

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

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■ Khajuraho footfalls take a hit

■ Infrastructure key for Gujarat

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MOT reduces e-Tourist Visa fee

To boost tourism and help make India a 12-month destination, Ministry of Tourism has announced a flexible e-Tourist Visa fee for the lean and peak seasons, partially fulfilling a long-standing demand of the industry.

Nisha Verma

The announcement for the reduced visa fee was made by **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (Independent Charge), Government of India, at the National Conference of Tourism Ministers that was recently concluded in New Delhi. A short-duration e-Visa for tourists with

a month's validity and visa fee of \$25 has been introduced for peak season (July-March). The Ministry has also introduced a five-year e-Tourist Visa with a \$80 fee, besides the existing one-year e-Tourist Visa with a fee of \$40. For Japan, Singapore and Sri Lanka, visa fee during the lean period is \$10 and for an e-Visa of 30

“MOT is developing a one-stop solution through a web-based application and a grievance redressal mechanism”

days, one year or five years, the fee is US\$ 25. For other countries where e-Visa facility is available, visa fee in the lean period is \$10 and that for peak season for 30 days is \$25. For e-Visa for one and five

years, the fee is \$40 and \$80, respectively. Speaking at the conference, Patel also called for better coordination between MOT and the states to boost tourist numbers

to the country. He also focused on adoption of Adventure Tourism and bed & breakfast or homestay scheme guidelines by States/UTs. Patel said, “MOT is developing a one-stop solution, including information on tourism-related services, through a web-based application and a grievance redressal mechanism through Twitter and the tourist helpline.”



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

LCCs shift ops at Delhi & Mumbai

Delhi's IGIA and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport have reshuffled terminals of major LCCs like SpiceJet, IndiGo and GoAir, owing to capacity enhancement and customer convenience, respectively.

TT Bureau

From September 5 this year, IndiGo and SpiceJet will shift operations from Terminal 2 (T2) to Terminal 3 (T3) at Indira Gandhi International

Airport, New Delhi, owing to capacity enhancement work at T2. While IndiGo will shift only a part of its operations to T3, all of SpiceJet's operations will be from T3. Operations of both airlines at Terminal 1 (T1) will

remain unaffected. GoAir will continue to operate from T2. In a similar move, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai, will see all flights of SpiceJet being

operated from Terminal 2 from October 1. IndiGo and GoAir will operate all domestic flights from T1 and international from T2. This has been done for the benefit and convenience of passengers.

Airline	Delhi Airport		Mumbai Airport	
	From	To	Domestic	International
IndiGo	T2	T2 & T3	T1	T2
SpiceJet	T2	T3	T2	T2
GoAir	No change	No change	T1	T2

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STB intensifies cruise focus

Singapore Tourism Board (STB) will organise a one-day Singapore Tourism Board Cruise Forum in New Delhi on September 12, 2019, to deliberate on how the travel industry can benefit from and help grow the cruise market.



Hazel Jain

Continuing its focus on developing the cruising market in India, Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has announced that it will organise another edition of its Singapore Tourism Board

Cruise Forum on September 12, 2019, in New Delhi. Explaining the idea behind this is GB Srithar, Regional Director (India, Middle East & South Asia), Singapore Tourism Board, who says, "We began actively positioning Singapore

ing with cruise lines and intermediaries – in 2017, in Mumbai and in Singapore last year. We are now bringing it back to India."

The theme of this year's forum will be "Growing Cruise

Singapore: A cruise hub

Offering easy fly-cruise options for travellers, Singapore has become a huge cruising hub, especially for Indians. In fact, India continues to be the third-largest visitor source market for Singapore, contributing over one million visitors annually for the fourth consecutive year. Srithar shares some numbers that support this. He says, "With a double-digit growth of 13 per cent, India retains the third spot in visitor arrival in 2018, after China and Indonesia. India was our top foreign source market in 2018 for the segment, welcoming 160,000 Indian cruise holiday makers (a 27 per cent increase over 2017) and we are actively seeking to entice the cruise traveller from India."

STB wants to continue tapping India's outbound potential. "We partner with stakeholders in the cruise industry to secure a vibrant pipeline of cruise ships," Srithar explains.

"India was our top foreign source market in 2018 for the cruise segment, and we are actively seeking to entice the cruise traveller from India"

as a major cruise holiday destination and a cruise hub, 2014-2015 onwards. We have conducted cruise forums in the past with cruise professionals, to provide thought leadership, discussions and network-

Connections – Achieving Together' and will be an event involving thought leaders and cruise professionals. "We plan to do 2-3 panel discussions bringing in professionals from the industry including cruise lines and travel agent intermediaries, and people looking at this cruise industry from a strategic perspective, including CLIA (Cruising Lines International Association)," Srithar adds.



GB Srithar
Regional Director (India, Middle East & South Asia), Singapore Tourism Board

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TRAVTALK

VIEWPOINT

India empowers tourists with Visa power

At a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech laid down the importance of the Indian tourism industry and its contribution to the overall development of the economy, the announcement of reduction in e-Visa fee has been a welcome move. A long-standing demand of inbound tour operators has now been paid heed to as India introduces a flexible e-Visa fee policy. To boost inbound tourism during lean period (April-June), MOT has announced the reduction of visa fee to US\$ 10. A short-duration e-Visa for tourists with one-month validity and visa fee of US\$ 25 has been introduced for the peak season. The ministry has also introduced a five-year e-Tourist Visa with US\$ 80 fee, besides the existing one-year e-Tourist Visa with a fee of US\$ 40. The visa fee reduction is under consideration of Ministry of External Affairs.

Where there's a will, there's an EMI way

As disposable income keeps growing among the Indian middle class, more and more millennials are looking to travel. International travel is no longer confined to the upwardly mobile class — the middle class is taking the plunge more than ever. As per the statistics shared by UNWTO, India will account for 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. This number has more than doubled from 23 million in 2017. Travel, though, is not as affordable as heading to a mall and buying a pair of shoes. People need to save consciously to travel to a foreign destination. However, discerning travellers seem to have worked their way around that. With plastic money being the vehicle of empowerment, today's millennials have much better access to personal loans, credit card Equated Monthly Instalments (EMIs) and travel loans. This has helped many fulfill their travel ambitions. As long as the monthly installments are paid on time and the escalating debt doesn't sour travel memories, here's to more trips!

25 years

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

Trav Talk

EYE OF THE STORM

When some of the IATA agents returned British Airways' ticket stocks, the airlines issued an official statement which said that they were 'extremely disappointed' and also that they were 'willing to curtail the activities of GSAs in the metros provided we are not placed in an uncompetitive situation'.



Dan Brown, Managing Director, BA's overseas

Tower Air Files in New Fares

It was almost before dawn that Tower Air has gone ahead and filed its (or the DOT's) a lower fare. They wanted it to be understood right from the start that this would be a real move. More than anything else, for air line operators to send a clear message to the media that they were serious and would wish to work with the media. "What we have proposed is a 25 to 30 per cent lower fare than the present



Vipin Khanna

Frankly Said ...



"Shouldn't that read: 'Have you anything left?'"

Then (1994)



Balbir Mayal
Chairman
GSA Sub-committee, TAAI

From the Archive

Balbir Mayal, Managing Director, New Airways Travels, was the Chairman of the GSA Sub-committee for Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) 25 years ago, and has been raising his voice for members' issues since then.

A veteran in the industry and a fearless speaker, Mayal was also the TAAI President from 2003-2005, and is an active member of the association even today.

Now (2019)



Balbir Mayal
Managing Director
New Airways Travels

137 peaks for adventure

In a positive move for adventure enthusiasts, the government has opened 137 mountain peaks for foreigners desirous of obtaining Mountaineering Visa (MX). The move has been lauded by the adventure tour industry.



Addressing the demand to open more mountain peaks for mountaineering and trekking, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has announced that the government will unveil 137 mountain peaks, which will be located in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal



Capt. Swadesh Kumar
President, Adventure Tour Operators
Association of India (ATOAI)

Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim, to foreigners who want to obtain Mountaineering Visa (MX) for climbing/ trekking. While the highest number of 51 peaks have been opened to foreigners in Uttarakhand, 15 peaks of Jammu & Kashmir have also been included in the list. The decision has been lauded by the adventure travel industry in India.

