaborating on future plans, she said that 2020 is the second year of campaigning for Manchester. "From January to March, we will be going for a digital campaign. We are working with MakeMyTrip, so apart from the practical bookings we will be sharing the experiences, things like the steam train, behind the scenes in the cricket

Regional and seasonal spread

Vishal Bhatia, Country Manager, India, Visit Britain, says, "We have been pushing our product from the travel agent community whom we work with quite closely in the Tier-I and Tier-II markets. We will continue our focus on destination training going into next year as well. Increasingly, the focus is on regional spread and seasonal spread. India is a great market to do this for us, as a lot of our travel happens in the summer months of April, May and June. So, last year, we had Indian visitors spending more nights in the rest of England than London. It means that people are not going away from London, it means they are spending more time in the country, which is what we want to do.



Vishal Bhatia
Country Manager, India, Visit Britain

We have been focusing a lot on the north of England, whether we do Manchester, Lake District, Liverpool, or Yorkshire. That is something that we are seeing traction in. We are working very closely with the UK trade for that, especially in the north of England, because it's a new market for them, where they are seeing a lot more Indians coming in."



Sheona Southern
Managing Director
Marketing Manchester

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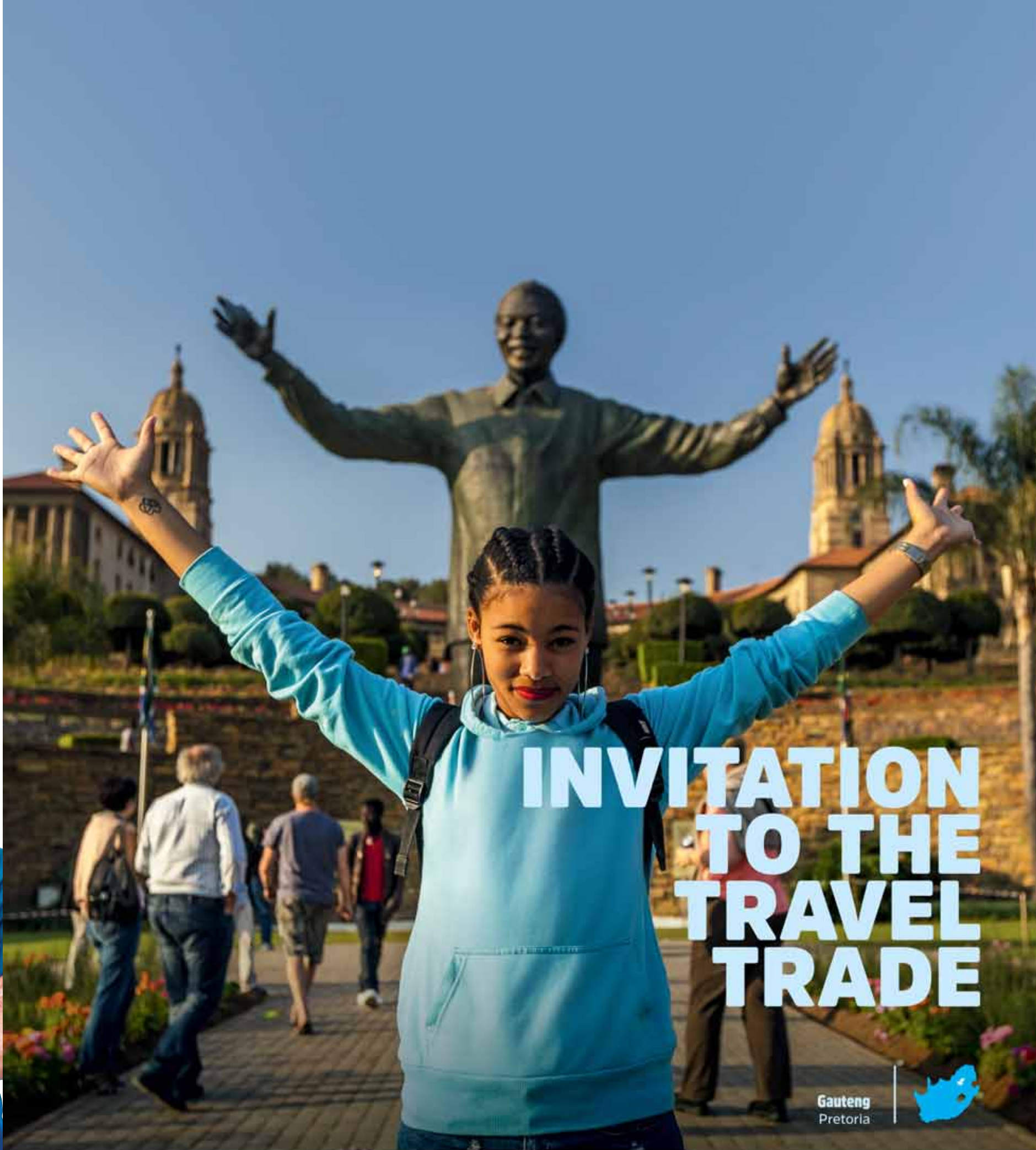
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Cruise^{talk}

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Cruise^{talk}

AN ACQUIRED TASTE

There has been a lot of talk around cruising of late with a sense of urgency in selling cruises that wasn't apparent before. While for most travellers in India, cruising is a new concept, it is surprisingly so for the B2B channel as well. But a happy turn of events is that more and more cruise companies are interested in tapping India. They are now offering longer itineraries and diverse destinations. Isn't it great that travellers who have braved sub-tropical climate conditions all their lives are eager to go on an Alaskan cruise?

While we use this term 'cruise' loosely, it can mean many things: ocean cruise, river cruise, luxury cruise, expedition cruise, themed cruise, world cruise, etc. So it is important that sellers learn to identify the different genres. That will probably be the next step in the evolution of cruise-selling in India. Until that happens, cruising remains an acquired taste for the average middle-class traveller and it is up to the B2B channel to make this category mainstream.

