

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

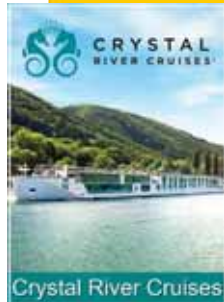
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'Fee cuts to boost tourism'

Pointing out to the revised visa fee and GST rates, **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism and Culture, claims that the current environment in India is most favourable for both inbound and domestic tourists.



Nisha Verma

On September 27, 2019, India played host to the UNWTO World Tourism Day celebrations, where **M Venkaiah Naidu**, Vice President of India, gave away the prestigious National Tourism Awards in 21 categories. Speaking on the occasion, **Prahlad Singh Patel** said, "Every year, on September 27, we celebrate World Tourism

Day and it was the first time that India got the opportunity to host the celebrations. We are fortunate that the Secretary General of UNWTO, **Zurab Pololikashvili**, came all the way for the occasion. A total of 82 international delegates attended the event, and we are proud to host them in our country."

Congratulating the winners of the National Tourism Awards, he

“Today, India is one country in the Asian continent that has one of the lowest tax slabs; this would further boost tourism”

said, "Everyone who is a part of this industry, from a guide or driver to a tour operator or hotel executive, is important and makes a huge contribution to a tourist's experience and hence needs to be felicitated.

They represent the nation and key to changing the perception of India."

Patel reiterated that in the last 100 days of the new government, some of the most

historical decisions were taken, which hadn't been done for the last 40 years. "Right from increasing the validity of e-Visa, relaxation in e-Visa fee, opening of new peaks and the biggest step, to change the GST slab for hotels, all these are historical decisions. Today, India is one country in the Asian continent that has one of the lowest tax slabs. This would boost tourism," the minister shared.



Prahlad Singh Patel
Minister of State (I/C)
Tourism and Culture

Air India expands foreign network



Meenakshi Malik
Commercial Director, Air India

After launching its Delhi-Seoul and Delhi-Toronto flights, Air India is now planning to boost its international connections with the launch of a Mumbai-Nairobi flight on November 27.



Nisha Verma

Air India recently launched its direct connection to Seoul, South Korea, which saw the national carrier join hands with Korea Tourism Organisation

in the presence of **Meenakshi Malik**, Commercial Director, Air India and **Jong Ho Choi**, Minister of Embassy of Republic of Korea in India. Elaborating, Malik said, "We have been operating to Seoul

for over 20 years, but the new flight is a direct connection via Hong Kong."

Air India also launched its Delhi-Toronto flight on the occasion of World Tourism

Day and will launch the Mumbai-Nairobi flight on November 27, 2019.

"We are expanding into many other markets. There is a lot of potential for international

travel. We need the support of the travel industry to push these markets, as Indians are great travellers and all they need is new destinations and hassle-free travel," Malik explained.

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Hindi @ UNWTO Academy

Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, UNWTO, who was recently in Delhi to attend the World Tourism Day celebrations, shared that Hindi has now made its way into the UNWTO Academy course.



Nisha Verma

Zurab Pololikashvili attended the UNWTO World Tourism Day celebrations in New Delhi, centred on the theme, 'Tourism and Jobs: A Better Future For All'. Speaking at the event, Pololikashvili said, "The true potential of tourism, both as a creator of jobs

and as a driver of equality and sustainable development, is only just being realised. Providing decent work opportunities and contributing to developing professional skills are at the heart of this."

At the event, he also shared that Hindi was being included in UNWTO's online academy

Adding that they termed 2019 as the 'Year of Education in Tourism', he said, "We are very happy that India is helping translate these courses and starting from next year, we can work together to grant these courses all over India. Next year, we are going to announce the year of rural and eco-tourism, and

promoting and boosting tourism, Pololikashvili said, "We all need to promote the visa and taxation steps the Indian government has taken. I am sure, in many countries, people don't know what is happening here and that's why we are here to use this occasion to promote more about these reforms happening in India. The country is one of the fastest growing economies and tourism sectors in the world. We will see how many things we can do together."

"We are very happy that India is helping translate these courses and starting from next year, we can work together to grant these courses all over India"

course to help Indian tourism students learn effectively.

we need more educated and competitive people in the region. This will be a very good opportunity for us to give education and basic knowledge, at least to families who now want to move to another part of the world because of jobs."

Talking about India and the initiatives the country has taken for

He stressed that after the introduction of Hindi translation in their courses, they are going to take more such initiatives. "We will continue our projects, like online academy and innovation hub - a platform we created for entrepreneurs to launch their projects. This is another opportunity for all of us to develop the tourism sector in India and the world," he claimed.



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TRAVTALK brings to you news and events that made headlines 25 years ago with relevance even today. From the archives, we present the Sept & Oct 1994 issues:

Dial D for Domestic tourism

According to a FICCI-Yes Bank report, the Indian tourism sector is likely to grow at 6.7 per cent per annum to reach ` 35 trillion with 9.6 per cent of GDP, by 2029. In 2018, the tourism sector generated \$247.3 billion (about ` 16.9 lakh crore), marking a growth of 6.7 per cent and contributing 9.2 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At present, India is the eighth largest country in terms of contribution to travel and tourism GDP and the largest market in South Asia. The sector generated 2.67 crore jobs in 2018. By 2029, it is expected to provide employment to nearly 53 million people directly and indirectly. Foreign tourist arrivals crossed 10 million in 2017 and the growth trend is expected to continue.

However, the consumption by domestic tourists remains a key strength of the sector in India, much stronger than the global average. Schemes like Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive) as well as UDAN have also helped to propel the domestic figures as spiritual/religious tourism is a big draw for Indian tourists. Realising the importance of the domestic Indian tourist, Prime Minister Modi, while addressing the nation in his Independence Day speech, urged people to visit at least 15 tourist destinations within India by 2022. Modi went on to say in his speech that only when domestic tourism increases will international footfalls also shoot up.

The growth of domestic tourism in India has been nothing short of phenomenal. From 220 million domestic tourist visits in the year 2000, the recent figures of 2018 have shown a growth of almost nine-fold to 1.82 billion in 2018. However, despite this staggering growth, this sector remains largely untapped. The industry surely needs to sit up and take note of the domestic sector and push their products to cater to this particular crowd. Systematic growth, maintenance and sustainable development of tourism destinations, and focus on promoting emerging avenues of tourism will be essential towards unlocking the true potential of tourism.

Packages should be designed keeping domestic tourists and their interests in mind. It's time we paid heed to the unsung contribution of this sector.

Then (1994)



Dipak Haksar
Manager, Welcomgroup
Rajputana Palace Sheraton

Then (1994)



Ankur Bhatia
Director
Amadeus India

From the Archive

In 1994, **Dipak Haksar**, then Manager, Welcomgroup Rajputana Palace Sheraton, was elected as the Vice President, Hotels and Restaurant Federation of Rajasthan. Today, he is a veteran in the hospitality industry and is the Chief Executive, ITC Hotels. His role is to ensure the brand's values are reflected across its hotels in the country, abiding with the chain's ethos of 'Responsible Luxury'.

