

ddppl.com

SAY NO TO FAKE NEWS

PASS IT ON

NAME

SEEN

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

64

65

66

67

68

69

70

71

72

73

74

75

76

77

78

79

80

81

82

83

84

85

86

87

88

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

96

97

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

181

182

183

184

185

186

187

188

189

190

191

192

193

194

195

196

197

198

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212

213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260

261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

273

274

275

276

277

278

279

280

281

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

305

306

307

308

309

310

311

312

313

314

315

316

317

318

319

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

340

341

342

343

344

345

346

347

348

349

350

351

352

353

354

355

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

368

369

370

371

372

373

374

375

376

377

378

379

380

381

382

383

384

385

386

387

388

389

390

391

392

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

409

410

411

412

413

414

415

416

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

438

439

440

441

442

443

444

445

446

447

448

449

450

451

452

453

454

455

456

457

458

459

460

461

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483

484

485

486

487

488

489

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

506

507

508

509

510

511

512

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

520

521

522

523

524

525

526

527

528

529

530

531

532

533

534

535

536

537

538

539

540

541

542

543

544

545

546

547

548

549

550

551

552

553

554

555

556

557

558

559

560

561

562

563

564

565

566

567

568

569

570

571

572

573

574

575

576

577

578

579

580

581

582

583

584

585

586

587

588

589

590

591

592

593

594

595

596

597

598

599

600

601

602

603

604

605

606

607

608

609

610

611

612

613

614

615

616

617

618

619

620

621

622

623

624

625

626

627

628

629

630

631

632

633

634

635

636

637

638

639

640

641

642

643

644

645

646

647

648

649

650

651

652

653

654

655

656

657

658

659

660

661

662

663

664

665

666

667

668

669

670

671

672

673

674

675

676

677

678

679

680

681

682

683

684

685

686

687

688

689

690

691

692

693

694

695

696

697

698

699

700

701

702

703

704

705

706

707

708

709

710

711

712

713

714

715

716

717

718

719

720

721

722

723

724

725

726

727

728

729

730

731

732

733

734

735

736

737

738

739

740

741

742

743

744

745

746

747

748

749

750

751

752

753

754

755

756

757

758

759

760

761

762

763

764

765

766

767

768

769

770

771

772

773

774

775

776

777

778

779

780

781

782

783

784

785

786

787

788

789

790

791

792

793

794

795

796

797

798

799

800

801

802

803

804

805

806

807

808

809

810

811

812

813

814

815

816

817

818

819

820

821

822

823

824

825

826

827

828

829

830

831

832

833

834

835

836

837

838

839

840

841

842

843

844

845

846

847

848

849

850

851

852

853

854

855

856

857

858

859

860

861

862

863

864

865

866

867

868

869

870

871

872

873

874

875

876

877

878

879

880

881

882

883

884

885

886

887

888

889

890

891

892

893

894

895

896

897

898

899

900

901

902

903

904

905

906

907

908

909

910

911

912

913

914

915

916

917

918

919

920

921

922

923

924

925

926

927

928

929

930

931

932

933

934

935

936

937

938

939

940

941

942

943

944

945

946

947

948

949

950

951

952

953

954

955

956

957

958

959

960

961

962

963

964

965

966

967

968

969

970

971

972

973

974

975

976

977

978

979

980

981

982

983

984

985

986

987

988

989

990

991

992

993

994

995

996

997

998

999

1000

1001

1002

1003

1004

1005

1006

1007

1008

1009

1010

1011

1012

1013

1014

1015

1016

1017

1018

1019

1020

1021

1022

1023

1024

1025

1026

1027

1028

1029

1030

1031

1032

1033

1034

1035

1036

1037

1038

1039

1040

1041

1042

1043

1044

1045

1046

1047

1048

1049

1050

1051

1052

1053

1054

1055

1056

1057

1058

1059

1060

1061

1062

1063

1064

1065

1066

1067

1068

1069

1070

1071

1072

1073

1074

1075

1076

1077

1078

1079

1080

1081

1082

1083

1084

1085

1086

1087

1088

1089

1090

1091

1092

1093

1094

1095

1096

1097

1098

1099

1100

1101

1102

1103

1104

1105

1106

1107

1108

1109

1110

1111

1112

1113

1114

1115

1116

1117

1118

1119

1120

1121

1122

1123

1124

1125

1126

1127

1128

1129

1130

1131

1132

1133

1134

1135

1136

1137

1138

1139

1140

1141

1142

1143

1144

1145

1146

1147

1148

1149

1150

1151

1152

1153

1154

1155

1156

1157

1158

1159

1160

1161

1162

1163

1164

1165

1166

1167

1168

1169

1170

1171

1172

1173

1174

1175

1176

1177

1178

1179

1180

1181

1182

1183

1184

1185

1186

1187

1188

1189

1190

1191

1192

1193

1194

1195

1196

1197

1198

1199

1200

1201

1202

1203

1204

1205

1206

1207

1208

1209

1210

1211

1212

1213

1214

1215

1216

1217

1218

1219

1220

1221

1222

1223

1224

1225

1226

1227

1228

1229

1230

1231

1232

1233

1234

1235

1236

1237

1238

1239

1240

1241

1242

1243

1244

1245

1246

1247

1248

1249

1250

1251

1252

1253

1254

1255

1256

1257

1258

1259

1260

1261

1262

1263

1264

1265

1266

1267

1268

1269

1270

1271

1272

1273

1274

1275

1276

1277

1278

1279

1280

1281

1282

1283

1284

1285

1286

1287

1288

1289

1290

1291

1292

1293

1294