EDITORIAL

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Gaganpreet Kaur
Arumita Gupta
Susan Eapen

NEWS IN BRIEF



MSC'S NEW GRANDIOSA TO DEBUT THIS NOVEMBER

MSC Cruises is readying itself to introduce its brand new ship this November, called MSC Grandiosa. She will be christened in Hamburg and will become MSC Cruises' new flagship and the largest ship in the fleet. Apart from a strong emphasis on the new ship, the cruise line also has regular promotions that keep the market buzzing. It currently has a 50 per cent off on the second person promotion focusing on its Gulf sailings this winter along with attractive pricing for its West Med sailings. MSC Cruises is also transforming a former industrial sand extraction site into a flourishing marine reserve and private island destination exclusively for MSC Cruises guests.



Regent Seven Seas Cruises to launch new ship in 2020

Regent Seven Seas Cruises has announced the name of its new ship, scheduled for delivery in the first quarter of 2020. Seven Seas Splendor will set sail in February 2020 with itineraries for up to nine days, 10-14, 15-20 and more than 21 days to destinations such as Bermuda, Caribbean and Panama Canal, the Mediterranean, Transoceanic Crossings, Grand Voyages, and Northern Europe. She is the sister-ship of Seven Seas Explorer.

Norwegian Encore sails for the first time

Norwegian Cruise Line's newest innovative ship, Norwegian Encore, has completed another major construction milestone, when she departed the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg, Germany, and sailed down Ems River towards North Sea. The ship is nearly 1,100 feet long.



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- For the first time, it will have sailing from San Francisco on Carnival Miracle that will sail to Alaska from SFO.

HAZEL JAIN

In India recently for a flying visit, **Luke Smith**, Head International Sales, Carnival Cruise Line, was impressed with the enthusiasm that the travel agents exuded towards cruising. On his first time in India (in Mumbai), he met key travel partners and discussed growth areas. He said, "I'm absolutely loving it. We are here to show our support for the trade and to show our commitment to the Indian market. It is a fantastic growth market for us and definitely one of the markets on our radar. We look forward to growing our network of travel agents."

The cruise line has new ships coming up – Carnival Radiance, Carnival Panorama, Mardi Gras. "This is a really exciting time for us. The product caters well for Indian guests. India has been growing at a faster rate than us globally but it is at a much smaller volume at the



Past numbers for Carnival Cruise Line indicate that there is huge demand for shorter cruises from key home ports like Miami, New York, and Los Angeles

moment. We are only scratching the surface of what we can do with the Indian market," Smith added.

Past numbers for Carnival Cruise Line indicate that there is huge demand for shorter cruises from key home ports like Miami, NY, and Los Angeles that has huge variety.

Smith revealed, "We are seeing multigenerational families and large groups from India. Our aim is to educate our partners through various programmes, incentives, and networking events."

Meanwhile, Discover the World has been working closely with Carnival Cruise Line for over 10 years with strong focus on its B2B partner network pan India. **Dipti Adhia**, Director Sales & Product Head Cruises, Discover the World, says, "We have been working closely with Carnival Cruise Line for over 10 years and have seen significant growth over the years with strong focus on our B2B partner network pan India."

"We educate and train our partners to curate unique itineraries to create more options. We encourage our travel partners to educate their consumers about cruising as a great travel option and help them to experience this by providing excellent service and information. We have seen many examples of

travellers trying out cruising, only to fall in love with it and wanting to experience it over and over again," she adds.

Speaking about the change she has seen in the behaviour of Indian cruisers, Adhia says, "Generally, Indian travellers prefer land plus cruise packages. Hence, short cruises seem to be more popular for now amongst Indian travellers. We believe this trend will also change as Indian travellers become more accustomed to longer itineraries and destinations, and venture to try out more unique cruise experiences."

Carnival Cruise Line caters to every nationality, and approximately 80 per cent of its chefs onboard are Indian and are therefore able to offer a delicious Indian menu for guests.

"I would say that India has become an emerging market for international cruising and there is huge potential for everyone. The Indian traveller has been cruising for the last 20 years or more, with certain segments having graduated to become connoisseurs of cruising, even undertaking expeditions and small-ship cruising, while a large segment enjoys cruising as at least a part of their vacation. M!CE and special events will also continue to be a high point for us in the year 2020," Adhia adds.



"We are only scratching the surface of what we can do with the Indian market"

LUKE SMITH
Head International Sales
Carnival Cruise Line



"M!CE and special events will also continue to be a high point for us in 2020"

DIPTI ADHIA
Director Sales & Product Head Cruises
Discover the World



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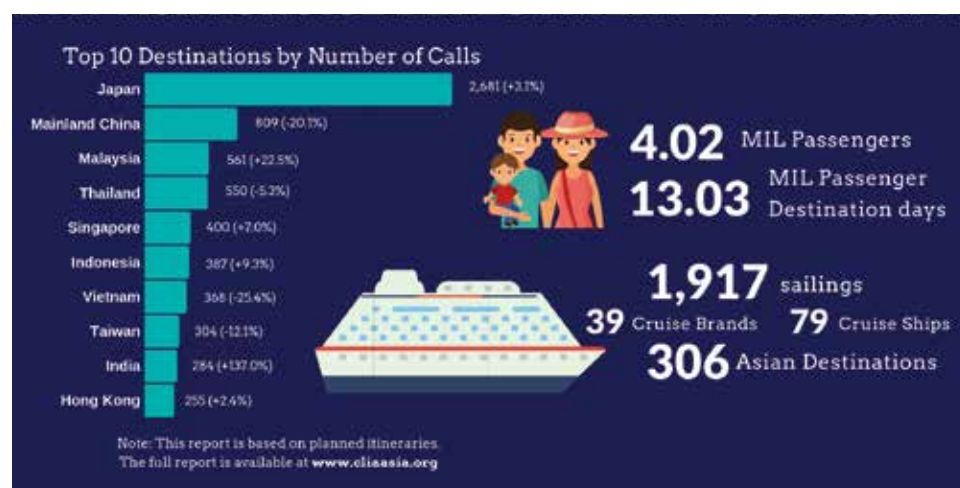
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Where does India stand?

The latest reports published by CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association) indicate that India is showing phenomenal growth as a cruise destination and is expected to witness a 13% increase in port of call.