Now (2019)



Dipak Haksar
Chief Executive
ITC Hotels

Now (2019)



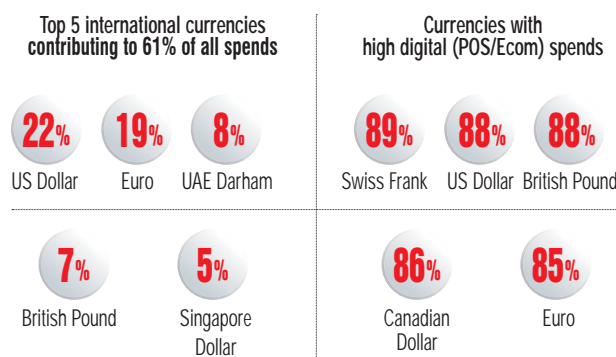
Dr. Ankur Bhatia
Executive Director
Bird Group

Cards over cash, say Indians

Over 50 per cent Indians now use cards on international travel, says NiYO travel report that is based on insights from 25,000 respondents who used the NiYO global card on their foreign trips in the last one year. These majorly include business, leisure, and student travellers from Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, and Hyderabad.

Most Indians use plastic money when abroad

The latest NiYO report suggests that over 50 per cent of Indians are using credit, debit, or prepaid cards as their primary payment instrument on foreign travel, even as a large number of tourists also carry foreign exchange as a backup. **While USA, Canada and Europe account for the highest digital transactions (higher card payments), the US dollar, Euro, UAE Dirham, British Pound, and Singapore Dollar are the top five international currencies, contributing 61 per cent of all spends by Indians.**



Group Travel is most common among Indian foreign travellers



Source: NiYO travel report

The report also suggests that Indian globetrotters are no longer hesitant in exploring far-off destinations, and at least one in five will visit multiple countries on a single trip, with countries in Europe and Southeast Asia being preferred destinations. Within Europe, France, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, and the UK are top destinations. That said, **group travel organised by travel agents and aggregators is the most common form of travel among Indian foreign travellers.** More than half of Indian tourists take trips with family or friends, typically in groups of three or four. However, a third of Indians also travel solo, indicating growth in the backpackers sub-segment.


Top travel destination in Europe



France Switzerland Spain Denmark

MOT looks westward

A recent event in Mumbai conducted by Ministry of Tourism’s regional office brought together five western states and two Union Territories (UTs) to help them showcase their products to agents.

 Hazel Jain

In a bid to further develop domestic tourism, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India’s, Mumbai office recently organised an interaction between five states along with two UTs in the western region and travel agents from these regions, on-board Karnika ship.

Neela Lad, Regional Director, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said, “The main purpose of this event is to handhold small destinations like our UTs, that may not



Neela Lad
Regional Director
Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

have the budget to do it alone. We conduct this event annually at different venues that have the potential of becoming good tourism products and introduce them to the travel agents. This is the second one this year, while the first one was held at the Statue of Unity where state tourism boards interacted with Gujarat agents in Baroda.”

The states participating this time included Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Chhattisgarh and the two UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. According to Lad, more than 100 agents attended this event and had travelled from different parts of the region like Nashik, Pune, Goa, Mumbai and Gujarat. This was also the first time that Daman & Diu was participating in the event. Meanwhile, Dadra & Nagar Haveli informed that they had launched a new tourism policy on September 1, 2019, which includes initiatives for improving ease of doing business in the UT, such as single-window clearance for investors.

The Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation

“We conduct this event annually at different venues that have the potential of becoming good tourism products and introduce them to travel agents”

(MTDC) made a presentation on cruise tourism, which Lad said was one of the focus areas for the Ministry of Tourism

as well. “We are developing some niche products that include cruising, golf, and wildlife,” she said.

Iceland visa services at VFS

Gudmundur Arni Stefansson, Ambassador, Embassy of Iceland and Alok Singhal, Regional Head - North & East India, VFS Global, signed a contract in New Delhi for processing Iceland visa applications for Indians.



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Khimji appoints India rep

Khimji Tourism has appointed Renuka Natu Travel Relations to manage its sales representation in the India market, for Oman and UAE, and the B2B hotel management system.



TT Bureau

Khimji Tourism, one of the leading travel consortiums in the GCC region, has appointed **Renuka Natu**, Director, Renuka Natu Travel Relations, to manage their sales representation in the Indian market. Speaking on this occasion, **Cashio Vettom**, General Manager, Khimji's House of Travel, said, "Khimji Tourism has a diverse portfolio of prod-



Renuka Natu
Director
Renuka Natu Travel Relations

management services to the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, along with its B2B worldwide hotel and leisure management system, tripnstay.com. Following this appointment, Natu commented, "The ease to obtain tourist visas for Indian nationals in the GCC has opened greater avenues for travel into the region."

Natu will be working closely with the Khimji Tourism team based in Oman and UAE, designing products that cater specifically to the Indian market. Natu has previously held numerous senior positions within Kuoni India and the Switzerland Tourism Board before launching her own travel representation company in October 2010. She has represented the Schilthorn Cableway and the Zanzibar Collection in the past, and currently has an impressive client list. ✈

“The ease to obtain tourist visa for Indian nationals in the GCC has opened avenues for travel into the region”

ucts and we are delighted to partner with Natu to be our marketing partner in the Indian market. She brings with her over 25 years of experience with the travel trade along with in-depth knowledge of the travel patterns in India. We are

confident that with her expertise, we can strategically position our products and have the required business growth in this dynamic market.”

Under the umbrella of Khimji Tourism, Natu will introduce two segments—destination

Cosmos' 2020 tours

The Globus family of brands - Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon Waterways - unveils their 2020 touring vacations to Europe, North America, South America and more.



TT Bureau

Globus family of brands is unveiling its spectacular 2020 touring vacations to Europe, North America, South America and more. It is offering more than 500 vacations on seven continents to over 70 countries.

The global partners network of Globus family of brands gives access to some of the world's



Vares Chhpra
Regional Director – South Asia & ME
Globus family of brands

take travellers through unspoiled villages other tour companies don't visit and cruise ships don't stop overnight at.”

Cosmos' exciting new tours for 2020 include a 10-day trip to Madrid and southern Spain, an eight-day vacation to Sicily, an 11-day Russian river cruise, and a Mediterranean tour of Athens combined with a seven-night Aegean Islands cruise, a 12-day USA tour from Los Angeles to Las Vegas, and a 13-day tour from New York City to Miami Beach.

Globus also introduces some brand new vacations to Irish manors and castles, Scotland; southern Italy and Greece in Europe; a tour to see the Jasper Dark Sky Festival and Canadian Rockies; and also a seven-day tour to eastern Canada. Agents can book their clients early and save up to 15 per cent on select Globus or Cosmos vacations. ✈

“Agents can book their clients early and save up to 15 per cent on select Globus or Cosmos vacations”

most exclusive experiences combined with expert guides.

Vares Chhpra, Regional Director – South Asia and Middle East for the Globus family of brands, says, “Year 2020 marks a special year with our new Cosmos branding as we're

celebrating the unparalleled and attainable access a Cosmos tour provides to the world's 'wow' moments. With its new look and feel, Cosmos is celebrating with specials offers on its value-centric vacations. This year, we are also focusing on an inventive series of touring vacations that

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Day 2: Interlaken

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Day 3 : Interlaken - Montreux

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Day 4 : Montreux - Zermatt

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Day 5 : Zermatt - St Moritz

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Day 7 : Lugano - Lucerne

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Indian arrivals double in 3 years

At the third edition of their annual B2B showcase - Experience France - **Sheetal Munshaw**, Director, Atout France in India, said that tourist arrivals from India to France jumped from 3,65,000 in 2014 to 7,00,000 in 2018.



Hazel Jain

Having doubled the short-term visa numbers from India to France within just three years, Atout France in India is ready to rejig its strategy and up the ante. It is already seeing results from its revamped annual offsite that now brings buyers from across India under one roof rather than travelling to different cities in India with the sellers.



Sheetal Munshaw
Director
Atout France in India

multi-city format in order to have a pan-India approach.