Capt. Swadesh Kumar, President, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI), shared his joy and said, "The Association has been pushing very hard for this since many years. It is a positive step."

Expressing happiness on opening of the Kanchenjunga, Kumar added, "It is the best decision as no one has climbed that peak from the Indian side. Opening of many mountains

in Sikkim would augment new avenues for mountain climbing for the state."

Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (I/C), Government of India, also expressed that it is a historic step towards promoting adventure tourism in the country.

Highlighting the challenges on the same, Kumar added, "One

circular, which needs to be rectified. We have written to the MOT and MHA to get it rectified. If they are allowing us to climb 114 mountains with tourist visa, we want the newly-opened peaks also to be climbed with a normal tourist visa."

Kumar claimed that India can offer huge potential in mountaineering. "Seventy-five per cent of the Himalayas are

“It is a positive step, however, if they are allowing us to climb 114 mountains with tourist visa, we want these peaks also to be climbed with a tourist visa”

of the biggest challenges is that according to the circular, MHA wants people to take Mountaineering Visa (MX) for these peaks. I think that is a typographical error on the part of the government in the

with us, but we only have 40 expeditions, when we can actually afford to have 200. Now, we wish that the Siachen glacier peaks are also opened for mountaineers," he shared. 📌



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Educate clients on conduct

Condemning the Bali incident that went viral with an Indian family being accused of theft by a hotel, the industry says there is an urgent need to educate clients on how to conduct themselves outside or within the country.



Mahendra Vakharia
President
OTOAI

“Though not all Indian travellers are the same, sadly, the Bali incident will be generalised. We have a set of rules to educate OTOAI members about this. However, considering social media reactions, we will create a set of guidelines that each member can put up on their website or give to clients during document handover. We will also have these on our website.”



PP Khanna
President
ADTOI

“Just as the government has guidelines for tour operators for business, there need to be guidelines for travellers as well. It is important to educate our own people on behaviour. Travellers' conduct is also part of responsible tourism and as an association, we will be educating our members to further educate their clients on how to conduct themselves.”



Pradip Lulla
Acting President & VP
TAFI

“We don't generally train our members in educating their clients about behaviour when travelling, but the Association is considering having a White Paper that talks about the dos and don'ts for clients to observe. A warning and education on how travellers could be recorded and penalties imposed on such actions can act as deterrents.”

Inputs by TT Bureau



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President
FHRAI

“Tourists of all nationalities, at one point or another, have indulged in such behaviour. Hotels that place tent cards in guest rooms informing guests of what needs to be purchased, reduce the probability of such incidents. It's not easy to educate a guest as it can be misinterpreted, bordering on insult. Handling this would have to be done sensitively, if needed at all.”



Kajal Chandan
Marketing Manager
Lords Hotels and Resorts

“It is important that hotels tighten security measures at the time guests check-in and check-out. This incident is least likely to happen in our hotels since we have a policy of baggage check prior to check-in and check-out. Hotels and tour operators should educate the guest before they travel or check into a hotel. This will make the guest familiar with the rules of the place they are travelling to or the hotel they are staying at.”

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■ MOT releases Hindi version of Incredible India website

■ Travelport unveils blockchain solution to optimise hotel commission settlement

For more news, log on to:
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Rajkot isolated ahead of season

Footfalls into Rajkot have been drying out ever since the commercial hub of Gujarat has been without air connectivity with its main feeder market of Mumbai. This has affected travel agents catering to domestic and inbound traffic. Hotels have also felt the pinch.



Hazel Jain

Travel agents in Gujarat are hoping that Air India will keep its word and restart its Mumbai-Rajkot-Mumbai flight from September 27, 2019. This commercial hub of Saurashtra has been without any air connectivity to Mumbai for almost three months now. Air India, in principle, has agreed to start this flight after the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) strongly urged Ashwani Lohani, the national carrier's Chairman & Managing Director, to restart this route. However, at the time of going to press, the flight had not been loaded on the booking system.

“Rajkot is the gateway for not just Gir but also Dwarka, Somnath and other destinations that see high inbound traffic”



Randhirsingh Vaghela
Chairman
Gujarat Chapter, IATO

Sharing his worries, **Randhirsingh Vaghela**, Chairman, Gujarat Chapter, IATO, says, “The wildlife safari season will start in October and we

Randhirsingh Vaghela



Sanjay Mehta
IATO member and CEO
Trans Globe Travels

hope we get more flights into Rajkot from Mumbai. Air India diverted its flights from this route for Haj and it has been more than three months that we don't have a flight. This route has suffered majorly because of the Jet Airways collapse.”

Lauding IATO Vice President Rajiv Mehra for his consistent dialogue with Lohani for this,



Vaghela adds, “This Air India flight proposal is only because of IATO and Rajiv Mehra's persistence. Rajkot is the gateway for not just Gir but also Dwarka, Somnath and other destinations that see high inbound traffic. We are still worried about traffic getting affected and have spoken to IndiGo as well but to no avail.”

Another problem is the shorter runway at Rajkot airport that can only accommodate smaller

aircraft. Voicing his concern is **Sanjay Mehta**, IATO member and CEO, Trans Globe Travels, in Rajkot. He says, “It is pertinent that Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who hails from Rajkot, intervene and ensure immediate restoration of these flights. Even State Tourism Minister Jawahar Chavda, who is from the Saurashtra region, needs to intervene and ensure that Saurashtra's capital, Rajkot, get the required flight soon.”

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Cater to the domestic tourist

At the ADTOI Convention in Ahmedabad, the travel trade shared that the domestic traveller is the future of India's tourism sector. That said, to appeal to the well-travelled Indian tourist, amenities need to be reassessed.



Aashima Mehrotra
Director
Ministry of Tourism

“Iconic sites are a concept where to develop world-class amenities, we need to have a holistic outlook. This will give an impetus to domestic tourism. We have chosen 12 clusters, including 17 sites, to promote tourism. We don't want development to occur in a haphazard manner, so we are taking care of connectivity, hotel infrastructure, information on the place, and tourism facilitation centres.”



Ashwani Lohani
Chairman & Managing
Director, Air India

“Domestic tourism can be promoted through the five 'S' of tourism – *soochna* (information), *suvridha* (facilitation), *suraksha* (security), *sanrachna* (infrastructure), and *sehyog* (cooperation). Inter-regional and intra-regional tourism within a state needs to be encouraged. We, at Air India, are working on giving family holiday packages to encourage people to visit at least 15 destinations in the next three years.”



PP Khanna
President
ADTOI

“In India, domestic tourists travel 1.25 times in a year, whereas domestic tourists in the US and China travel five times and three times a year, respectively. With the help of improved infrastructure and a coordinated effort of the states, we can be number one in the world in domestic tourism, by 2025. Also, to keep MICE revenues within India and to be on a par with neighbouring countries, a reduced GST will help.”



Bimal Mehta
Chairman
ADTOI Gujarat Chapter

“The ADTOI convention this year has been supported by Gujarat Tourism. We would like to promote Gujarat, where we have the Dinosaur Fossil Park that's coming up in a big way. Even if you were to roam around for a month in this State, you would still find something new to see. Growth in tourism has been good, with a 12 to 15 per cent growth in domestic as well as inbound tourism.”



Himmat Anand
Founder
Tree of Life Hotels & Resorts

“Today, states need to share knowledge and data that will help enhance the business of the tour operator and increase domestic tourism. States need to move away from main cities and focus on hidden gems in terms of accommodation and experience. From knowledge studies, states need to move to trend studies, especially to cater to millennials. Every hotel is looking at the domestic tourism segment.”



Maitreyee Patel
Director
Pathfinders Holidays

“Domestic tourism holds a lot of value. India is a large country; we have some amazing destinations and hotels, and even infrastructure is getting better day-by-day. Depending on who's travelling where, there are various destinations to go to right from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, be it beach, religious, or wildlife tourism. We have a lot to offer within our own country.”

*Inputs by Kanchan Nath
from Ahmedabad*



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Japan **AUTUMN** Surprises

Nature's Wonderland

In autumn, Koyo or 'Red-leaves' paint the entire land from the north to the south, in brilliant flashes of red, creating inspiringly beautiful settings. Like the tea ceremony, Koyo viewing too is an introspective personal experience for many. From September to November crowds flock to witness the surprising dazzle at Hokkaido, Akita, Kyoto and other major spots.