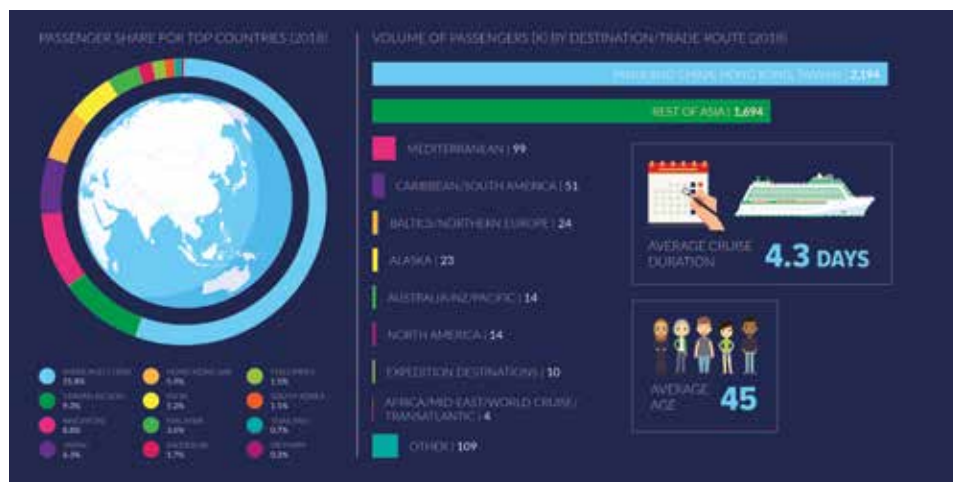
2019 ASIA CRUISE DEPLOYMENT & CAPACITY

Port calls in Asian destinations

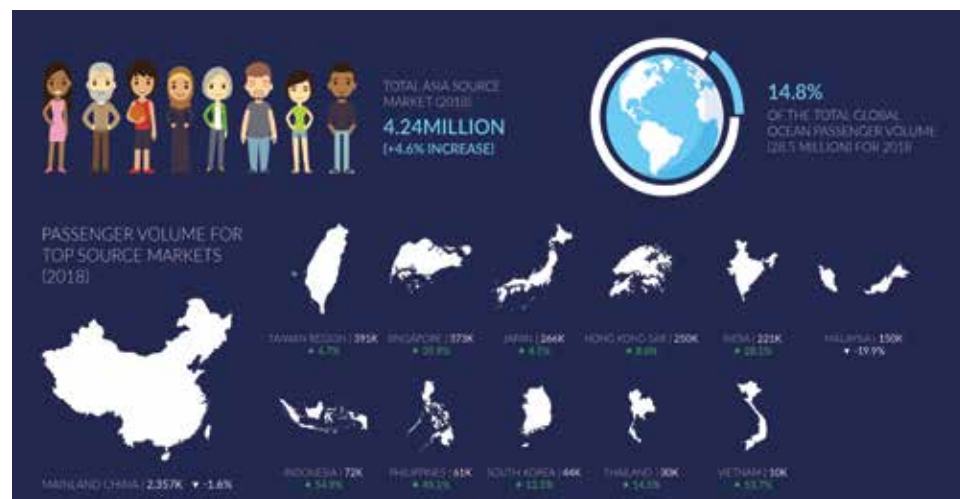
The number of port calls to Asian destinations is expected to fall marginally in 2019. A total of 7,154 port calls will be made throughout Asia, 15 fewer than last year. In Mainland China, port calls will decrease by 21 per cent, while the passenger destination days will decrease by 17 per cent. However, not all destinations will experience a decline in port calls. Many will see growth: India (+137%), Malaysia (+22.5%), Indonesia (+9.3%), Singapore (+7.0%), Japan (+3.1%) and Hong Kong (+2.4%) will see gains in port calls, while South Korea (+28.4%) will bounce back following an 82 per cent dip in 2018. The five-year CAGR of Asia's port calls is 14 per cent, and the five-year growth from 2014-2019 is 88 per cent, continuing an upward growth trajectory.

Passenger Destination Days (PDD)

PDD is a measure of potential visits from cruise passengers when a ship calls at a destination, and an increase translates to more tourism impact for the destination. Contrary to the decline in port calls, Asia will see an increase in PDD. In 2019, there will be 13.03 million PDD, which is a 1 per cent increase from the 12.9 million PDD expected in 2018. The increase will come from Southeast Asia (+8.6%) and South Asia (+106.8%). South Asia's growth will be fuelled by India's expected 137 per cent year-on-year growth in port calls. Singapore moved up to be the top port hosting 991,000 PDD. Despite a short dip, Japan remains the top destination, hosting 4,726,000 PDD. India (+150%), Indonesia (+46%), Malaysia (+40.2%) and Singapore (+10.1%) saw double-digit growth in PDD.



PASSENGER SHARE & VOLUME OF PASSENGERS BY DESTINATIONS (2018)



INDIA HITS A RECORD HIGH IN 2018 WITH 4.24 M CRUISE PASSENGERS

Asia Ocean Source Markets 2018

Asia sourced cruise passenger numbers hit another record high in 2018 with 4.24M taking an ocean cruise (up 4.6%). In 2018, global ocean passenger volume was 28.5M, and Asia accounted for 14.8 per cent (versus 15.1% in 2017). After China, Taiwan remains the second largest Asian source market (9.3% share) followed by Singapore (8.8%), Japan (6.3%), Hong Kong (5.9%), India (5.2%) and Malaysia (3.6%). Passenger volume from Singapore, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam had double-digit growth. Asian cruise passengers are found across the age spectrum with an estimated average age of 45.4 years. Only three markets show real divergence: India, a young 37 years average; Indonesia, a young 39 years average; and Japan, an older 57 years.

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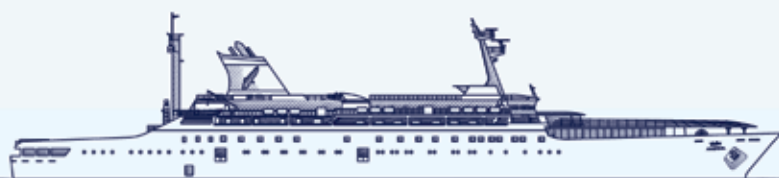
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Indian tourists set sail

India is regarded as a key source market for Singapore, which presented its latest cruise offerings to the travel trade at a forum organised by Singapore Tourism Board (STB) in association with **TRAVTALK** as knowledge partner.

NISHA VERMA

At Singapore Tourism Board's recently-organised forum themed 'Growing Cruise Connections, Achieving Together' in New Delhi, the travel trade along with cruise liners and professionals from the cruise industry deliberated on opportunities and potential of Singapore as a hub for Indians looking to cruise. The forum delved into the growing overseas cruise tourism from India via focused conversations and a stirring exchange of ideas.