Sheetal Munshaw, Director, Atout France in India, says, "We have been doing multi-city roadshow formats for some time which worked at the time. But we passed a point where we could no longer work with two or three cities and we needed a pan-India approach and this was the best way to do it. So for Experience France, we bring agents from different parts of India to meet our delegates. We have agents from Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur and even Lucknow." The B2B showcase was graced by the presence of Mme Catherine Suard, Consul General of France in Puducherry.

Munshaw claims that while 2014 saw 3,65,000 short



visas being issued, this number jumped to 7,00,000 in 2018. This indicates a double-digit growth in numbers, year-on-year, in the last three years. France has seen a 44 per cent increase in short-term (tourist) visas in Chennai alone in 2018-2019. She also adds that the aim for 2020 is to reach one million visitors but the collapse of Jet Airways and Cox

& Kings PLC, might affect these numbers.

The French delegation comprised of a mix of transport companies, hoteliers, regional tourism board, local tourist offices and a strong presence from the French Alps, fortifying the tourism board's efforts to position France as a winter destination. In addition, France's overseas territories

were also represented in the form of Reunion Island.

The NTO will continue to focus on smaller cities in India and will also tap the wedding segment more aggressively from 2020 as Munshaw feels that France is ready to cater to Indian weddings now. Atout France India will hold its annual French Ambassador's Travel Awards 2019 on November 21, 2019 in Mumbai. 🇫🇷

“We have agents from Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur and even Lucknow.”

The third edition of its annual B2B showcase 'Experience France' that took place over three days at Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, Mahabalipuram, saw the largest

delegate participation from France since the inception of the tourism board in India with 36 partners who met 85 agents from different parts of India. It moved away from the regular

Explore & Experience France

The third edition of 'Experience France' roadshow organised by Atout France India in Mahabalipuram, took place over four days at Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa and saw the largest delegate participation from France with 36 partners who met 85 agents from different parts of India. It saw strong participation from private players from the Alps region because of the huge traction it sees from the Indian market.



Kuwait-London from Oct 27

Jazeera Airways will be launching a direct flight from Kuwait to Gatwick Airport in London on October 27, 2019, becoming the first low-cost carrier from the Gulf to directly fly to UK's Gatwick Airport.



TT Bureau

Kuwait-based LCC, Jazeera Airways, will soon launch its new direct flight from Kuwait to London Gatwick, starting October 27. This will be a first for a low-cost carrier from the Middle East.

Sharing this news, **Romana Parvi**, Country Manager – India, Jazeera Airways, said, 'Jazeera Airways is now preparing to launch new routes in Q4, starting with flights to the British capital, London, in October 2019. London Gatwick is a milestone for us as it is the very first

“On flights to London Gatwick, Jazeera Airways will fly passengers using the new A320neo aircraft, with three cabin classes”

direct low-cost service between the Gulf and the UK.”

On flights to London Gatwick, Jazeera Airways will fly passengers using the new A320neo aircraft with a cabin configuration in three classes: Business Class, a new Premium Economy Class, and Economy Class. The Business Class offers a 33-inch seat pitch, 50 kgs in baggage allowance; the Premium Economy Class

offers passengers a 31-inch seat pitch; and the Economy Class offers a 29/30-inch seat pitch. By end 2019, Jazeera Airways will see more routes launched, including Nepal and Bangladesh.

Parvi also revealed that the airline recently launched its new holidays' service, Jazeera Holidays. "We launched this on August 28, in partnership with Sharjah-based Cozmo Travel, offering customers

packages to leisure destinations in the Middle East, India, and Europe," she added. The new Jazeera Holidays portal enables customers to select their destination and then search through a range of hotels and local



tour options. Destinations include Turkey, Georgia, Jordan, Azerbaijan, UAE,

Egypt, Bahrain and India, and flights on Jazeera Airways are included in all.

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Until November 30, 2019, Jazeera Airways will operate four flights a week (Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) in the initial stage of the LGW operations.

December 1, 2019, onwards, Jazeera Airways will operate daily non-stop flights between KWI and LON. Passengers from five Indian stations will be able to connect to LGW with a smooth transit of anything between 2.5 to four hours via Kuwait.

Tourism Breaking News

- Gurbaxish Singh Kohli re-elected as HRAWI President
- Tourism minister bans single-use plastic in and around ASI monuments
- Kerala becomes first state to partner with China for its China Ready programme
- WelcomHeritage to open 3 new hotels by December 2019
- Max Lords Plaza opens with 116 rooms in Goa
- Kutch to get a new airport

Networking key at Nevada meet

The 2019 Nevada Governor's Global Tourism Summit is all set to be held from November 12-14, 2019, at Plaza Hotel & Casino in Downtown Las Vegas, the city's historic centre.



The 2019 Nevada Governor's Global Tourism Summit would allow delegates to get insights on global business trends and success stories from top marketing executives.

The keynote speaker will be **Andy Schuon**, who held leadership roles at MTV and Warner Brothers, among others, before he founded Spkr audio platform. Apart from that, there will be **Ross Borden**, CEO of the Matador Network, who will lead a discussion with **Michael Downs** and **Tyler Williams**, the Zappos visionaries, who have changed the future of Downtown Las Vegas by embracing its past.

The conference at the Governor's Global Tourism

Summit this year would be another highlight for the delegates. It will have the popular sales and media marketplaces, allowing interactions with representatives from Travel Nevada's international



agencies as well as international media and buyers. This would help the participants to increase the understanding of travel trends in the 10 international markets in which Travel Nevada has representation—Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Latin America, South Korea and the United Kingdom.

On November 12, a 'Meet and Greet' opening reception will be held at Fergusons Downtown, a fun and funky new downtown venue, which would allow delegates to interact with each other. There is a session titled 'Connecting

with Google's Latest Trends and Newest Opportunities for Destinations' on November 14, which would highlight the latest trends and newest opportunities in Google Travel that destination marketers and other segments of the industry should know.

There will be another session on the same day, where



Lisa Motley, Director of Sports Marketing and Special Events for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority, will have a panel discussion with representatives from the Vegas Golden Knights, NFL Raiders, Las Vegas Motor Speedway, Ultimate Fighting Championship, University of Nevada Las Vegas and HyperX Esports along with special guests as they discuss the strategy and excitement behind Las Vegas emerging as the 'New Sports Capital of the World'.

The closing reception would allow delegates to let their hair down and cement their

valuable relationships made over the last three days.

For Nevada, the international market holds a lot of importance, especially when around 80 million international visitors came to the United States in 2018, as per statistics of the US Travel Association. Around six million global travellers who visit Nevada every year spend \$7.5 billion during those visits, which means that the Governor's Global Tourism Summit is just the right platform to engage and interact. 🌟

Did you know there are over 148,690 hotel rooms in Las Vegas. It would take 340 years to spend an evening in each room and 19 of the 25 largest hotels in the world are here. The four hotels at the corner of Las Vegas Blvd and Tropicana Ave have more rooms than all of San Francisco.

Tourism to boost Odisha's economy

The Hotel & Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) organised the fourth edition of Odisha Tourism Conclave on September 18, themed 'Tourism to be the driving force of state economy'. **Ganeshi Lal**, the Governor of Odisha, inaugurated the conclave, which is expected to give a 360-degree boost to the growth of tourism and hospitality in the state by attracting investments in the sector.



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Tee time in Mauritius

Well-positioned as one of the most prominent golf regions, Mauritius is planning to attract more Indian golfers to the island and also focus on families and adventure tourism.