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New ERA for Rail Europe

The company has been investing in technology to bring in transformation, and has introduced a powerful new system called ERA that issues e-tickets.



TT Bureau

With an aim to usher in a new era of technological innovation, Rail Europe India has launched ERA – Easy Rail Access – that will slowly phase out its old system called Euronet, reveals **Srijit Nair**, Regional Sales Director, Greater India (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan), Rail Europe, who joined the



Srijit Nair
Regional Sales Director (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal & Pakistan), Rail Europe

“All tickets can be booked as e-tickets on ERA. By end of this year, we will have most of our other trains like TGV Lyria, Eurostar, and Thalys online”

company in April 2019. “We are currently investing a lot in technology and we will transform a lot of things within Rail Europe. One of the main areas where you will see this will be in our system. We have been using

Euronet platform for many years and we have felt a need for change. We are creating a new distribution system called ERA, which was launched in March 2019, with a few preferred partners,” he says. Currently,

only a few train journeys like the Swiss Travel E-Pass, Renfe day trains, and the Swedish day trains are live on the new system. Nair adds, “By end of this year, we will have most of our other trains like TGV Lyria, Eurostar, and Thalys online. We are currently in transition and we will do it in phases. Euronet will phase out by 2020. The change in platform is important as it allows more ease and convenience to our partners. The platform on ERA is very powerful and all the tickets can be booked as e-tickets, which is the need of the hour.”

This move comes because of the company’s underlying strategy to be a technology partner for the B2B segment so they can book with ease. “We are therefore looking at building other train products that are outside of Europe,” Nair says. 📌

Royal journey on track

Worldwide Rail Journeys (WRJ) has made a massive investment and a bulk purchase of Palace on Wheels cabins from 2019 to 2021.



TT Bureau

Rail tourism specialists, Worldwide Rail Journeys (WRJ), are now offering maximum pre-purchase of cabins with India’s prestigious Palace on Wheels royal train for the seasons 2019, 2020 and even 2021! WRJ offers journeys on luxury trains such as the Palace on Wheels, Deccan Odyssey, The Golden Chariot, Maharaja’s



Manish Saini
Director
Worldwide Rail Journeys

“Collaborations and enquiries are invited; I request the travel trade to make the most of this and give their clientele an unparalleled experience”

Express, Deluxe Buddhist Train, Majestic Train, and Heritage Toy Trains of India.

Manish Saini, Director, Worldwide Rail Journeys, says, “Aficionados of luxury rail

tourism are in for some really exciting news. We have made a noteworthy investment with Palace on Wheels and have made a bulk pre-purchase of its cabins for 2021 also. This came only three months after a

massive investment in acquiring cabins of the luxury train for the travelling seasons of 2019 and 2020 with the total investment of approximately ₹ 4.96 crore.” Those keen on booking Palace on Wheels can find out about WRJ cabin availability by checking the inventory online for trips in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

WRJ has been busy extending its services across the length and breadth of the country and also internationally. Their latest endeavour towards strengthening the network with trade partners saw them opening an office in Mumbai. “Collaborations, partnerships and enquiries are invited. I request the travel trade to make the most of this great opportunity to give their clientele an unparalleled experience of luxury train travel in India,” Saini adds. 📌

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Fly daily, Delhi to Incheon

Korean Air has increased its frequency on the Incheon-Delhi route from five days a week to daily, which would further improve connections to US and Japan for transferring passengers.



TT Bureau

Korean Air is all set to increase its frequency of direct passenger flights between Delhi and Incheon (South Korea) from five days a week to daily, starting September 2019. The South Korean carrier has been operating on the Delhi-Incheon route since December 2016.

Talking about the increased frequency, **Han Sang Wook**, Regional Manager of Korean Air Delhi, said, "Due to the recent improvement



Han Sang Wook
Regional Manager
Korean Air Delhi

of South Korea-India relations, the importance of the Incheon-Delhi route has increased. We are very pleased to operate the route as a daily service and hope the capacity increase contributes to further expansion of relations between the two countries."

September 1 to October 26

The Delhi-Incheon flight will depart from Delhi at 19:40 hours on all days except Wednesday, when it will depart at 20:35 hours. The return flight from Incheon will depart at 13:35 hours on all days except Wednesday (when it will depart at 14:40 hours), arriving in Delhi at 18:05 hours. On Wednesday, it will arrive in Delhi at 19:10 hours.

October 27 to March 28

The flight will depart daily from Delhi at 19:40 hours, while the return flight from Incheon will depart at 12:45 hours and arrive in Delhi at 18:20 hours on all days except Wednesday, when it will depart at 12:30 hours and arrive in Delhi at 18:20 hours.

"We hope the capacity increase contributes to further expansion of relations between the two countries"

With the increased frequency, passengers from Delhi will get unparalleled travel options from Incheon International

Airport Terminal 2, Korean Air's world-class hub that opened in 2018. In fact, in the first half of 2019, on average,

a third of passengers on the Delhi-Incheon flight transferred at Incheon to travel to other cities including cities in the Americas, such as Toronto, San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Atlanta. Korean Air, with Delta Air Lines, also connects 80 Asian cities to over 290 US cities.

Passengers flying from Delhi enjoy an easier connection to certain US cities, including Boston, the newest addition to the airline's network.

Korean Air also offers flights to various Japanese cities including Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya,

for those travelling to Japan from Delhi. Korean Air uses a 218-seater A330-200 on its Delhi route. The airline currently operates a direct passenger flight to Incheon from Mumbai as well, which flies three days a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. ✈



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New initiatives for a better experience

Rupinder Brar, Additional Director General (ADG), MOT, claims that the experience of tourists coming to India can only get better.



Nisha Verma

Rupinder Brar comes from Indian Revenue Services (IRS), 1990 batch. Before assuming her latest role at MOT, Brar was serving as the Commissioner of Income Tax and was posted in Mumbai. She comes in place of Meenakshi Sharma (IAS), who is now the DG, Ministry of Tourism.



Rupinder Brar
Additional Director General, MOT
Government of India

Soon after joining at MOT, Brar shares, "I still have to be officially allocated my portfolio under the umbrella of MOT. Anything that goes into making India a better and a more attractive destination from all parts of the world is the focus of MOT. The target we have is to increase the tourist flow to at least double. We hope that not

only do we double the numbers but increase it to even more than that. With this approach, whatever it takes in terms of improving the facilities or developing the centres of heritage, culture, adventure, eco-tourism, and everything that is related to interests of tourists is going to be in my ambit."

Khajuraho footfalls take a hit

Tourism in Khajuraho has suffered terribly amidst lack of infrastructural development and poor connectivity. Tour operators and guides here shut shop for three days, demanding better connectivity to the destination.



Manas Dwivedi

Madhya Pradesh's global tourist hotspot, Khajuraho, has been facing a tough time receiving tourist footfalls, as local stakeholders blame poor connectivity to the city a contributing factor.

Tour operators are left with no choice but to omit



The number of foreign tourists visiting Khajuraho reduced by 8% between 2016 and 2018. The decline continues this year, too.



Domestic tourists increased from 2,79,390 in 2016 to 3,61,594 in 2018.



Khajuraho gets the largest foreign tourist footfalls in the state of Madhya Pradesh.



Khajuraho, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, from itineraries. According to **Anshu Awasthi**, Vice President, Dharmar Guide Association of Khajuraho,

ho, foreign tourist footfall has dropped by 35-40 per cent as a result. "We majorly get tourists from European countries but in recent times, lack of proper air and rail connectivity has affected tourism. Post the Jet Airways closure, there was no direct flight to the city. Air India has now announced a daily direct flight, but we still need better

rail connectivity to major cities like Varanasi, Agra and Delhi," he said.

Following a decline in footfalls, the business of all allied sectors including local shops selling souvenirs, small restaurants, and hotels has declined. This has also led to job cuts.

After a virtual shutdown of the city called by tour operators, guides and other stakeholders for three days to demand action from the authorities, Air India decided to start its direct flight to Khajuraho from October 27.

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Hahn Air on NDC platform

Hahn Air is extending its suite of products for partner airlines and travel agencies, with a solution powered by IATA's New Distribution Capability (NDC) standard.

TT Bureau

On August 16, the German airline and ticketing expert welcomed its first set of passengers holding NDC-enabled Hahn Air tickets on one of its scheduled flights from Luxembourg to Düsseldorf.