Addressing the gathering was **GB Srithar**, Regional Director (India, Middle East & South Asia) at STB, who shared that the tourism board was adopting a two-pronged marketing strategy for India's outbound cruise market. First, it would raise awareness and promote cruising as a hassle-free holiday option for the Indian traveller and second, it would look to establish Singapore as a favoured cruise holiday destination by presenting the island city-state's varied tourism offerings for pre and post-cruise experiences within. Srithar said, "STB partners with stakeholders in the cruise industry to secure a vibrant pipeline of cruise ships and new cruise offerings in Singapore. Cruise holidays in Singapore present an opportunity to explore the popular attractions, rejuvenated precincts, the growing café culture, innovative bars



"Cruise holidays in Singapore present an opportunity to explore the popular attractions"

GB SRITHAR
Regional Director
(India, Middle East & South Asia), STB

and restaurants, while embarking on a variety of interesting tours available."

The objective of the forum was to help connect with the trade and educate them on the different schemes, said **Raymond Lim**, Area Director, India (New Delhi), STB. "Such programmes can help the travel trade to promote Singapore better. The Cruise Development Fund gives marketing assistance to cruise companies or cruise agents who wish to sell Singapore and market it for cruising with pre and post-cruise programmes. It ensures that we stay relevant and competitive against other destinations."

For **Jiali Wong**, Regional Manager (Asia), Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), it was a fruitful session. "There were a lot of good partners together and the topics discussed were interesting. Everybody had a lot to share, which is great because we all know that India is a market with a lot of potential and currently has a very low market penetration for cruises."

Srithar presented the 'Valued Tourism Partner' awards on the occasion, to representatives from key cruise liners operating out of Singapore.

Singapore Tourism Board's recent forum delved into the growing overseas cruise

tourism from India via focused conversations and a stirring exchange of ideas

Cruising along the tide

Comparing the market scenario to what it was earlier, stakeholders of the cruise industry claim that the future is only bright and cruising is here to stay with Indians looking for a plethora of experiences on board.

NISHA VERMA



“

Cruising as of now is probably one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry and India has been a very substantial contributor. We started slow a couple of years back, but I think we are catching up with the pace of other markets. Passengers are evolving themselves from not just cruising in Asia, but are moving beyond and reaching to other parts of the world, whether it is Mediterranean or the Bahamas, and even Alaska. It is very exciting now to see Indians getting on to expedition cruises as well. I think as a market, Indians have evolved over the years and it is a segment, which is only going to grow by the year.

NARESH RAWAL
Vice President, Sales
Genting Cruise Lines

“

Travellers are getting educated, and understand the value that cruise products offer. I always say—once a cruiser, always a cruiser. The biggest advantage now is that we have a ship in India, allowing people to get their first experience of cruise within the country and then moving to other countries like Singapore, Europe etc. People are progressing in terms of cruising.

PRADEEP SABOO
Partner
Guideline Travels



“

The cruise market in India is at a very nascent stage. However, there is only growth ahead. This growth will further enhance with the local Indian cruise liners making a headway with Jalesh and Angriya. This would allow Indians to get a taste of what cruises are all about, which would in turn trigger the demand amongst the travellers. The market will grow exponentially.

PANKAJ NAGPAL
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group



“

The cruise industry in India started from small towns when Star Cruise was introduced. Since then, the market grew from 18-20 per cent year-on-year. In the last few years, charters, events on cruises, and theme-based cruises, have really done well. At least 20-30 families have done over 10-12 cruises in these many years with us. There is also a rise in five to seven-night itineraries from India.

KISHAN BAYANI
Managing Director
Ark Travels



“

India is a market with immense potential. At the moment, it has a very low market penetration for cruise, and it's heartening to see a lot of interest. If the travel agent is able to put their customers on the right cruises, I am very sure that the market will grow at a very fast pace. India has been seeing double-digit growth, and in 2018 as a source market, we saw year-on-year growth of more than 28 per cent.

JIALI WONG
Regional Manager- Asia, Cruise Lines
International Association (CLIA)



“

The future of the cruise industry is great in India. Firstly, a cruise is a complete package and one doesn't need to look at anything beyond the cruise liner. There are a lot of experiences on board that one can try. That's where cruising becomes an option, where one can have 100 per cent holiday and enjoyment once on board. In fact, for cruising there are different segments in India, right from luxury to budget. In case someone has had a taste of luxury cruising, they don't want to come down to anything budget. People are now looking at different experiences.

GULDEEP SINGH SAHNI,
Managing Director
Weldon Travels



“

In the last six to eight months various cruise companies have started approaching us for bringing social events, weddings, anniversary celebrations and other private functions to the genre. I believe that cruise is a very cost-oriented product. However, when it comes to Indian weddings, people are ready to spend. We are talking to a lot of cruise companies and evaluating how to work with them for Indian weddings. M!CE is already a hit on cruises, and social events have also happened there. I am confident that cruising will become big in the near future.

RAJEEV JAIN
Director
Rashi Entertainment

“

Cruising is an evolving market, where consumers, after cruising once would go to different destinations and cruises. I see the potential of Indian consumers not only from main cities, but even smaller towns, grow phenomenally. For us, the interest in cruises, in terms of number of queries and generations have grown 300 per cent and we've grown almost 30 per cent over last year in cruising.

DEEPAK RAWAT
Senior Vice President, Holiday Products
& International Markets, Make My Trip



“

Multi-generation family travel to celebrate special occasions on cruises is increasing. There is an interest to go for exploratory or expedition cruises to places like Antarctica. Cruisers are getting younger by the day. We are seeing young families travelling with children. A lot of people are travelling with friends, where they form a group of four to five couples with kids.

NIKHIL THAKURDAS
Chief Executive Officer
CruiseBay



“

Indians look for longer itineraries and more cruises. Initially, they would prefer to go with big groups, but now they are willing to go with families and small groups, as well as take trips on their own. In fact, because of technology, travellers are well informed. However, if there are 28 million cruisers around the world, India contributes to about 180,000 which is 0.0005%. The opportunity is huge.