TT Bureau

During a travel agents' workshop organised in Delhi in association with Air Mauritius, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) India talked about its future marketing plans to attract more Indian tourists to the island nation popular for its beaches. **Vivek Anand**, Country Manager - India,



Vivek Anand
Country Manager - India
Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority

destination in India, MTPA had organised 'Mauritius Tourism Invitational Golf Tournaments' earlier this year in Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi in collaboration with IGTA, MGTA and Air Mauritius. MTPA India hosted the top three winners from each city for the finals in Mauritius at Heritage Golf Club. The winner was felicitated and awarded at the World Travel Award held in Mauritius. Anand said that they aim to organise such events in future as well.

To promote adventure, Anand says that MTPA is promoting all the activities for Indian tourists ranging from fly and dive, five island tour, submarine, sea cart, curious corner and others. He added that Government of Mauritius is soon going to get one more MiCE policy, where the country may provide a VAT refund for MiCE groups. The policy is yet to be unveiled. 🇵🇸

also boasts of ten 18-hole golf courses, each offering a unique golfing experience. We will continue promoting Mauritius as a MiCE, wedding, honeymoon, adventure, family and film destination in 2019," Anand said. In its attempt to promote Mauritius as a golf

“We will continue promoting Mauritius as a MiCE, wedding, honeymoon, adventure, family and film destination in 2019”

MTPA, said that the tourism board is promoting golf and adventure activities in a big way and luring families is also a priority for it.

"Besides being an ideal round-the-year destination for the entire family, Mauritius

Indonesia beyond Bali

In a bid to provide experiences for different segments of Indian travellers, Indonesia has identified '10 New Balis' and has prioritised four key destinations to attract more tourists.



TT Bureau

Reiterating that the Indian market is one of the most important markets for Indonesia, **Dr. Raden Sigit Witjaksono**, Director of Tourism Marketing - South & Central Asia, Middle East, Africa - Republic of Indonesia, claims that visitor arrivals from India are increasing year by year. "We received close to 595,000 visitors from India,



Dr. Raden Sigit Witjaksono
Director of Tourism, Marketing for South & Central Asia, Middle East, Africa, Republic of Indonesia

“We received close to 595,000 visitors from India; this year, we are hopeful of receiving 700,000 tourists”

which is a 12 per cent growth from the previous year. This year, we are hopeful of receiving 700,000 tourists," informs Witjaksono.

He further said that they are looking to reach out to Tier-II and Tier-III cities. "Apart from

popular segments in the country, we are also focusing on other segments like MiCE and weddings. We are especially looking to attract millennials. The adventure segment is booming in Indonesia with activities like diving getting popular. So, we are looking to

focus on segmented visitors," he said.

According to him, 60 per cent Indians travel to or through Bali, and now their focus is to promote Indonesia beyond Bali. "While the tourism board has identified '10 New Balis' for the Indian market, it has prioritised four key destinations from those 10. They are Lake Toba in the North of Sumatra; Borobudur in Central Java, which also has two prominent Hindu temples; Mandalika on the island of Lombok; and Labuan Bajo in the Nusa Tenggara region of East Indonesia, close to Komodo Island. We are promoting these areas in India. Bali is known in the India market. We have to educate on destinations beyond Bali," he added.

The country is also pinning hopes on Air India's proposed Delhi-Chennai-Bali flight, expected to start from Oct 27. 🇵🇸

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Lithuania enters VFS fold

VFS Global has rolled out Lithuania visa services in New Delhi to cater to travellers from India visiting the European country. Along with Delhi, the services are available in Mumbai and Bengaluru.



Manas Dwivedi

Julius Pranevičius, Ambassador of Lithuania to India and **Giedrius Kazakevičius**, Director of the Consular Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania, formally inaugurated the new Lithuania Visa Application Centre in the capital. Along with Delhi, the services are now available in two other cities, Mumbai and Bengaluru. The authorities expect to extend the services to 10 Indian cities by the end of 2019. India is now among 71 countries in which VFS Global offers Lithuania visa services, owing to its growing popularity among travellers globally.

“We see huge interest from different sectors of the Indian society, students in particular, to visit Lithuania”

Sharing his happiness during the occasion, Pranevičius said, “The newly opened centres will facilitate the process by bringing the service closer to a customer, contribute to building stronger people-to-people contacts, as well as strengthening bilateral relations between Lithuania and India through tourism, trade and culture. We have some historical and cultural ties with India as our language happens to be very similar to Sanskrit. It’s not only about history and culture, today, we see huge interest from different sectors of the Indian society to visit Lithuania. Students, in particular, take great interest in studying in the universities of Lithuania with around 1,000 Indian students already studying there. People like living there and price-wise also, it is comparable to other European countries. We also see interest from Indian tourists and Indian business companies looking to enter the European market using Lithuania as their gateway. We are looking forward to produc-

tive cooperation between the Embassy of Lithuania and VFS Global.”

Vinay Malhotra, Regional Group COO - South Asia, Middle East and China, VFS Global, said, “Globally, we

have had a long and fruitful association with the Republic of Lithuania, having served the embassies and consulates in multiple other countries since 2013. We are extremely pleased that Lithuania has extended its reach to include

one of the fastest growing outbound markets – India.”

The Visa Application Centre in New Delhi is equipped to accept all categories of Schengen visas for Lithuania, as well as biometric enrolment. 🇱🇹



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1,200 delegates attend PTM

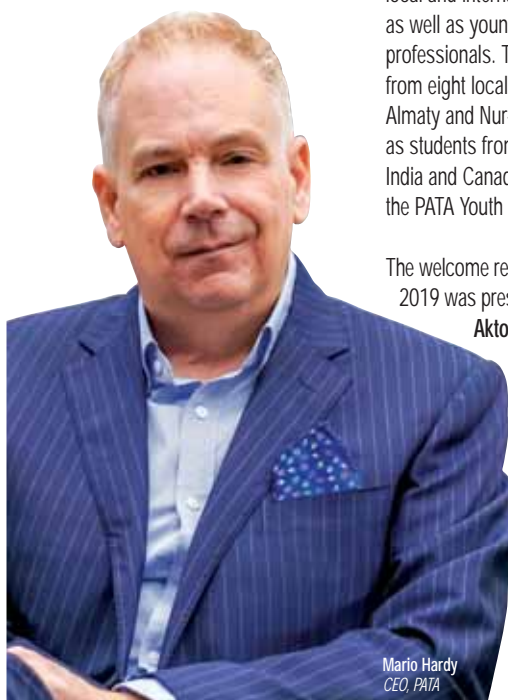


PATA Travel Mart 2019 (PTM 2019) welcomed 1,200 delegates from 63 global destinations, in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, where PATA also announced its 2020 theme and took initiatives to propagate sustainable tourism.



TT Bureau

PATA Travel Mart saw a total of 347 sellers from 180 organisations and 34 destinations, along with 252 buyers



from 244 organisations and 48 source markets with first-time buyers comprising 44 per cent of the total. In addition, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) also welcomed 190 local and international students as well as young tourism professionals. The students from eight local universities in Almaty and Nur-Sultan, as well as students from Malaysia, India and Canada, were part of the PATA Youth Symposium.

The welcome reception of PTM 2019 was presided over by **Aktoty Raimkulova**, Minister of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at the Radisson Hotel, Astana. On the occasion, **Mario Hardy**, CEO, PATA,

said, "This marks the first time that PATA is organising an event in Central Asia, and our aim is to highlight the unexplored region, particularly Kazakhstan. PTM provides the perfect opportunity to showcase this unique destination's vast landscapes and beautiful culture and heritage."