"We are leveraging on the expertise we have acquired during our 20 years of being the leader in airline distribution solutions as well as our involvement in IATA activities driving and developing

Agents will find exclusive carriers and flights, and can continue to use their preferred form of payment

the NDC standard from the very beginning," says Christopher Allison, Head of NDC at Hahn Air. The NDC platform by Hahn Air will benefit partner airlines in



Christopher Allison (centre) welcomes the first passengers travelling with Hahn Air's NDC-enabled tickets.

many ways. Airlines, whether they are already NDC capable or not, can add an additional distribution channel and thereby

solution, so they save time, money and resources. On the other hand, travel agents, regardless of which system they are using, can easily connect to Hahn Air's NDC platform. Only one implementation is needed to gain access to multiple partner airlines of Hahn Air. They will find exclusive carriers and flights via Hahn Air's NDC platform.

Travel agencies can continue to use their preferred forms of payment in almost any market.

Narita-Bengaluru in 2020

Japan Airlines is set to launch a new frequency from Narita to Bengaluru in 2020, focused on both business and leisure travellers.

TT Bureau

Claiming that 2018 was the year for setting the pace of growth in India for at least the next two years, Shinya Naruse, Country Manager (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Maldives), Japan Airlines (JAL), said that they are seeing an increase in demand. He added, "The inaugural flight from Bengaluru to Narita will start operating in the summer schedule of 2020. We already have a daily flight between Delhi and Narita. Currently, we cater to the business sector demand."

Naruse added that the expansion of Haneda Airport in Tokyo in 2020 will open doors



Shinya Naruse
Country Manager (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Maldives)
Japan Airlines

It would allow us to provide a more convenient flight route and expand the seat capacity between Japan and India

to a new route between Delhi-Tokyo. "It would allow us to provide a more convenient

flight route for Indian and Japanese travellers. At the same time, the seat capacity between Japan and India would expand. Our focus has been business, but we have now started going into the regional and student markets as well," he shared.

He added that Bengaluru was chosen as a destination because of the potential it held

for not just South India but the entire country. While the exit of Jet Airways from the Indian aviation scene has given many airlines new slots, JAL is not pitching for any of them as of now.

The non-stop flight is proposed to fly daily between the two cities on a Boeing 787-8 (SS8) aircraft. It is expected to depart from Bengaluru at 02:45 hrs and arrive in Narita at 14:55 hrs, then depart from Narita at 18:25 hrs and arrive in Bengaluru at 00:05 hrs.



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After-hours in Nevada

This Western US state brings together the best of entertainment and food to serve the ever-inquisitive Indian traveller, making their trip worth its while.



TT Bureau

Known for its entertainment, dining and hospitality, not a minute goes idle in Nevada. Besides being home to world-famous casinos and uber-luxe hotels oft visited by Hollywood celebrities, the Silver State also offers visitors interesting eating-out options through a variety of cuisines and quirky restaurants.



Eataly, Las Vegas
Park MGM also debuted Eataly this December, an

Italian marketplace featuring two restaurants, a chef's table, three bars, a cafe, six fresh counters for dining and shopping, and over 5,000 retail products. The location is the first in southwestern United States and occupies over 40,000 sqft.

The Spa at Silver Legacy, Reno

The Spa at Silver Legacy is northern Nevada's newest and most expansive luxury wellness destination, with a 21,000 sqft treatment facility. The Spa includes The Salon, offering premier services in hair, skin and beauty; The Boutique, offering luxury fashion accessories and premium wellness essentials; and the Fitness Center, featuring virtual reality trails on state-of-the-art 'Technogym' equipment.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Reno

As part of a master renovation of over \$100 million, Ruth's Chris adds to the fine-dining offerings of the three interconnected resort-casinos (Silver Legacy, Eldorado, and Circus Reno).

The Sparks Nugget, Reno

This is set to open the region's first true Chophouse this year, mimicking that of Anthony Bourdain's inside the M Resort in Las Vegas.

Park MGM, Las Vegas

The newest destination on the Las Vegas Strip, Park MGM targets travellers seeking a high-end, intimate experience that favours quality over quantity. New nightlife offerings include Juniper Cocktail Lounge, an all-gin bar. On the Record, a speakeasy stocked with vinyl records, also opened on New Year's Eve 2019. The resort is home to the Park Theatre where Cher, Lady Gaga, Aerosmith and Britney Spears have booked residencies for the year.

NoMad, Las Vegas

Located on Park MGM's top floors, NoMad is a hotel-within-a-hotel that opened in October 2018. The luxury resort offers 293 distinct rooms and suites.

A green foundation in Bihar

Tourism Association of Bihar celebrated its Foundation Day on August 16, where guests were gifted plants as a token of appreciation for their participation.



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Mumbai opens to Levi

Visit Levi hosted a networking evening for the trade on August 9, to introduce them to the year-round destination. Cocktails and dinner ensued...



jüSTa looks to the North

jüSTa will be opening a property in Delhi by end of this year, and is looking at prospective projects in Jaipur and Noida as well.



TT Bureau

Rajasthan has been a focus for jüSTa Hotels & Resorts, claims **Rohit Katyal**, its National Sales Head. Speaking about their latest property in the state, jüSTa Sajjangarh, he says, "With this addition, we have close to 117 keys

within Udaipur. We believe that there could be greater opportunities for MICE and weddings. We are also eyeing a project in Jaipur, but nothing has been finalised yet. We will also come up with another property in South Delhi, which would open by end of this year."

Katyal further reveals that they are looking at more opportunities in Delhi-NCR. "We are focusing on getting the right opportunity in Noida, which could be a property of 50-80 rooms on a management contract or revenue-share basis. We are also looking at Gurugram. This would be a step ahead of what we had done in Chennai, in terms of a design hotel," shares Katyal.



Rohit Katyal
National Sales Head
jüSTa Hotels & Resorts

With multiple properties in and around Udaipur, Katyal claims that they are looking at tapping the wedding market as well. "jüSTa Rajputana has a pillarless banqueting space of 6,000 sqft, with a 2000 sqft pre-function area and three separate meeting spaces of 2000 sqft each. The property has three lawns and can easily accommodate about 1000 people for a gathering. jüSTa Sajjangarh has a banqueting space and lawns which are 20,000 sqft," he says.

In terms of creating awareness about the brand, he claims that they have come a long way in the last 14 years and have created a space for themselves.

"We have a portfolio of small, mid-size luxury hotels and boutique properties that stand out because of their hospitality and services. For creating awareness about the brand, we are participating in a number of travel trade fairs and we have been doing a lot of roadshows in multiple cities for corporates as well as the travel trade in both national and international markets. We also have a digital marketing team and people across six cities who update clients on the latest at Justa and work to boost footfalls," he shares.



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Qingdao	Delhi	SC8829	6:00	13:10	MON/FRI
Delhi	Jinan	SC8828	15:45	3:15	WED/SUN
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NokScoot adds routes

To develop its network in Asia and provide more options to Indian and Japanese passengers, NokScoot is introducing new routes, reinforcing its Bangkok hub.



TT Bureau

Thailand-based low-cost-carrier NokScoot is currently working on improving connectivity for its passengers between Delhi-Tokyo and Osaka. Giam Ming Toh, Deputy CEO, NokScoot Airlines, says that they are working with Nok Air to provide greater connectivity from/to major domestic destinations in Thailand.



Giam Ming Toh
Deputy CEO
NokScoot Airlines

“We predict high utilisation of our expanded fleet to continue our route expansion across Asia during 2019”

“Passengers will be able to book their flights on the NokScoot website and issue a single ticket purchase for their journey combining Delhi with Tokyo or Osaka. Additionally, the new B777-200 aircraft has joined our fleet in July 2019 and another aircraft delivery is

due in September this year. We predict high utilisation of our expanded fleet to continue our route expansion across Asia during 2019. New services, flight frequency increases, and aircraft deliveries will help further strengthen our Bangkok hub by providing customers

with faster and more convenient connectivity to and from North and South Asia into Thailand in 2019,” Toh explains.

Talking about the prominence of the Indian market for the airline, he says that passenger load on the Delhi flight has been very exciting, based on the capacity they carry. He also says that Thailand is one of the most sought-after destinations for an Indian traveller as it creates a demand for all age groups. “Travel from Tier-II and Tier-III cities has seen incremental opportunities due to the addition of more middle and upper-middle class families. Connection to major airports has now increased opportunities to travel,” says Toh.