NALINI UDAI GUPTA
Managing Director- Lotus Destinations
GSA for Costa Cruises



“

India is one of the largest source markets for Singapore cruises. There is no market for cruise in India currently. From how the market looks like, the growth from India will be slower until we have brands represented in our own backyard. However, till that time Singapore is our home port, but for India to grow as a market, we must homeport out of India.

RATNA CHADHA
Co-Founder and Chairperson
Tirun Travel Marketing -
representative Royal Caribbean Cruises



“

I believe that the last five years have seen the real expansion of the cruise market in India. Our numbers, the kind of queries that we get for cruising, and the kind of conversions we are getting on the same, are showing that. We are seeing a very consistent demand of over 20 per cent on a regular basis for cruises. Last year, we saw a growth in cruises when combined with multiple types of land packages and stand-alone cruises. We are seeing a growth in excess of 25-30 per cent, and an increasing interest in all kinds of cruises across the globe.

ROMIL PANT
Senior Vice President - Leisure Travel
Thomas Cook India



India has been seeing double-digit growth and in 2018, as a source market, it saw year-on-year growth of more than 28 per cent, which reflects the fast pace



“

The Indian cruise market is maturing fine and fast. In our six-month existence, we had around 50,000 guests. Most of them are first time cruisers, and very few have cruised for the second time. I think cruising is going to become very trendy in India. Soon, Indians will be ready for more ships and more companies to come. Everybody's working very hard to put India on the map of cruising. There are still some challenges because cruise business in India is new, but support from port operations, board of ports, secretaries of tourism and shipping, has been very good.

JURGEN BAILOM
President & CEO
Jalesh Cruises

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Luxury dining on Arabian Sea

Queensline Cruises changed the way Mumbai dined with its super luxury floating restaurants – Queensline Sea YAH and Queensline Neverland – that are docked near the city's famous landmark — Gateway of India.

Not only can Mumbai savour the best international cuisines money can buy in the middle of the sea à la the French or Italian Riviera, guests will also be able to cruise along Mumbai's iconic coastline with stunning views while dining. Converted into Mumbai's largest super-luxury floating restaurants, Queensline Sea YAH and Queensline Neverland opened their gates in October 2018 near Mumbai's iconic point – The Gateway of India. This was the brainchild of **Shripriya Dalmia Thirani**, a 38-year-old first time restaurateur from Delhi.

A scion of one of India's most affluent and revered Dalmia clan – Thirani is the granddaughter of Jai Dayal Dalmia, the co-founder of Dalmia Cement and OCL India. She brought this experience to India by winning the most coveted tenders to start India's finest floating restaurants and cruises next to Mumbai's iconic site on the Arabian Sea. Each ship has a capacity of 200 people and will cater to the international taste buds of India's young and old. Queensline will bring to India some of the



SHRIPRIYA DALMIA THIRANI

best chefs from across the world to whip up international cuisines besides allowing Indian chefs to play with traditional specialities. Celebration, some quite family time, or even a corporate get-together will have a new meaning with the best views of India's Maximum City and an explosive gastronomic experience. Thirani made waves by initiating and hosting the first-ever literature festival on sea. She will, in December 2019, host India's most unique and largest Queensline Culinary Congress (QCC) across India that will have flavours of the past interact with the flavours of the present in a single gigantic platform.

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The rivers of Europe

From exploring the continent through its pebbled paths to experiencing it via its rivers, Indian travellers have come a long way, says **Neelu Samant**, Director, Quantum Travels.



KNOW?

DID YOU

Italian cruise line, MSC, tends to omit deck 17 due to Italian superstitions surrounding the number.



“As a company, we handle the globe, but our focus is Europe and cruising in Europe”

NEELU SAMANT
Director
Quantum Travels

A river cruise is probably not for the first-time traveller to Europe, but can definitely be combined with some city stays. This way, they can experience the local culture, the countryside and the essence of the destination at the same time. River cruising is an inclusive product that includes excursions with attractive deals that are on offer for a limited time. So we cannot call it a popular product.

Itineraries change every year and are carefully curated with feedback from past travellers. Seven to ten nights is the ideal duration for the Indian travellers for this. Cruises can also be chartered for a shorter duration. Destinations include and are as varied as the Duoro River valley in Portugal, and hidden gems such as Arles in France and Durnstein in Austria.

River cruises are appealing to travellers as the ship does not accommodate more than 150 to 200 travellers because of its size, as against 1,000 upwards in ocean liners.

This ensures exclusivity and privacy. Moreover, in terms of F&B, each meal on the cruise is a plated gourmet meal where the guests' food preferences are taken into consideration. There are no buffets. This also indicates a level of exclusivity.

Destinations include Duoro River valley in Portugal, and gems like Arles in France and Durnstein in Austria



River cruises also work well with solo travellers as they are likely to meet like-minded and well-travelled guests on the cruise. Also, since excursions are included in the package and availed by almost everyone on board, by the end of day two, guests know at least half their fellow cruisers. There are also activities for children available for those travelling with families. So it can appeal to the entire spectrum of travellers.

As a company, we organise tours to all continents, but our focus is on Europe and particularly cruising in Europe. All our products are niche and are thoroughly researched by our team personally who travel to these destinations. We also work closely with the travel trade and have created a great rapport with travel agents over the years. We also have an updated website now with new products that will be of interest to the agents.

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Where to cruise?

Experts tell us where Indians are cruising. Europe is a clear winner but surprise entries are Alaska and Scandinavia.

HAZEL JAIN

“The Indian cruiser is very diversified today. I would put the Indian cruiser in three buckets.

The first-time cruisers prefer destinations like

Western Mediterranean, Alaska or the Caribbean and of course Asia (Ex Singapore). These are easy cruising destinations which have well-appointed port facilities and great flight connectivity. The second kind of cruisers are luxury or experienced cruisers who have mostly done more than five to seven cruises and are now on the lookout for more bespoke destinations such as Baltic and Scandinavian countries, South America or river cruises in Europe on the Danube or Rhine. The adventure or expedition cruisers opt for Antarctica followed by the Galapagos, Arctic, Amazon, Raja Ampat and Komodo. These destinations promise a surreal nature experience, taking them up-close to wildlife.