"This marks the first time that PATA is organising an event in Central Asia, and our aim is to highlight its unexplored regions, particularly Kazakhstan"

PATA also announced its theme for 2020— 'Partnerships for Tomorrow'— in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hardy shared, "The world is seeing dramatic social, political, environmental and economic changes, particularly in relation to

the damage to our planet by climate change. Against this backdrop, there is an urgent need to work towards the development of a more responsible and sustainable travel and tourism industry. The challenges that we face are complex and require coordination from all industry

stakeholders across all sectors. Only through concerted efforts can we preserve the world for the future."

The annual theme will permeate all of the Association's activities for the calendar year and be lever-

aged to drive greater strategic alignment and advanced planning between all PATA business units. Furthermore, PATA will use initiatives that include the theme as a multi-faceted PR campaign to drive greater media awareness of the need for a sustainable tomorrow, within the membership community and at large.

Apart from that, PATA, in partnership with ADB Ventures and Plug and Play, also launched Travel Lab Asia (TLA), Asia's only corporate innovation programme focused on sustainability in travel.

Hardy said, "As PATA's mission is to act as a catalyst for the responsible development of travel and tourism to, from and within the Asia Pacific region, we are excited to announce the launch of Travel Lab Asia in partnership with ADB Ventures

and Plug and Play. The travel and tourism industry is recognising that responsible business practices must embrace innovative measures to offset the potentially irreversible damage to our planet caused by climate change, however, the availability of technology is constraining them from going beyond quick solutions. Travel Lab Asia provides them the opportunity to find the right solutions for their needs." 📌

PATA announced that the PATA Adventure Travel Conference and Mart 2020 (ATCM 2020) will be held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah at the Sutera Harbour Resort from February 12-14. The three-day event will be hosted by Tourism Malaysia in partnership with Sabah Tourism Board and Malaysia Airlines. It will be the first time that ATCM is being hosted in Malaysia.

Partners aid SLH's growth

Small Luxury Hotels of the World (SLH), represented by ISA Tourism in India, hosted meets for key partners in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru.



For hassle-free 'Trawell'

TrawellTag Cover-More, a leading provider of travel protection for more than two decades, protects over 3.8 million travellers globally, with 11,000 active clients in India.



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TrawellTag Cover-More's travel protection provides exclusive travel assistance services. It works in tandem with some of the largest airlines, travel agent associations, travel agency networks and foreign exchange players, offering them end-to-end solutions. The Expert Claims Assistance

TrawellTag Cover-More

such cases that TrawellTag Cover-More swings into action and provides emergency assistance by liaising with hospital authorities and expediting paperwork.

Recently, a TrawellTag Cover-More client, **Ram Kumar Paswan**,

started experiencing discomfort. On evaluation, he was diagnosed with kidney stone.

TrawellTag Cover-More deployed help as soon as they were intimated about the diagnosis. They not only ensured that he had a hassle-free recovery but also saw to it that the financial aspects were dealt with in less than 15 minutes.

Paswan was thankful that he didn't have to worry about the financial burden of overseas treatment despite the unforeseen emergency. He reiterated, "Global travel protection from TrawellTag Cover-More is essential, especially for those with erratic travel schedules." 📌

TrawellTag Cover-More works in tandem with some of the largest airlines, travel agent associations, travel agency networks and foreign exchange players

team is always ready to help, be it any time of the day.

Chances often arise when clients suffer from an ailment while on holiday, and it is in

whose work demands constant and arduous travel, went to Switzerland. The journey was hassle-free until he reached the destination. The following morning, he

A Diamond in the Moguls

Blue Diamond Pune by IHCL Seleqtions, with the objective of reaching a larger audience, is the latest property to partner with Internet Moguls for its social media management.



TT Bureau

Blue Diamond Pune by IHCL Seleqtions, which is the first 5-star hotel of Pune, has joined hands with Internet Moguls for its social media management and presence. Popular among the masses, the brand required visibility and online reputation across all platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Avijit Arya, Founder and Chief Mogul of Internet Moguls, said, "Blue Diamond



Avijit Arya
Founder and Chief Mogul
Internet Moguls

hubs of the city, as it is located in the famous Koregaon Park.

serves authentic Maharashtrian delicacies, which makes it stand apart.

Urvija Deshpande, Director of Sales & Marketing, Blue Diamond Pune by IHCL Seleqtions, said, "We're incredibly excited about this association and expect our brand to reach out to a larger audience base with the latest digital marketing strategies. The world is changing and so are we by adopting the newest trends that will support our vision to stand out in the industry."

Founded in 2009, Internet Moguls offers digital marketing strategy and services to the travel and hospitality sector. It has been in the business for more than a decade now, offering a multitude of services including social media and performance guarantees, for over 500 hospitality companies in 11 countries. 🇮🇳

“Blue Diamond Pune by IHCL Seleqtions is a reputed brand and we're elated to come on board with them”

Pune by IHCL Seleqtions is a reputed brand and we're elated to come on board with them."

The property is a stone's throw away from the famous

Situated at the centre of the business hub, it is the preferred property for business travellers from across the country. Not only that, it's the only 5-star hotel of Pune that

A taste of Belgium in India

Visit Brussels, represented in India by Aviareps, conducted its two-city Brussels Tourism Mission in Mumbai and Delhi, where travel agents got to experience the destination through presentations and business meetings with sellers.



"Exclusive 5-star living for couples and adults only"

The Outpost Hotel is a 5-star accommodation that is suited for an adult-oriented environment to rest and recharge. Inspired by Sentosa's Heritage as a colonial military base, the 193 guest rooms are a stylish interpretation of black and white design, with crisp lines and a sharply contrasting palette.

The hotel offers personalised services and room amenities include toiletry kits by Australian beauty brand APPELLES Apothecary & Lab, pillow mist kits for turn down service, and customised mini bars from a selection of wine, liquor, chocolates, & gluten-free snacks, with compliments from the hotel. A welcome drink mixed specially for them will also be served upon checking in.



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TTAUP hosts third travel mart


Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP) hosted the third TTAUP Travel Mart, 'TTM 2019', in Lucknow. The Chief Guest for the event was **Jitendra Kumar**, Additional Chief Secretary & Director General, Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh. About 35 exhibitors participated in the mart which received more than 400 online registrations from buyers.



B2B MiCE now online

An online platform for bookings, MICE ONLINE (MOL) was launched recently in New Delhi. This platform provides not just hotels, but also ancillary services for events.

Kumar Shubham, Co-founder, MOL, shared that the App is the future of MICE. "We are not an aggregator and every property is selected after reviewing its MiCE potential. This platform is going to create a difference in the way revenues and booking patterns of MiCE groups are managed at the hotel." 🇮🇳

Jadwet feels that there is a need to create an enabling atmosphere. "Connectivity is a challenge; it has improved, but there is scope to improve further. Upgrade of infrastructure at ferry and cruise terminals is another need," he explains. 



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takes anniversary

TravelBullz (TBZ), to celebrate its 9-year anniversary, brought all its employees from Hong Kong, Thailand and India together for a 5-day celebration in Pattaya and Bangkok. The festivities concluded with a Gala Awards Night for industry partners in Bangkok, which saw over 300 people in attendance, and included the launch of TBZ's brand new booking engine.



celebrations to Thailand



National Tourism Awards tips

The Vice President of India, **M Venkaiah Naidu**, presented the National Tourism Awards 2017-18 on World Tourism Day in New Delhi. A total of 76 awards under various categories were presented. The Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (I/C), **Prahlad Singh Patel**; Secretary General of United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), **Zurab Pololikashvili**; Tourism Minister of Paraguay, **Sofia Montiel De Afara**; Tourism Secretary, **Yogendra Tripathi**; Joint Secretary of Tourism, **Suman Billa**; Director General of Tourism, **Meenakshi Sharma**; senior officials of Ministry of Tourism; and 82 international delegates were among those present on the occasion.