NokScoot airline has announced an increase in its daily Bangkok-Tokyo flight to 11 weekly, effective October 28, 2019 to March 28, 2020. ✈

Asia Leisure in India

Sri Lanka-based hotel chain, Asia Leisure Hotels, has turned its focus on India to attract the vast outbound towards its shores – with a formidable proposition.



Hazel Jain

David Anthony Jones, Director (Sales & Marketing), Asia Leisure Hotels, was visiting India recently to meet travel agents in a few cities to understand the dynamics of this ever-evolving market. For him, he says, it was just about getting informed. Represented



David Anthony Jones
Director (Sales & Marketing)
Asia Leisure Hotels

his interactions with the trade here, he got a lot of inquiries for Tamarind Hill in Galle and The River House in Balapitiya, which is perfect for a small family/friend groups. “What we are offering is single-property packages as well as two-property combination packages. The length of stay from India may not be that high though – maybe three to five nights. We are targeting travellers who are looking for off-beat experiences, who want to explore the country and are not in for just a one-night stop-over,” Jones adds.

What he has also learned is that the Indian market likes to do a lot of activities while balancing it out with free time. “So, we are ready to be flexible for our travellers from India and allow them to change and customise our standard packages. Our activities include village tours, water activities, eating at a local home, etc.,” he says. ✈

Current inventory

Le Grand Galle in Galle
57 rooms/suites

Tamarind Hill in Galle
12 rooms/suites

The River House in
Balapitiya: 5 suites

Shinagawa Beach in
Balapitiya: 26 rooms/suites

Taprobana in Wadduwa
27 rooms/suites

The Habitat in Kosgoda
28 rooms/suites

by LINKIN Reps in India, Asia Leisure Hotels is a group of six unique properties under three different categories, all located in different parts of Sri Lanka.

Speaking about India, Jones says, “We are only just scratching the surface with this market. India is such a big market and we are here on a 10-day visit to meet a few agents.”

The group is looking to open its seventh property in Galle next year. Jones said that during

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On the menu are the steepest glacier in Canton Valais, a rewarding route along River Vispa, a historic Benedictine monastery, Switzerland's Grand Canyon, the Rhaetian Railway landmark, the loop tunnel between Preda and Bergün, and more. A journey through the Swiss Alps doesn't get better than this. Or maybe it does—if you reserve a spot for yourself in the train's Excellence Class wagon. The experience on board one of the world's most famous trains now becomes twice as exclusive with the choice of traveling in the Excellence Class. Featuring 20 individual seats and With a state-of-the-art design and 20 individual seats, the Excellence Class has now become a permanent addition to the Glacier Express. It comes with a Glacier Bar, which serves aperitifs and cocktails, a regional five-course gourmet menu paired with select wines, and a special compass on the ceiling to keep one abreast of the many twists and turns en route. A tablet with several infotainment options also comes in the package. To top it all, a concierge hosts you throughout the journey with personalised care and quality service. Eight hours on board the world's slowest express train could not be more luxurious!



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Incredible India for WTM

Incredible India has been shortlisted in two categories, for Best National Tourism Board Campaign and Best Destination Campaign - Country, at WTM.



The Incredible India campaign, run by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has made it to the second shortlist unveiled for the International Travel & Tourism Awards (ITTA) 2019 presented by WTM. More than 90 nominations have been shortlisted for these awards from across the world.



by the organisers in the second shortlist.

The Incredible India campaign has been nominated along with campaigns of NTOs such as Azerbaijan Tourism Board, Tobago Tourism, St Kitts, Slovenian Tourist Board,

2019 compared to the inaugural event last year. I feel, this alone shows huge support from the industry. We have been delighted with both the volume and quality of the entries, with contenders entering from across the globe – from destinations as diverse as St Kitts, Jordan, Kerala and Wales – and they demonstrate how tourism is playing a vital role in the economies of different cities and regions. Our judges have been greatly impressed by the exceptional quality of entries, and those who are on the shortlist know they have reached a very high standard – they will be among the best in the world.”

The winners will be announced to an audience of more than 500 leading industry figures, including Heads of tourism and government ministers, during an awards ceremony at Magazine, London. 🇮🇳

“We have been delighted with both the volume and quality of entries; they demonstrate how tourism is playing a vital role in different economies”

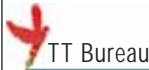
The ITTAs, supported by UNWTO, welcomed a selection of distinguished judges to assess the first tranche of categories, and the contenders have been unveiled now. A total of eight award categories have been unveiled

Croatian National Tourist Board, and Tourism New Zealand.

Sharing her views, Nicole Smart, Organiser, International Travel & Tourism Awards, said, “We are amazed to see even more shortlisted entries for

Tamil Nadu with TTM

With its focus on inbound tourism, CII Tamil Nadu Travel Mart (TTM) is offering four post-event tours that will showcase the remote areas of Tamil Nadu.



Tamil Nadu will soon see an influx of buyers from within India and other countries to attend CII Tamil Nadu Travel Mart (TTM) scheduled from September 19-22 at Chennai Trade Centre. They will meet sellers from across Tamil Nadu, showcasing products from various categories at this platform. T Natarajan, President, Tamil Nadu Travel Mart Society, who is also the CEO of GRT Hotels & Resorts, says, “We currently have about 150 buyers from abroad and 400 domestic buyers, but we haven’t frozen the numbers just yet. The model we are following at TTM is that buyers make prior appointments with sellers for both business days and hold fruitful discussions.”

TTM is a B2B conclave except for the last day, when it is open to public. The venue will also be a hotspot for Medical Value



T Natarajan
President
Tamil Nadu Travel Mart Society

“Our Society’s objective is inbound tourism. Tamil Nadu can offer all forms of tourism and is already well-known across the world”

Travel with a parallel event called CII Tamil Nadu Medical Travel Mart, organised in association with Health Department, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Participants can also opt for one of four post-event tour

programmes that will take them to the inner regions of Tamil Nadu. Most of these tours are already getting booked, the President claims. “Our Society’s objective is inbound tourism. Tamil Nadu can offer all forms of tourism and is already well-known across the world. The TTM Society is now projecting hitherto unknown aspects of Tamil Nadu spread across its various districts,” Natarajan adds.

He says that after almost 40-odd years, TTM is taking place in Tamil Nadu thanks to the efforts of the Government of Tamil Nadu, its Department of Tourism, the Government of India, CII, and all stakeholders. 🇮🇳

adtoi convenes in Ahmedabad

The ninth convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), supported by Gujarat Tourism, was held at Hyatt Regency Ahmedabad between August 16 and 18, 2019. It was attended by a host of dignitaries and officials from Government of Gujarat and MOT.





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Factor in the THRILL

Thrill begins at the Thrill Factory, an adrenaline boosting destination in Rishikesh that offers spectacular options for the adventure seeker. If that is not your cup of tea, the entertainment destination also provides arcade games, cricket and football simulators, a bowling alley, and an extensive food menu.



Thrill Factory is an adventure and entertainment destination that provides an end-to-end product to the customer, from rides and indoor gaming to scrumptious

food options and customised packages. Thrill Factory's adventure line-up offers reverse bungee, rope course with 20 obstacles and night treks, while indoor options



include a bowling alley, cricket and football simulators, arcade games, pool table, and video games.

What's more? Not a minute goes idle with Thrill Factory's

- Highlights
- ❖ NIMS-certified trainers
 - ❖ Pretzel, Camp and Black Diamond equipment
 - ❖ Team building activities
 - ❖ Training and development sessions
 - ❖ In-house bakery and restaurant

amazing entertainment options that include DJ nights and live band performances. With a couple of other entertainment options in the pipeline, Thrill Factory will soon offer freefall jump, a zipline, jumaring, and a micro-brewery as well.

Multi-cuisine restaurant
Besides coming up with world-class entertainment, Thrill Factory provides the perfect setting to satiate those hungry stomachs. The multi-cuisine restaurant serves Italian, Chinese, *tandoori*, North Indian and Continental

food. There's never a dearth of options at Thrill Factory! The destination also has an in-house bakery that dishes out delicious cakes, cookies and pastries for the sweet-toothed.