IAN BANERJEE
Director
Global Anchor Cruises



“We offer itineraries to more than 300 destinations around the globe but some of the popular ones amongst Indians

are the Western Mediterranean, Alaska, Scandinavia, Greek Isles and the Bahamas. The seven-day Western Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona to Spain, Italy, and France is quite popular as it gives an opportunity to explore some of the most scenic on-shore excursions in each of these countries. Another popular itinerary is the Alaskan voyage. Cruising is the best way to see and experience most of Alaska. Scandinavia, Russia and Baltic from Copenhagen is also high on the list. This is because guests can experience the best of Baltic by land and sea. A cruise is the best way to explore and immerse in the beautiful destinations of the Baltic Region and Greek Isles, especially with shore excursions.

MANOJ SINGH
Country Head, India
Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings



“In my experience, all parts of Europe are doing well with cruisers from India. The Greek Isles are also high on the list but this is only for three to four nights. They don't go for the seven-night itineraries. But those opting for West Mediterranean of course do the seven-night one because it includes all key cities of Rome, Naples, Florence, Monte Carlo, and Nice – so Spain, France and Italy. Slightly mature travellers do Norway and further north, the Baltics going up to Russia, Helsinki to St. Petersburg. Basically, Indians want to start with destinations they have heard of first. Once they are comfortable with this, they then plan lesser-known places to explore like some of the islands because no one wants to go to random islands which don't have brag value. Croatia along with Greek Islands is also popular with mature cruisers as this is a 14-nighter and is also cheaper than doing a land holiday here.

VIVEK JAIN
Managing Director
Griffon



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2 / 3 / 4 / 5 Nights Cruises

- Malaysia • Indonesia • Thailand
- Vietnam • Cambodia • Myanmar

World Dream

Departing from Hong Kong:

Sailing period: Sep 2019 – Mar 2020

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Explorer Dream

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Highly experiential in nature, Aqua Expeditions' journeys encompass activities with guided small-group excursions with a 1:1 crew-to-guest ratio

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HAZEL JAIN



"Peruvian Amazon and Indonesian archipelago are perfect destinations for the Indian market"

FRANCESCO GALLI ZUGARO
Founder and CEO
Aqua Expeditions

Aqua Expeditions caters to modern-day adventurers seeking active exploration in destinations best discovered by cruising. Highly experiential in nature, Aqua Expeditions' journeys encompass tailored activities with guided small-group excursions with a 1:1 crew-to-guest ratio. There is also a strong focus on sustainability and conservation.

Established in 2007, Aqua Expeditions began with the launch of three Aqua Expeditions river cruise vessels, the Aqua Amazon and Aria Amazon in 2008 and 2011 respectively in the Peruvian Amazon, followed by an expansion in Southeast Asia (Cambodia and Vietnam) with the Aqua Mekong in 2014.

In 2019, Founder and CEO of Aqua Expeditions, **Francesco Galli Zugaro** announced two new vessels and three new destinations. Aqua Blu, the cruise line's first-ever ocean going explorer yacht, will explore three new coastal destinations of East Indonesia, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Komodo National Park. Aqua Nera, a new-build river cruise ship, will sail the Peruvian Amazon in August 2020.

Speaking about how he thinks this will be received by the India market, Zugaro says, "We believe that the Peruvian Amazon and Indonesian archipelago are perfect destinations for the Indian market. In the Peruvian Amazon, you can travel on our newest vessel – the Aqua Nera – which will set sail next year in October." Aqua Nera is touted to be the most state-of-the-art river boat to sail the Amazon.

"In Indonesia, guests can travel on our new luxury expedition yacht called the Aqua Blu. It is our first coastal ship and the first-ever long-range explorer yacht with year-round departures to be permanently based in East Indonesia—the heart of the Coral Triangle and the fabled Old World spice trade route. Aqua Blu is one product that we would like to promote in the India market," he adds.

For such a niche product, the company has found some traction in the Indian market. "Yes, we do see some growing numbers from India. However, it is still a very small market for Aqua Expeditions. It might take a bit more time to develop some consistent bookings from India. We believe that with our luxury expedition yacht portfolio, we will have more chances to target such a niche clientele," Zugaro shares. The company currently works with Global Anchor Cruises, which in turn introduces its cruises to luxury travel agents. Aqua Expeditions also takes advantage of the Virtuoso and Traveller Made portfolio/network focusing on getting exposure from the trade partner. While it does not have an incentive structure for the B2B channel for the Indian market at this stage, the CEO adds, "The moment we see an increase of business from here, we will customise our incentives for this market. We are still a relatively small team and need to ensure we invest our human resources in the right markets at this time."

DID YOU KNOW?

Cruise ships are getting more futuristic. Passengers can expect a futuristic experience on board a number of liners in just a decade's time.

Ark Travels' Voyage

The cruise specialist reached out to untapped Tier-III cities like Dehradun and Agra, and UTs like Puducherry, as part of its 21-city roadshow.



Ark Travels is promoting a seamless travel experience from Singapore

Airport to Marina Bay Cruise Terminal in partnership with Jewel Changi Lounge

Ark Travels successfully completed a 21-city roadshow in October 2019. The roadshows were planned and executed in association with Genting Cruise Lines and Dream Cruises, and were aimed at educating the travel trade about the services, new offers, value-add-ons and benefits of cruising. The events were organised in major metro cities like Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai (seven events including in Thane and New Mumbai) and Chennai, along with Tier-II cities such as Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Lucknow, and Mangaluru. The company, primarily in the business of selling international cruise vacations to Indian travellers, is also the first to touch base with travel agents in cities like Dehradun, Agra, Coimbatore and Madurai, and UTs like Puducherry, by hosting cruise-specific roadshows.

To further reward its travel partners, Ark Travels organised a familiarisation trip on board Dream Cruises' newest cruise ship – Explorer Dream. To add on to their experience, agents were hosted in Singapore and were taken to Hong Kong on a Jetstar chartered flight by Genting Cruise Lines to board the cruise. In total, 64 travel agents were hosted from across India for the inaugural five-night-sailing itinerary (October 8-13) on Explorer Dream, giving agents an opportunity to explore destinations like Hong Kong, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Singapore.