Best State for Adventure Tourism — Madhya Pradesh (Joint Winner)



Best State/Union Territory: Comprehensive Development of Tourism Rest of India (Third Prize) — Kerala



Best Inbound Tour Operator/Travel Agent Category I (1st Prize) - Abercrombie & Kent India



Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent Category I- 2nd Prize — Trail Blazer Tours India



Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent Category II- 1st Prize — Trans India Holidays



Best Inbound Tour Category / Travel Agent Category IV - 2nd Prize — Travel Pundits



Tourist Transport Operator Category II - 1st Prize — Cholan Tours



Best Civic Management of a Tourist Destination in India (Category - A) — Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Gujarat



Best 3 Star Hotel Category — Express Inn, Nashik



Best Inbound Tour Category/Travel Agent Category III (2nd Prize) and Best Domestic Tour Operators Category I - Yatra Online



Best Adventure Tour Operators (Domestic) - Clubside Tours and Travels



Best Eco-Friendly Hotel - ITC Rajputana, Jaipur (Joint Winner)



Best Wellness Centre - Manaltheeram Ayurvedic Hospital & Research Centre Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala



Best Hotel Based Meeting Venue — The Ashok, New Delhi (Joint Winner)

hat to heroes of the industry



Best Inbound Tour Category / Travel Agent Cateogry V - 2nd Prize — Special Holidays



Best Standalone Convention Centre — India Expo Centre & Mart, Noida



Best Tourism Promotion Publicity Material (State Government/ UT Administration) — Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board for Pocket Guides: Pocket Madhya Pradesh, Short Escapes from Bhopal, Tiger & Beyond, Heritage Trips in Madhya Pradesh



Best MICE Operator — Alpcord Network Travel and Conference Management Company



Best Heritage (Grand) Hotel Category — The Oberoi Cecil, Shimla (Joint Winner)



Best maintained and differently-abled friendly monument— Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi



Tourist Transport Operator Category I - 2nd Prize - Parveen Travels



Best Domestic Tour Operators Category III - Citius Holidays



Excellence in Publishing in English — Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority for its coffee table books: Seaside Handicrafted and Sacredscape



Best Inbound Tour Operator / Travel Agent Category III - 1st Prize - Indian Legends Holidays



Best Inbound Tour Category / Travel Agent Category VI - 2nd Prize - Quality India Tours



Best Heritage (Classic) Hotel Category - Deobagh, Gwalior

The Prince opens doors

The Prince Akatoki London, which is the inaugural luxury hotel under the newly launched global brand 'The Prince', has opened doors after a multimillion-pound transformation.

TT Bureau

Located centrally on Great Cumberland Place in Marylebone, the five-star luxury hotel The Prince Akatoki London (formerly The Arch London), is ready to welcome guests after a multimillion-pound refurbishment. The hotel offers an amalgamation of refined Japanese aesthetic with a unique sense of Western heritage, creating a one-of-a-kind urban sanctuary.

Takashi Goto, President & Chief Executive Officer, Seibu Holdings, said, "We are delighted to announce we have opened The Prince Akatoki London. This new global brand name bares our flagship brand 'The Prince' of Prince Hotels and aims to raise awareness about it by making full use of the brand value of Prince Hotels in Japan. Akatoki is an old expression of Akatsuki, meaning sunrise or a new beginning, and speaks to a



new time for Prince Hotels, reflecting the international growth of our business."

Commenting on the property, Simon Wan, President & Director, StayWell Holdings, said, "The new hotel will see travellers experience five-star luxury hospitality with service performed from the heart and inspired by Japan, and amenities that reflect key elements of the unique, refined and generous Japanese hospitality and culture. We look forward to showcasing the new hotel

to our discerning local and international guests."

The Prince Akatoki London is the first property to open under the newly launched The Prince Akatoki brand.

The property features timeless facilities including 82 guest rooms and suites; TOKii, a Japanese inspired restaurant; and The Malt Lounge & Bar, a sophisticated late-night destination. TOKii and The Malt Lounge and Bar will officially launch soon.

Raebareli for Clarks Inn

Clarks Inn has opened the 32-key Om Clarks Inn, which provides world-class event spaces for corporates and for social occasions, in the town of Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh.

TT Bureau

An upscale hotel, Om Clarks Inn lies in close proximity to the Raebareli Railway Station and is located in the city's commercial hub along Civil Lines. The 32-key hotel offers the latest amenities and world-class guest services along with spacious and well-appointed rooms. There are 30 Deluxe rooms along with

Commenting on the latest addition, SN Srivastava, President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, said, "We are absolutely thrilled at the launch of Om Clarks Inn at Raebareli, our newest addition to the fast-growing portfolio of properties in our chain. Raebareli is a town with a growing demand for travel and business opportunities. Today, the town is more prosperous



SN Srivastava
President & Co-founder
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

"We are looking at offering quality hospitality experiences, a void that we are keen to fill in this historical town of Raebareli in no time"

two Executive Suites to cater to the demands of discerning guests. The property also boasts of well-planned event spaces for corporates and for social occasions, along with an F&B outlet and more.

than what it used to be in the past. We are looking at offering quality hospitality experiences, a void that we are keen to fill in this historical town. We are confident that this property will be the most sought-after

hospitality address of Raebareli in no time."

He also informed that Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has made giant strides as a hospitality chain and has emerged as one of the fastest growing hotel companies in the South Asia region. "Today, we have established our presence in India and Nepal, with other developments to unfold in the country as well as overseas."

Robinville travels across India

Robinville Intech organised Robinville Tourism Conclave —The Roadshow, in three Indian cities in association with its partners, which saw agents from Delhi, Mumbai and Jaipur network and learn about products under the Robinville umbrella.



WTM London in a new avatar

The revamped Buyer's Club programme at WTM London this year aims to bring in the highest calibre of buyers and provide a more tailored experience to them.



TT Bureau

For the 40th anniversary of WTM London this year, the organisers have revamped the Buyers' Club programme to create a new and exclusive experience for buyers, exhibitors and visitors.

The focus on streamlining WTM London's features will create a greater business experience for all and ensure the arrival of fresh ideas and new possibilities.

Sharing his views on the revamped programme, **Simon Press**, Director, WTM London, said, "This fundamental change in the way in which the buyers' programme will operate represents an exciting advancement for WTM London. Entering our 40th edition has encouraged us to refine our products in order to give attendees the best experience possible. We feel, our more exclusive approach

“Our exclusive approach to the Buyers' Club will produce fantastic results, making WTM London the location for world's top buyers to do business”

to the Buyers' Club will produce fantastic results, making WTM London the location for the world's top buyers to do business and to enhance the global travel industry.”

As part of the new and improved WTM London Buyers' Club, the top 600 industry buyers will receive invitations to attend it. These buyers have achieved their position due to their reputation, place of business and buyer spending power. Although there will be fewer buyers than in previous years, this group would have been screened to guarantee the highest quality set of buyers that will have



ever attended WTM London. Outside of the top 600 global buyers, the application process includes a new vetting procedure. This process will gather

data on how individual buyers use WTM London to enhance their business, ensuring all who attend gain maximum benefits from this world-class travel exhibition.

All Buyers' Club members will also be able to use the dedicated luxury lounges during

the show, equipped with private meeting rooms. This is in addition to the opportunity of participating in at least one of the WTM London Speed Networking events.