Customised packages
If tailor-made packages are what you seek for your clients, look no further than Thrill Factory. Here, packages can be custom-

Booking through Agents
Powered by Kingdom of Dreams, the destination specialises in customising staff retreats, team outings, events, and adventure trips. It works with all agents on a TAC model.

Moreover, Thrill Factory's rates are quite competitive since Rishikesh is a region where people don't really come to spend a lot. Agents can do



ised to include sessions on personality development that are conducted by experts. To top it all, there are stress-buster sessions like Yoga, meditation, Qigong, Zumba and much more.

Thrill Factory also arranges for hotels, camps and transportation, besides organising sight-seeing of exotic, undiscovered places in Rishikesh, and enabling guests to indulge in adventurous pursuits like rafting. The destination hosts staff retreats, team outings, and conducts adventure trips.

their bookings by getting in touch with Thrill Factory's team which takes care of all B2B transactions. For more information, log on to the website at www.thrillfactory.in

Connectivity & Stay

Thrill Factory is just 10 kms away from Lakshman Jhula and provides a shuttle service from Rishikesh to the property. As for stay options nearby, it has partnered with properties that cater to every kind of traveller, be it corporate groups, families, FITs, or luxury travellers and couples.



Reverse bungee

Enjoy the rain in Madhya Pradesh



The state is well-known for its wildlife, palaces, culture and history, but not many know that the rainy season makes everything here all the more green, fascinating, and breathtaking. Here are the top five spots a Madhya Pradesh travel itinerary can't afford to ignore.

From Palaeolithic settlements to ruling begums and from the Vindhya Mountains to river valleys, Madhya Pradesh is the perfect getaway for the adventure lover, the history buff, the backpacker, even more so during the monsoon when everything 'turns a new leaf'.

Mandu

Mandu, during monsoon, is a sight to behold! At the threshold, it welcomes you with Kakrah Khoh waterfall, a captivating sight that is sure to forever be etched in your memory.

One thing you just cannot afford to miss in Mandu is Jahaz Mahal that floats on the Kapur and Munj lakes and stands tall against the lush green grass. During monsoon, the water level reaches the edge of the monument, giving it a ship-like appearance and its name. Your



visit to Mandu isn't complete if you've missed Rani Roopmati Pavilion. It commands a striking view of River Narmada that meanders through the plains like a silver lining.

Pachmarhi

For those who love mist-covered, rain-soaked mountains, Pachmarhi is just the hill

station for you. A bonus to your trip here is that you can borrow a bicycle from any Madhya Pradesh Tourism (MPT) property and simply go out exploring the scenic trails of Pachmarhi. With smooth roads and pleasant weather, you can head out for an adventurous expedition. Travellers can unwind at MPT Champak

season brings out the hidden magic of Madhya Pradesh's capital city. Begin the day with a cycling experience in Van Vihar National Park! After touring the Park, head to Wind & Waves restaurant (approximately 18 minutes from Van Vihar). This place will give you a breathtaking view of upper lake.

Another scenic spot is Bharat Bhavan, a centre for perform-

and soothing to the eye. You can also enjoy a pleasant stay at MPT Tawa Resort, which is an experience in itself. Be camera-ready here and return with a bagful of memories!

Amarkantak

Amarkantak, a pilgrim town in Madhya Pradesh, is one of the hidden gems of the state. When the Sonmuda, Kapil Dhara and Dugdhdhara waterfalls come alive in the



Bungalow, MPT Rock End Manor, MPT Glen View, or MPT Satpura Retreat.

Bhopal

A beautiful amalgamation of natural scenery and rich history, Bhopal looks amazingly pretty during monsoon. The

ing & visual arts, and a short distance from the boat club.

Tawa

An ideal monsoon getaway, Tawa comes alive with picturesque views during the monsoon. Everything you see here turns green, fresh, clean

monsoon, a visit to at least one of them is a must, but if you are in no mood to step out in that weather, worry not! MPT Holiday Homes allows you to enjoy fantastic views from your very own room. Get yourself ready with a cutting-chai with scrumptious snacks.





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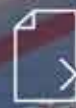
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


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Bring home the Chinese guest

The Chinese market can open a wealth of tourism opportunities for India, if only we were to overcome some barriers to it through safe and clean transportation infrastructure, better preparedness with regard to the Chinese language, and more information on the many attractions and activities for Chinese tourists.

As the country with the largest population in the world, China reported a total of 1.395 billion inhabitants as of the end of 2018. The growth of China's population has almost plateaued and is expected to peak in 2030 at 1.45 billion inhabitants. It has also been predicted that 180,000,000 border crossings from Mainland China will be made in 2019. Shouldn't India, then, make the most of this massive outbound movement? Data shared by COTRI states that travelling to India is affordable for almost 150 million Chinese. India has a share of less than 0.2 per cent of the whole China outbound tourism market. While the share of Chinese travellers increased to 2.6 per cent in 2015, the share of Chinese arrivals among total Indian arrivals reached a historical high at 3 per cent in H1 2019.

Understanding the Chinese traveller

Market Segment	Interest	Services Expected
Families (with kids)	Sightseeing, beach, national parks, wildlife, museums, local food, shopping	Four-star and five-star hotels, package ticket for family, Mandarin-speaking services
Couples	Wedding, honeymoon, shopping, experiencing daily Indian life (festivals, food and clothes, etc.)	Wedding/honeymoon services, photography, four-star and five-star hotels, thematic hotels, local tour guides, courses experiencing local life (cooking Indian food, making Indian handicraft, learning dancing, etc.)
Friends	Relaxation, cultural activities, festivals, outdoor activities	Thematic hotel or B&B with Indian characteristics, courses experiencing local life (cooking Indian food, making Indian handicraft, learning dancing, etc.)
Individuals	Relaxation, culture activities, outdoor activities	Four-star and five-star hotels, thematic hotel or B&B with Indian characteristics, local tour guides, courses experiencing local life (cooking Indian food, making Indian handicraft, learning dancing, etc.)

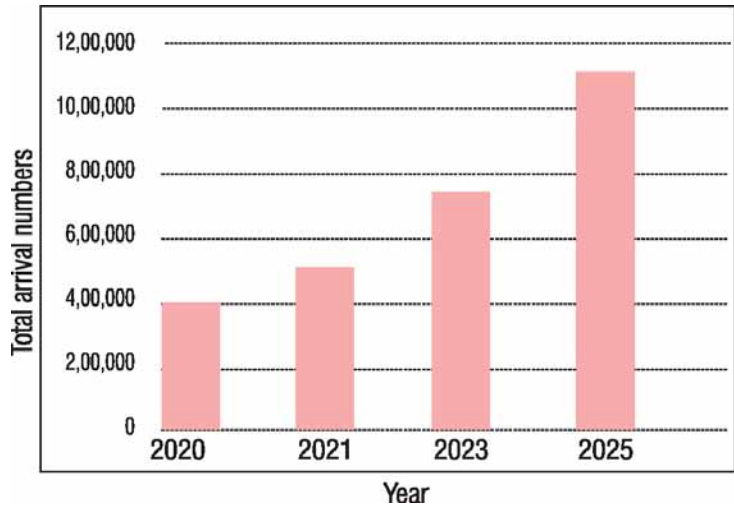
Characteristics of Chinese travellers to India

India	Absolute Number	Share of Total
Total Arrivals From China, All Destinations (4 th quarter 2018)	40,000,000	–
Total Arrivals From China, India (4 th quarter 2018)	84,487	0.2%
Age		
0-29	13,518	16%
30-49	57,451	68%
50+	13,518	16%
Gender		
Male	54,917	65%
Female	29,571	35%
Education Level		
Up to High School	18,587	22%
Up to College	25,346	30%
Above College	40,554	48%
Residence in China		
First-tier City	52,382	62%
Second-tier City	23,656	28%
Third and Lower-tier City	8,449	10%
Purpose of Visit		
Corporate	38,019	45%
MICE	8,449	10%
Leisure	21,122	25%
VFR	4,224	5%
Other	12,673	15%
Organisation of Travel		
Non-Package Tour Traveller	50,692	60%
Package Tour Traveller	33,795	40%
Type of Accommodation		
Accommodation up to 2-star	12,673	15%
Accommodation 3-star	15,208	18%
Accommodation 4/5-star	56,607	67%

Forecast for Chinese arrivals to India: 2019-2025

The high-end market will have the slowest growth rate for the overall departures from China, as the top 10 per cent of the Chinese society are already active travellers. The mid-level market and the mass market will grow stronger, fuelled by new travellers from lower-tier cities. However, for India, it can be expected that given a successful branding strategy, the high-end market will see a stronger than average growth, especially if suitable touristic products are offered in fields like health, nature, and special interest which are unique for India.