India being a major fly-cruise market, the partners were also given the opportunity to understand the fly-cruise concept by visiting Jewel Changi Lounge, which is a nature-themed entertainment and retail complex near Changi Airport, Singapore. Ark Travels is currently promoting a seamless travel experience

from Singapore Airport to Marina Bay Cruise Terminal in partnership with Jewel Changi Lounge. The B2B travel company that has been a trendsetter in the cruise industry has celebrated this milestone by being the first Indian PSA to send 50,000 passengers from India to travel on board the fleet of Genting Cruise Lines comprising Star Cruises and Dream Cruises.

Attributing its success to a well-rounded marketing strategy, **Kishan Biyani**, Managing Director, Ark Travels, says, "Our aim is to reach every nook and corner of India to educate travel partners about the benefits of cruising. The unmatched luxury on board these floating resorts has been projected as a unique destination to host theme parties and events, be it MICE, weddings, birthdays, or anniversaries."

"We make continued efforts to strengthen our relationship with our partners and empower them through our digitally-driven tool called DECK PRO, which is our online booking engine," adds Biyani.



NARESH RAWAL
Vice President – Sales &
Marketing India & South Asia
Genting Cruise Lines

“It's now time to explore opportunities in Tier-II and III markets through the support of our PSAs like Ark Travels”



Naresh Rawal, Vice President – Sales & Marketing India & South Asia, Genting Cruise Lines, says, "Ark Travels has always played an integral role in our growth story in India. We believe that educating our travel agent fraternity about our existing services and newer introductions is an essential component of our continued penetration into the Indian market. With a sizeable amount of awareness already existing in the metro cities, it's now time for us to explore newer opportunities in Tier-II and III markets through the continued support of our PSAs like Ark Travels."



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A maritime adventure

Inspired by the Sagarmala Project, Angriya has reactivated the Mumbai-Goa sea route after a gap of three decades.

HAZEL JAIN



India has a 7,000-plus kilometre coastline that is bedazzled with unique seascapes, cultural diversity, and an array of marine biodiversity. To showcase these to the Indian as well as global travellers, **Captain Nitin Dhond**, Chairman & Managing Director, Angriya Sea Eagle, started the company whose name has been inspired by Kanhoji Angre, chief of the Maratha Navy in 18th century India. “The maritime history of India is thousands of years old and serves as an inspiration to the global maritime sea-farer and sea-lover community. Yet, there was not a single Indian domestic cruise liner with an Indian flag in recent times. Our endeavour at Angriya was to change that,” he says. With inspiration from the Sagarmala project – a Ministry of Shipping initiative – and support from the Indian maritime and tourism fraternity, Captain Dhond decided to lead by example and launch Angriya, India’s

CAPTAIN NITIN DHOND
Chairman & Managing
Director, Angriya Sea Eagle

“We plan to effuse life into new and old maritime routes that have tremendous tourism potential”

first domestic cruise ship in its class. The aim was also to pave way for others and open this sector of marine tourism on the Indian coast. Angriya has successfully reactivated the Mumbai-Goa sea route for sea travellers after a gap of three decades, and connected the financial capital to the holiday capital of India. He adds that Angriya has been able to promote change in the Indian maritime sector with its thrust in the marine tourism sector by bringing into limelight the demand for cruise tourism. “With its focus on developing smaller coastal ports in the Konkan belt of Maharashtra and the states of Goa and Gujarat, Angriya plans to rekindle the sea travelling traditions of Indians. Smaller vessels that will showcase maritime and marine diversity, while promoting green ship mandates, are goals that have been set with dedicated timelines by Angriya. This includes a major thrust on enthusing more travellers

After completion of over 175 voyages and hosting over 50,000 passengers

from India and abroad, Angriya has re-established the culture of sea travel



KNOW?

DID YOU Ships have been called 'she' for centuries; it's a seafaring tradition that began with the earliest sailors and is still widely practised today.

to travel and holiday on Indian seas and also use sea routes for water transport as well as corporate and social events. Angriya envisions to connect people, cultures and experiences at sea with its outlook and commitment of safe seas and happy sea farers at all times," Captain Dhond adds.

PROMOTING CRUISE TOURISM

Angriya has helped build confidence amongst travellers in India about sea travel. Earlier, safety at sea and sea sickness were two challenges that the Indian traveller always pondered before embarking on a sea voyage, from a catamaran to an international cruise liner. After completion of over 175 voyages and hosting over 50,000 passengers from India and abroad, Angriya has succeeded in re-establishing the culture of sea travel without worry or anxiety.

With vast open decks, an infinity pool and an array of 'under the starlit sky' activities, Angriya promotes local cuisine, celebrates the famed Maratha supremacy of Sarkhel Kanhoji Angre at sea, and documents marine life at sea. "Angriya has also helped rekindle interest in state monuments like the Light house at Vengurla that can be viewed whilst sailing on the Mumbai-Goa route.

Empowering local and coastal youth and creating employment in this freshly emerging sector has been Angriya's strength. We plan to expand further and effuse life into new and old maritime routes that have tremendous tourism potential on the Western coast of India," the Captain asserts.

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IRCTC makes waves

In June 2019, the Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation identified the potential that cruise tourism offered and has introduced the first international cruise package along with Norwegian Cruise Line.

The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has been a pioneer in various business modules with different verticals with online selling. One of them is cruise tourism which it has started promoting on its portal since June 2019. It has conceptualised international cruise as well as river cruise tourism which may be launched shortly along with domestic river cruising.

IRCTC introduced the first international cruise package in partnership with Norwegian Cruise Line on June 24, 2019 in Baltic Ocean. It was ex-Delhi for 13 days and 12 nights and included a nine-night sailing on Norwegian Cruise Line. The starting fare was ₹ 295,817 per pax on double sharing basis in a Balcony Cabin on Norwegian Cruise Line which included transfers, meals, poolside activities, access to fitness facilities, insurance, visa charges, hotel stay (1+1 nights) and return airfare on Emirates Airlines (ex-Delhi). It has already booked and operated 12 cabins on Norwegian Getaway from June 24, 2019 to July 6, 2019 (12N/13D).