As there will be no changes in visa policies for people

entering the UK following a deal or no-deal Brexit, it is anticipated that global buyer applications will exceed those of last year. In 2018, there were over 9,000 buyers. This year, it is projected there will be more buyer applications than ever. 🇬🇧



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Director
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EVENT TALK

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WTM	London	4-6
Nevada Governor's Global Tourism Summit	Las Vegas	12-14
Expedia's Explore 2019	Las Vegas	14-15
IITE	Mangaluru	15-17
Scandinavia Tourism roadshow	Delhi	18
IBTM World	Barcelona	19-21
Scandinavia Tourism roadshow	Chennai	20
Scandinavia Tourism roadshow	Mumbai	21
Travel Technology Summit	New Delhi	22
IITM	Hyderabad	22-24
Paryatan Kumbh	Lucknow	25-28
PATA Destination Marketing Forum	Pattaya, Thailand	27-29
IITM	Pune	29-1 Dec

DECEMBER 2019

ILTM Cannes	Cannes	2-5
Travel & Tourism India	Mumbai	3-5
International Buddhist Travel Mart	Bodh Gaya	10-12
Travel Allied Show	Jaipur	13
Travel MICE Show	Jaipur	14-15

JANUARY 2020

Visit Britain Sales Mission	Mumbai	13
South African Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	13
South African Tourism Roadshow	Pune	14
Visit Britain Sales Mission	Delhi	15
South African Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	15-16
IITT	Mumbai	15-17
TTF	Bengaluru	17-19
Destination DC roadshow	Delhi	20-21
Grand Ski Trade Exhibition by Atout France	Chambery, France	21-22
Destination DC roadshow	Mumbai	22-23
Fitur	Madrid	22-26
TTF	Chennai	24-26
TTF	Delhi	30-1 Feb
BLTM	New Delhi	30-1 Feb

FEBRUARY 2020

OTM	Mumbai	3-5
TTF	Ahmedabad	8-9
NYC & Co Sales Mission	Delhi	10-12
Visit Finland Sales Mission	Mumbai	11

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

ASSOCIATION TALK

TAFI concludes AGM in Gujarat

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) recently met at the Statue of Unity in Gujarat to conduct its AGM and discuss key topics, including TAFI Connect, to help it transition into the new year.



Hazel Jain

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) conducted its AGM successfully in Gujarat close to the Statue of Unity at Tent City Narmada, sponsored by Gujarat Tourism. A total of 90 members came together at this destination to discuss various topics including its new digital platform – TAFI Connect.

Pradip Lulla, Acting President and Vice President, TAFI, who led the delegation, said, "We conducted our AGM as well as our National Joint Council (NJC) meeting where the entire TAFI Managing Committee meets with the TAFI Chapter Chairpersons. So we were a total of 90 members from different cities of Gujarat as well as Delhi and Mumbai."

He added that TAFI is looking at a lot of things for future and



Pradip Lulla
Acting President and Vice President
TAFI

one of them is the new TAFI Connect digital platform. "It is currently in the pilot phase but we are encouraging our members to get on it and use it to sell their products. They can just upload their offerings on the platform and can even integrate with an API with the help of our technology partner at a small fee. We are currently taking feedback from our agents who are already using it and incorporating it.



We will roll it out shortly. So far it is working well and we urge our members to use it and share their feedback with us," he said.

Some bookings have already been made on the platform

est but they need to be TAFI members to come on to TAFI Connect. We hope that this will be a much-needed silver lining for travel agents who want to increase their income at a time when overall business is down," Lulla adds.

The TAFI AGM was held at Tent City, which is owned by Gujarat Tourism and operated

“Members can just upload their offerings on the TAFI Connect platform and can even integrate with an API with the help of our technology partner at a small fee”

and close to 400 members are online right now. "In fact, we are also being approached by non-TAFI members who would like to sell their products on this platform like DMCs and hotels. We are happy with this kind of inter-

by a private player. Tent City is in Narmada which is two hours away from Baroda and where the Statue of Unity is located. It is a new luxury camping product and is offering special introductory offers to all TAFI members. ↴

Silver Jubilee year for ATOAI



Completing 25 years of its existence in 2019, the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) is planning to celebrate the occasion in an innovative way.



Manas Dwivedi

Sharing fond memories of 25 years since its inception on September 22, 1994, the founding member and current President of ATOAI, Captain Swadesh Kumar said that it is a wonderful achievement for the association and its members.

"For me it is a proud moment to complete 25 years of the existence of our association. I still remember, when we started the association, there were only 6-7 members on board and today we have more than 500 members. We had started with a very small setup and I am happy with the wide and extended network of our association. Initially, we faced some resistance from other associations in establishing a separate association for adventure operators. After 25 long years, it is a matter



Captain Swadesh Kumar
President
ATOAI

of great joy that we are a well-accepted and recognised partner of the travel trade industry," he recalled.

Talking about celebrating the silver jubilee anniversary, Kumar said, "Big way doesn't mean only having a party and enjoying. It will be a part of the celebration but what we are thinking is how we can give something back to the society and communities, where we

have worked. Our aim is now that we are going to adopt villages, where we will help the younger generations by training them to become professionals and earn through good jobs. Planning is underway," he said.

Captain Kumar also informed that the Government of India has withdrawn permission for climbing 15 mountain peaks located in Sikkim.

So, now there are 122 mountains peaks open for climbing

“Ministry of Tourism recognised 2018 as the 'Year of Adventure', which was a boost for ATOAI. The government also released the new adventure tourism guidelines”

"Last year was very fruitful for ATOAI. The Ministry of Tourism also recognised 2018 as the 'Year of Adventure', which was a big boost for us. The government also released the new 'Indian Adventure Tourism Guidelines, Version 2.0' in association with ATOAI for adventure activities around the country," he added.

instead of earlier notified 137 peaks. "Kanchenjunga and few others are considered holy mountains for the community, there was a protest from the Sikkim government and the demands were accepted, eventually. If the local community doesn't want the peaks open for climbing, why should the industry use force?" said Kumar. ↴



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VFS Global

Dubai

Frank Herzog has joined VFS Global as the Chief Financial Officer. In this role, Herzog will lead the overall finance function and will also be responsible for M&A, legal, internal audit, and procurement functions. He is a member of the Executive Board of the company and contributes to the overall strategic direction of VFS Global. He reports to Zubin Karkaria, Chief Executive Officer, VFS Global. Herzog has joined VFS Global with 25 years of experience in leadership roles in finance, banking, and general management. His last assignment was as CFO of Dematic, a KION Group company for supply chain automation.



One Above

Europe

Rajan Joshi has been appointed as Director for One Above Europe DMC. He is a name synonymous with destinations in Europe & United Kingdom. With an experience of more than a decade to his credit, his main responsibility will be heading the Europe & UK operations and generating business for these markets. Joshi, also a co-founder, was heading the Europe & United Kingdom Division of Globe 360 DMC. At Globe 360 he was Sales & Operations Head providing marketing and business generation of end-to-end customer solutions.



Concept Hospitality

Mumbai

Grimek Khizakhe has joined Concept Hospitality as the Chief People Officer. In his career of over two-decades, Grimek has acquired rich expertise in establishing and developing HR practices and contributing to productivity, culture and cost savings initiatives with focus on overall organisational development, change management, business excellence and transformation in a matrix structure. He has been associated in the past with brands such as the Taj Group, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf - UAE, Carlson Rezidor and the Intercontinental Hotel Group. He was working for Holiday Inn, Mumbai as Director HR before joining Concept Hospitality.