Expected Chinese arrivals to India



Accessing the Chinese market

The diversity of India's cultures, landscapes, heritage, and possible activities makes it possible to cater to the many specific interests of Chinese visitors at competitive prices. OTAs like Ctrip and Tuniu are important for the mid-level and Customised Tours/FIT market. Traditional tour operators like CTS (China Travel Services) have their role to play for the package tour mass-market.

Source: China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI)



Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

Incredible India



Confederation of Indian Industry



Tamilnadu
Travel Mart Society



19-22 September 2019
Chennai Trade Centre, Nandambakkam, Chennai, Tamilnadu, India



HIGHLIGHTS

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Cultural programmes showcasing the state's rich traditional folk dance, music, martial arts, religious activities like Homam, Yogam, etc

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EVENT TALK

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Indiva Marketing Roadshow	Mumbai	3-4
India Sales Associates B2B Roadshow	Bengaluru	4
Robinvillle Tourism Conclave	Jaipur	4
Beijing International Travel Mart	Beijing	4-5
India Sales Associates B2B Roadshow	Kolkata	5
Indiva Marketing Roadshow	Delhi	5-6
World Travel Market Asia	Philippines	5-6
India Sales Associates B2B Roadshow	Delhi	6
Robinvillle Tourism Conclave	Delhi	6
TTF	Surat	6-8
Azerbaijan Tourism Roadshow	Delhi	9
DCT Abu Dhabi Roadshow	Chandigarh	10
OTDYKH	Moscow	10-12
IMEX America	Las Vegas	10- 12
Azerbaijan Tourism Roadshow	Bengaluru	11
Switzerland Travel Experience	Delhi	11-12
Global MICE Summit	Nairobi, Kenya	11-13
DCT Abu Dhabi Roadshow	Ahmedabad	12
STB Cruise Forum	Delhi	12
35th IATO Convention	Kolkata	12-15
DCT Abu Dhabi Roadshow	Kolkata	13
Switzerland Travel Experience	Chennai	13
Azerbaijan Tourism Roadshow	Mumbai	13
TTF	Mumbai	13-15
Travel Luxury Show	Jaipur	14-15
Skål International World Congress	Miami	14-21
Switzerland Travel Experience	Kochi	16
GNT0 roadshow	Mumbai	16
Seychelles Tourism Roadshow	Chennai	16
Switzerland Travel Experience	Bengaluru	17
GNT0 roadshow	Pune	17
Seychelles Tourism Roadshow	Ahmedabad	18
GNT0 Roadshow	Kolkata	18
Switzerland Travel Experience	Mumbai	18-19
PATA Travel Mart	Aslana, Kazakhstan	18-20
Tamil Nadu Travel Mart	Chennai	19-22
GNT0 Roadshow	Kolkata	20
TTF	Pune	20-22
India Tourism Mart (ITM)	Delhi	23-25
ILTM North America	Riviera Maya	23-26
CTW Asia-Pacific	Bangkok	24-26
IITM	Mumbai	27-29

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

ASSOCIATION TALK

OTOAI on Ramayana Trail

Mahendra Vakharia, President, OTOAI, claims that the Ramayana Trail in Sri Lanka has huge potential for the Indian market.



Nisha Verma

The workshop on Ramayana Trail saw Jeevana Fernando, Assistant Director, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLPB), giving a presentation on Ramayana-related sites in Sri Lanka to attendees. The event was chaired by Austin Fernando, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India, along with **Mahendra Vakharia**.

Speaking about the event, Vakharia, said, "The workshop and presentation were meant to promote and showcase the Ramayana Trail circuit in Sri Lanka. It is a very interesting and important circuit, which is not very widely promoted in the Indian market. However, there is a huge potential for this circuit. During the workshop, Jeevana Fernando informed members about the circuit. There are around 58 interesting spots of Ramayana Trail that one



Mahendra Vakharia
President
OTOAI

“There are around 58 interesting spots of Ramayana Trail that one could cover in Sri Lanka; 28 of them are very important”

could cover in Sri Lanka, and 28 of them are very important, which can be covered in about 10 days. It was a successful workshop, where we had a good attendance of over 75-80 members. Everyone was given a certificate and it was well-received.”



The idea behind the workshop was to position Sri Lanka's rich Ramayana heritage as a popular pilgrim package and to create awareness among OTOAI members about key locations on the trail. Members of OTOAI responded positively to it and deliberated on possible itineraries.

saw members and industry leaders interact and network over cocktails and dinner. Speaking about the Association's recent activities, Vakharia said, "In the last one month, after the signing of an MoU with Korea Tourism Organisation, we held workshops with them in three cities—Ahmedabad, Pune, and Chennai. We are now starting the second round of workshops in Lucknow, Nagpur, and Chandigarh. In September, we have planned training for the frontline staff of members for soft skills.”

When asked about the convention, he said, "We are in talks with a few destinations for our convention.”

Did you know, in Sri Lanka, an oath taken at the spot where Goddess Sita undertook 'Agni Pariksha' is still considered valid in village courts or gram sabhas? It is also said the colour of the soil of the ancient battlefield is still red.

IATO to champion outbound

The Association will foster outbound tourism through initiatives that drive cross-border tourism and improve bilateral ties with countries.



Manas Dwivedi

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) will now be promoting outbound tourism to neighbouring countries in a bid to help its members expand their horizon of business as well as improving bilateral ties with the countries to get more tourists to India and simultaneously, send tourists from the sub-continent to these destinations. The Association



Rajiv Mehra
VP, IATO & EC Liaison, Outbound
Tourism Promotion Committee



Vishal Yadav
Convener, Outbound Sub-committee
IATO

operations for its members with an intent to develop a model of cross-border tourism. In a first such interactive meeting organised for IATO members who do outbound or want to do outbound, IATO introduced its members with the idea. Around 80 members marked their presence.

Sharing more details, **Rajiv Mehra**, VP, IATO & EC Liaison, Outbound Tourism

Promotion Committee, said that they are targeting countries like Thailand, Dubai, Vietnam and will further move on to other countries.

"We need to learn ways to promote India for inbound tourism to our neighbouring destinations and for outbound tourism as well, so that more Indian tourists could travel abroad," he said.

While enhancing the reach of outbound tourism within IATO and motivating members towards expanding their horizon, **Vishal Yadav**, Convener- Outbound Sub Committee, IATO, said that the Association must change with time. "IATO has been the apex body for inbound tourism in the country but we need to evolve with time to survive," he said. IATO will initiate a roadmap to help its members share knowledge about promoting outbound tourism. Yadav shared that the Association intends to organise an Outbound Knowledge Forum on a bimonthly basis.

Explaining the need of stepping into outbound tourism, Yadav added, "We do not have an association recognised by the Government of India, Department of Tourism (DOT) for outbound tourism. It becomes our responsibility to create a team of travel agents which is DOT-approved," he said.



recently invited Dubai Tourism, TCEB and Thai Airways to discuss their plans. IATO is also working to promote outbound

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Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board

Mumbai

Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board (Los Angeles Tourism) has appointed **Seema Kadam** as its first-ever Regional Director, India. In the new role, Kadam will develop and support air service for Los Angeles International Airport (LAX); spearhead strategic travel trade engagement including the implementation of a robust training programme, using the L.A. Insider Program; and attend key industry trade shows in the region. She has been in the Indian travel industry for over 25 years and over the course of her career, has worked with well-known Indian travel players.



V Resorts

Delhi-NCR

V Resorts has brought on board **Arvind Razdan** as Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing. In the new role, he will be responsible for driving the marketing, sales, brand, and PR strategies for the group in India and abroad. Razdan will also play a crucial role in developing and implementing both short-term and long-term business plans for the firm. At V Resorts, he will be in charge of creating strong offline business support by market penetration in feeder markets like Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad. Prior to this, Razdan was VP Sales at Royal Orchid Hotels.