Rajni Hasija, Director Tourism & Marketing, IRCTC, says, "We have collaborated with GSAs and PSAs of various cruise lines that have a presence in India. We have recently loaded 33 different itineraries covering 11 cruise liners covering maximum outflow from India during the months of May-June-July-August 2020. This means a choice of 104 itineraries during the summer vacation when schools are closed. We are receiving daily queries on the package price which will be launched shortly as the agreement with the party is in the pipeline. We intend to have tie-ups with all major

ON IRCTC

- Costa Cruises
- MSC Cruises
- Holland America Line
- Regent Seven Seas Cruises
- NCL
- Princess Cruises
- Seabourn
- Celebrity Cruises
- Hurtigruten
- Royal Caribbean International
- Carnival Cruise Line



"We have collaborated with GSAs and PSAs of cruise lines that have a presence in India"

RAJNI HASIJA
Director Tourism & Marketing
IRCTC

cruise lines sailing globally." The payment gateway will be an option available on the IRCTC portal. Live inventory is not available on the portal yet, but this key element will be added in the near future. Speaking about the growing cruise tourism in India, Hasija adds, "The market size of Indian cruises is around 1.8 lakh, which is a small drop in the large ocean of outbound Indian travellers at global cruise numbers. The Indian market is growing at an aggressive pace where IRCTC is targeting its own online market base for this."

The incredible tour package that IRCTC made for the Norwegian was done by selecting the most popular international destinations among Indians such as Denmark, Germany, Poland, Finland, Russia, and Sweden on optional charges basis directly on the IRCTC website. "These European destinations are known for their old-world charm, and also modern marvels. Being such an old part of the world, Europe is full of historical places, and this IRCTC international cruise offer gives a closer look into the great wide world," Hasija reveals.

The package includes meals in the dining venues as allotted by IRCTC, and this includes – two main dining rooms on every ship except Norwegian Breakaway, Norwegian Epic, Norwegian Escape, and Norwegian Getaway; buffet; 24-hour dining venue (on select ships); outdoor buffet (on select ships); pool bar and grill (on select ships); and coffee bar (on select ships). Guests also get the chance to enjoy all entertainment onboard with the exception of dinner and lunch theatre entertainment.

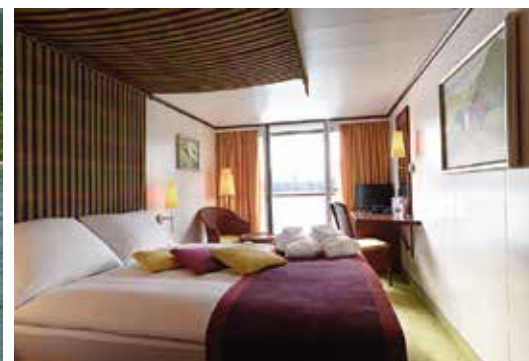
The incredible tour package that IRCTC made for the Norwegian was done by selecting the most popular international destinations among Indians

River cruising on A-Rosa

There is always something to see from these ships as both sides have a shore. Add to this the early booking discount offered by STIC Travel Group, which gives agents a chance to save anything between €80-600.

The A-Rosa river cruise provides a comfortable, simple, and stress-free way to see Europe. Its six premium international ships – A-Rosa Flora, Brava, Stella, Donna, Silva and Viva – offer cruises on Europe's rivers Danube, Rhine, Rhone and Seine. Unlike ocean cruising, river cruises have ports in the city centre, thus minimising transfer time to and from the ship.

A-Rosa sails on the Rhine/Main/Moselle, Danube, Seine and Rhone/Saone, and covers Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Bucharest, Slovakia, Prague, Wurzburg and France. Currently, STIC Travel Group has extended an offer called 'Double Super Early Booking' discount which gives agents a chance to save €80-600, depending on the sailing, including premium, all-inclusive offers and a free trip cancellation insurance. During this promotion, the departures have been increased to make the most of this limited time offer. It is valid until the cabins are sold out or November 30, 2019. A-Rosa Rhine sailing gives guests a chance to cover ports from Cologne to Mainz,



During this promotion, departures have been increased to make the most of the limited time offer

Amsterdam, Koblenz, Rotterdam, Gent, Antwerp, and Nijmegen. Meanwhile, A-Rosa Danube covers ports from Engelhartzell to Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Melk, Wachau, Belgrade, etc. A-Rosa Full Board Plus includes breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets, premium drinks through the day, children (two to 15 years) travel free, discount on spa treatments, and free use of on-board facilities.





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Explorer Dream arrives in Sydney

The inaugural arrival of Explorer Dream heralds Dream Cruises' first sailing beyond Asia to Australia. It features 928 cabins and a generous variety of culinary options.



Dream Cruises' arrival of Explorer Dream in Sydney at the White Bay Cruise Terminal heralds the start of Dream Cruises' global aspirations to sail beyond Asia for the very first time. During Explorer Dream's seasonal homeport deployment in Australia, travellers can explore a variety of round-trip cruise itineraries across Australia departing from Sydney and Brisbane between now and December 1, 2019 and from February 9-23, 2020.

Michael Goh, President of Dream Cruises and Head of International Sales, Genting Cruise Lines, says, "Dream Cruises is excited to begin a new chapter as we chart new waters beyond Asia to homeport in Australia starting this year for the very first time, creating new milestones as Dream Cruises evolves into 'Asia's



"Dream Cruises begins a new chapter as we chart new waters beyond Asia to homeport in Australia"

MICHAEL GOH
President of Dream Cruises and Head
of International Sales
Genting Cruise Lines

Global Cruise Line'. Explorer Dream will provide an additional unique vacation experience for local Australian travellers and inbound international tourists with the growing fly-cruise opportunities, which will pave the way for the return of Explorer Dream to Australia again in Q4 of 2020."

During Explorer Dream's seasonal homeport deployment Down Under, inbound international travellers can experience Dream Cruises. Travellers can choose a series of round-trip cruises from Sydney with a variety of seven-night cruise itineraries or, from Brisbane on six-night, seven-night and eight-night cruises to Australian destinations.

KNOW?

DID YOU

Australian millionaire Clive Palmer plans to create a working replica of the Titanic—the ship will be ready to depart sometime in 2022.



Explorer Dream will provide a unique vacation experience for local Australian travellers and inbound international tourists with the growing fly-cruise opportunities



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Genting Dream



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IRCTC introduces International Cruise Packages

- IRCTC operated first international cruise package in June 2019
- It has collaborated with GSAs and PSAs of various cruise line companies that have a presence in India
- It currently has 33 different itineraries covering 11 cruise liners on its portal
- Largest travel customer base in India
- IRCTC is always looking to innovate its offering and will soon launch river cruises



For details, contact:

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