Clarks Inn

New Delhi

Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has promoted **Abhinandan Sharma**, one of the longest serving employees in the company, as the Assistant General Manager - Finance. Sharma, who came on board soon after the Clarks Inn Group of Hotels was formed in 2006, has made invaluable contribution to the growth of the company since he joined in April 2007. In his earlier role, Sharma was the Manager - Finance, a position he served in for about five years. He has previously worked with some of the leading hospitality names like Hotel Sayaji and Hotel Fortune Landmark, a Welcom Group hotel in Indore.



Clarks Inn

Noida, Delhi-NCR

Clarks Inn Group of Hotels has recently appointed **Suneel Rawat** as General Manager - Business Development. A seasoned hotelier, Rawat will be responsible for the portfolio development and will form part of the core group to oversee the next phase of growth of Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. He will be based at the corporate office in Noida. An Economics graduate from Delhi University, Rawat comes with three decades of hospitality experience and has worked with leading Indian and international brands like Taj, Country Inn & Suites By Carlson, Holiday Inn, among others, at various positions in sales and operations.



The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel

New Delhi

The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts has appointed **Ashish Kumar Rai** as the General Manager of The Leela Ambience Convention Hotel, Delhi. With more than 20 years of experience in the luxury hospitality industry, he holds an impressive track record in managing successful and diverse hotel operations. Rai began his career with The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts as a Management Trainee and thereafter served as General Manager at various award-winning and iconic hotels such as The Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace Jodhpur, The Leela Mumbai and The Westin Mumbai Garden City.



Radisson Blu Hotel

Paschim Vihar, New Delhi

Nikhil Rajpurohit has joined as Director of Sales & Marketing at Radisson Blu Hotel Paschim Vihar. He brings with him more than 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry, having worked with brands like the Wyndham Group of Hotels, The Lalit, Fairmont, and Hilton. In the new role at Radisson Blu Hotel Paschim Vihar, he will focus on strategic development aimed at propelling the growth of the company and capitalising on shared value drivers. Prior to this appointment, he was the Director of Sales at Radisson Blu Hotel Indore.



Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa

Chennai

Anitha Simon has been appointed as the Director of Human Resources at Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa. She brings with her 13 years of experience in the service industry. In her new role, Simon will implement her excellent interpersonal communication skills, critical thinking, budget handling, counselling, and management skills to further boost the dynamic energy at the resort. She has worked for various international hospitality brands such as Traders Hotel, Chennai by Shangri-La; Courtyard by Marriott, Chennai; ITC Hotels Limited - Sheraton Park Hotel & Tower; and Hilton Chennai, before joining Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa.



Concept Hospitality

The Fern Spazio Leisure Resort, Anjuna, Goa

Gurpreet Singh Kandhari has joined Concept Hospitality as the Operations Manager at The Fern Spazio Leisure Resort, Anjuna, Goa. The property is centrally located in the heart of Anjuna in North Goa. Kandhari has been part of the hospitality industry for the last ten years and has worked with a number of brands like ITC Sheraton Park Hotel and Towers - Chennai; Taj Coromandel - Chennai; and Hilton a Flagship Hotel - New Delhi. Kandhari is a hospitality graduate from Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Srinagar and he was last associated with Park Inn by Radisson, New Delhi.



TALKing People

Subhankar Bose, General Manager, Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel, loves listening to music and taking short trips to nearby places. "But one thing I do on a regular basis is watching informative documentaries and short films, which rejuvenates my mind and helps me focus on newer things. My most memorable holiday is the one that I took with my family to Sentosa Island, Singapore. I also love hill stations in India, whether its Darjeeling or Ooty," Bose says.



A long ride on his motorcycle de-stresses **Amit Sachdeva**, General Manager, JW Marriott Jaipur Resort & Spa, like nothing else. On working days though he ends his day with a hot shower, a book in hand and a cup of piping hot Darjeeling tea to melt the stress away. He says, "I love the hotel business and look forward to the challenges I face in every new location that I go to. The sunrise at Angkor Wat in Cambodia is my most memorable holiday moment."



Vikas Kapai, General Manager, Sofitel Mumbai BKC, re-energises by playing his favourite sport which is squash and going for a walk. "I am a big fan of Bollywood movies as well as Formula 1 races. I also enjoy travelling. On one of our holidays, my family and I experienced the Mediterranean cruise, which was truly a memorable experience. My favourite holiday destination in India is Kashmir and abroad it's Italy - Milan and Rome," he says.





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MOT promotes Gandhi circuit

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) will be promoting the Gandhi Gramin Tourism Circuit to highlight and showcase the life and times of the Father of the Nation. The ministry is also roping in IATO to actively promote these circuits.



Manas Dwivedi

As part of celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, MOT is actively working to promote the Gandhi Gramin Circuit among foreign and domestic tourists. Sharing more details, **Meenakshi Sharma**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that Mahatma Gandhi was a world leader who encouraged people to travel and find out what different cultures and societies are about.

"With a vision to promote his ideas, we are working to promote the rural circuits and destinations related to the Father of the Nation, through which tourists can know and learn more about him. We are planning to identify such destinations around the country, and IATO is culling out different itineraries to help people coming to India know about Gandhi. They can learn

about his lifestyle and what he wanted India to become. Hence, the ministry is actively promoting these circuits with IATO and will continue to do that as part of the year-long celebrations," Sharma briefed.

On the same lines, the ministry also organised and celebrated the annual 'Paryatan

With India hosting the UN-WTO World Tourism Day celebrations this year for the first time, Sharma calls it another milestone for the country in promoting tourism. "This year's theme was 'Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all'. As we all understand, unless, tourism creates jobs, it is not good for the community. It was indeed a very

India a favourable and attractive destination. This seems to be a very good time for the tourism fraternity in the country as far as infrastructure, global promotion and facilitation are concerned. I hope that this will bring good news for the tourism industry as well as economic growth and employment opportunities for India," she said.

The ministry is also engaging in a lot of activities to boost the number of visitor arrivals in the country, which include a global promotional plan and strategies to attract Indian diaspora to the country. 🇮🇳

"With a vision to promote his ideas, we are working to promote the rural circuits and destinations related to the Father of the Nation, through which tourists can learn more about him"

Parv' starting from Gandhi's birth anniversary, October 2, to October 6 at Rajpath lawns, New Delhi, and from October 2-13 pan India, with an objective to promote the idea of 'Dekho Apna Desh' and 'Tourism for All'.

good experience working with UNWTO and we will continue to do so for nurturing tourism globally," she said.

Calling the current environment very positive for the tourism industry, Sharma said that the recent steps taken by the government are aimed to boost tourism business in the country.

"The current environment is very positive in the industry with the reduction in e-Tourist visa fee, GST rates on hotels and corporate tax. Moreover, the new one-month validity visa for \$10 during lean season, as well as the one-year and five-year visas for foreign visitors will further act as catalysts to make



IATO's itineraries for Gandhi Circuit

Working on the ministry's guidelines, IATO has suggested few itineraries for tour operators to promote the Gandhi Gramin Circuit. Tour operators are going to promote the circuit throughout the year to mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary celebrations. The main opportunity IATO is giving is to promote those locations, which are directly connected with Mahatma Gandhi. Not only his birthplace, Porbandar (Gujarat), but all the locations he worked, lived, and connected with people throughout his life. These locations include Mani Bhavan in Mumbai, Aga Khan Palace in Pune, Champaran in Bihar, National Gandhi Museum in New Delhi, Birla House (where Gandhi was assassinated), Rajghat (memorial dedicated to Gandhi) and certain places in Kolkata as well, where he led his movements during the freedom struggle of the country. Crafting some diverse tours and packages to sensitise the people about Gandhi, the itineraries include Shimla as well, where Gandhi spent a significant amount of time in his life.

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