Pullman & Novotel Aerocity

New Delhi

Biswajit Chakraborty is the new General Manager Delegate (Cluster General Manager) at Pullman and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity. He will spearhead operations at the two hotels, further creating finer experiences for the luxury and upscale travel and business market in the country. Chakraborty will bring together all interesting elements and create a unique and chic hospitality experience in Delhi and Gurugram, to not only further the Pullman and Novotel brands but also contribute to the growth and development of Aerocity itself. He moves to the new role from Sofitel Mumbai BKC.



DoubleTree by Hilton

Panaji

Hilton has appointed **Melville John** as General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji. In his new role, John will oversee the day-to-day operations of the property and spearhead the growth and development of DoubleTree by Hilton Goa - Panaji. With over two decades of extensive experience across the globe, he brings his expertise to strategically position the property as the destination of choice. Through his career, John has worked with several established brands such as Four Seasons, Marriott and The Leela, in the Maldives, Canada, Thailand, Azerbaijan, and Egypt.



Visa Lounge

Mumbai

Kunal Sampat has recently been appointed as Country Head - Sales at Visa Lounge. With over 22 years of experience in the travel and tourism industry, Sampat has worked extensively in the fields of sales and operations, and has been responsible for successfully establishing a pan-India footprint of companies he has worked with in the past. He has diverse experience and mastery over operations, sales, pricing strategy, team building, contact centres and management, and over the course of his career, has worked with companies like Emirates, Air Arabia, and MSC Cruises.



TravelOptionz Holidays

Mumbai

Vimmi Deshpande has been appointed as General Manager (West) at TravelOptionz Holidays. In her new role, she will be responsible for accelerating the business organically as well as administratively, setting up the B2C division and launching products aligned to current market trends. She will also work with various marketing channels and platforms for media promotions. Deshpande comes with an experience of over 23 years in the travel trade. She joins TravelOptionz from SOTC Travel where she served as General Manager - Trade Relations for India. Prior to this, she managed a wide array of roles at Kuoni.



Novotel Convention Centre Hotel and International Convention Centre

Hyderabad

Samit Kazi is the new Resident Manager at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre. He is a seasoned hotelier and brings with him over 16 years of industry experience, with an in-depth knowledge of the MICE potential of India. In the new role, Kazi, who began his journey with Accor in 2011, will be responsible for spearheading key operations for the two properties, including supervising their growth and expansion.



Courtyard by Marriott

Agra

Sanjeev Tandon has been appointed as the new Hotel Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Agra. In the new role, he will be responsible for the team's elicit performance, culminating in fine guest experience and achieving the vision of the hotel. He will also provide strategic leadership to ensure effective and efficient management at the hotel. A seasoned hospitality professional, Tandon has worked with five-star hotels and resorts in Oman, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand in the past. Prior to joining Courtyard by Marriott Agra, he was the Hotel Manager at Fairfield by Marriott Lucknow.



The Park Hotel

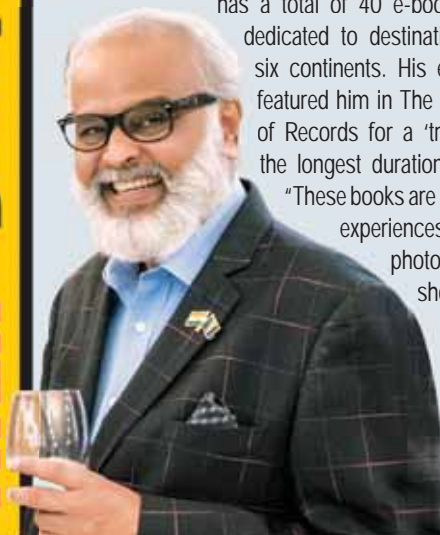
Mumbai

The Park Mumbai has appointed **Rahul Makhija** as Director of Operations. In the new role, he will work to elevate the overall guest experience by setting new standards in services and offering both resident and non-resident guests the most luxurious and unparalleled experience. He will manage the complete pre-opening planning operations of the hotel where, under his leadership, the team will strive to exceed the needs and expectations of the brand's target customer and property associates. In his 16-year career in the industry, he has held several managerial and senior managerial positions at various hotels.



TALKing People

Prakash Bang, Executive Chairman, roomsXML Solutions, has penned down his globe-trotting experiences in the form of e-books. Today, he has a total of 40 e-books that are dedicated to destinations across six continents. His efforts have featured him in The Limca Book of Records for a 'travelogue of the longest duration'. He says, "These books are my personal experiences and the photographs are shot by me."



Gorav Arora, General Manager, Novotel Mumbai Juhu Beach, has always enjoyed discovering new places. "Travel has always been a process for me when I crave clarity and peace. My favourite places to travel to are Singapore and the northern reaches of India." Being a hotelier doesn't leave time for much else, but whenever Arora gets time off, he likes to spend it with his family or goes out cycling.



Sunaina Manerker, General Manager, Grand Mercure Mysore, enjoys socialising and spending time with friends and family. She also claims to be an inquisitive traveller and finds the intricacy of cultures quite fascinating. "During the start of my career, I was fortunate enough to travel extensively across the globe and during this time, I achieved my wanderlust moments." Manerker also enjoys sports and says, "I enjoy playing badminton."





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Infrastructure key for Gujarat

The Statue of Unity has attracted many a tourist. A key challenge, however, that has risen alongside is maintenance of facilities at the site. **SJ Haider**, Principal Secy. - Tourism, Government of Gujarat, explains.



Kanchan Nath

The inauguration of two iconic sites in the State within a year has been a game changer for tourism in Gujarat, which has been receiving an increasing number of tourist footfalls ever since. Sharing details, **SJ Haider** says, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented two iconic monuments to the nation – one, the Statue of Unity that was inaugurated in October 2018 and is the tallest statue in the world at a height of 182 metres, almost double the height of Statue of Liberty in the US. The statue receives as many as 10,000 tourists a day. Second, on January 30 this year, the Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial, which receives between 3000 and 4000 tourists a day." With Statue of Unity receiving so many tourists, maintenance becomes a challenge, says Haider, adding that the tourism department is working to make provisions for the same.

With the annual convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) recently being held in the State in Ahmedabad, he says that

the 'Explore India - Experience India' theme seemed apt. "It is important to be more aware of our culture and heritage," Haider adds.

Regional economies grow with border tourism

Tourism has a huge socio-economic impact, believes Haider. "Our Chief Minister, Vijay Rupani, has also initiated border tourism, which will help instil a sense of pride among the people for our border security forces. It helps promote

“Every year, we allocate `250-300 crore for augmenting infrastructural facilities at both known and offbeat destinations of the state”

patriotism, develop economies, and improve cleanliness. 'Seema Darshan' is being developed in Nadabet, in the Sui village of Banaskantha district; another destination for it will be developed in Kutch. We are also developing infrastructure for the initiative," he shares.

Somnath and Dholavira among 17 iconic sites
Gujarat's Somnath and

Dholavira are part of the 17 iconic sites announced by Ministry of Tourism for integrated holistic development. "In a year, Somnath is visited by anywhere between 75,00,000 to 1,00,00,000 tourists, including daytime visitors. The destination is being developed keeping in mind the expected increase in this number in the next 15 to 20 years," says Haider.

Infrastructure is State priority

The tourism department of Gujarat has adopted a two-

pronged strategy for development of tourism-related infrastructure in the state. While one is an integrated destination development as part of the State government's budget, the other is the PPP initiative, explains Haider. "Every year, we allocate `250-300 crore for augmenting infrastructural facilities at both known and offbeat destinations. We focus on facilities like safe and adequate drinking water, sanitation, cleanliness, good approach roads, parking spaces and more," he shares. Haider adds that the department is also considering extending the tourism policy of the state, which is presently up to March 31, 2020. "As part of the policy, a slew of incentives ranging from capital and interest subsidies to reimbursement of stamp duty and registration fee as well as exemption of electricity duty is provided for development of hotels, convention centres, etc.," he says.



SJ Haider
Principal Secy. - Tourism
Government of Gujarat

Tourism creates economic opportunities



According to **Vasanth Ahir**, Minister of State for Tourism, Government of Gujarat, even in places where economic activity is not possible, tourism can help create them. "A shining example is the Rann Utsav, where there is no other viable economic activity but we have been able to develop tourism. This has given employment to the local population and improved their financial situation," he shares.

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