1295

1296

1297

1298

1299

1300

1301

1302

1303

1304

1305

1306

1307

1308

1309

1310

1311

1312

1313

1314

1315

1316

1317

1318

1319

1320

1321

1322

1323

1324

1325

1326

1327

1328

1329

1330

1331

1332

1333

1334

1335

1336

1337

1338

1339

1340

1341

1342

1343

1344

1345

1346

1347

1348

1349

1350

1351

1352

1353

1354

1355

1356

1357

1358

1359

1360

1361

1362

1363

1364

1365

1366

1367

1368

1369

1370

1371

1372

1373

1374

1375

1376

1377

1378

1379

1380

1381

1382

1383

1384

1385

1386

1387

1388

1389

1390

1391

1392

1393

1394

1395

1396

1397

1398

1399

1400

1401

1402

1403

1404

1405

1406

1407

1408

1409

1410

1411

1412

1413

1414

1415

1416

1417

1418

1419

1420

1421

1422

1423

1424

1425

1426

1427

1428

1429

1430

1431

1432

1433

1434

1435

1436

1437

1438

1439

1440

1441

1442

1443

1444

1445

1446

1447

1448

1449

1450

1451

1452

1453

1454

1455

1456

1457

1458

1459

1460

1461

1462

1463

1464

1465

1466

1467

1468

1469

1470

1471

1472

1473

1474

14

MOMENTS MADE FOR YOU



📍 Doha Corniche

visit
QATAR

Explore Qatar

03 DAYS FROM

US\$ 283* PP

Inclusions:

- ☑ 02 Nights Accommodation with Breakfast
- ☑ Return Airport Transfers on Private
- ☑ Half Day City Tour on Private

Remarks: Rates are based on DBL/TWN sharing basis. Rates & Offers are subject to change without prior notice and subject to availability. Valid till 30th Sep 2025. *T&C Apply.



Ottala International Pvt. Ltd.

Network: Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters): 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93 7612 0982

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4185

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: + 91 99 5271 7750

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Indore: +91 73 1491 1374

Kochi: +91 75 9386 3903

Kolkata: +91 98 3011 9561

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Pune: +91 89 7636 5200

Nashik: +91 25 3231 0044

For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices. | **Book with Ottala**

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP

SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

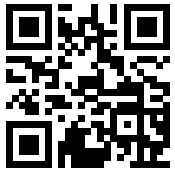
ddppl.com

SAY
NO
TO
FAKE
NEWS

TRAVTALK®

TravTalkIndia.com

Scan & Share



Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East



IATO gets business ready in Odisha

The IATO convention in Puri, Odisha, will not only focus on putting the destination in the limelight, members will also get a chance to discuss pertinent issues and indulge in policy dialogue during dedicated business sessions at the event.



Janice Alyosius

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) is all set to host its 40th Annual Convention from 22–25 August in Puri, Odisha. With thoughtfully crafted sessions and new opportunities for collaboration,



Ravi Gosain
President
IATO

introduce incentives. Hotels, airlines and representatives from the Ministry of Tourism will also address delegates." He also praised the host state's readiness to welcome inbound trav-



We are committed to bring the voices of our members to policymakers and ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed

ings and presentations by states, each component will provide an insight into the growing landscape of Indian tourism. We are committed to bringing the voices of our members to policymakers and ensuring their concerns are heard and addressed."

Tourism boost

Highlighting the convention offerings, Gosain said, "We have a meaningful inaugural session, business discussions and state presentations, which will

ellers. "Odisha has made strides in infrastructure. International connectivity to Bhubaneswar has improved, star-category hotels in Puri have grown in number. It has become an ideal destination for inbound tourism."

this year's convention promises to be a fresh chapter in India's tourism growth story.

Ravi Gosain, President, IATO, said, "This year's convention is different from previous editions in both content and participation. From business sessions to B2B meet-



Free visa to drive more Indians to Philippines

In an exclusive conversation with **TRAVTALK**, Christina Garcia Frasco, Secretary of Tourism (Minister), Republic of the Philippines, outlines the country's strategy to tap into India's outbound potential & shares plans to elevate the visitor experience for Indians.



Nisha Verma

Visiting India as part of the delegation of Ferdinand R Marcos Jr., President, Republic of the Philippines, Christina Garcia Frasco, Secretary of Tourism (Minister), discussed how the bilateral relations between the two nations are improving. "Tourism is identified as a



Christina Garcia Frasco
Secretary of Tourism (Minister)
Republic of the Philippines



key focus of this elevated partnership. Thus, we are very excited, especially as it comes at the heels of our President's announcement of visa-free access for Indian travellers going into the Philippines, and the reciprocal announcement of Prime Minister Modi for free e-visas for Filipinos visiting India. It is also a wonderful prepara-

tion for the direct connection between India and the Philippines, which will commence on 1 October."

Direct flights

The announcement of the 14-day visa-free entry for Indians by the Philippines in June was followed by Air India announcing a 5-time weekly service between Delhi and Manila from 1 October. Now, Frasco is optimistic about a surge in Indian tourist numbers. "In 2024, the Philippines received around 79,000

Indian visitors. In the context of the 6 million Indian nationals that travelled to the ASEAN region, we are eager to grow these numbers further, especially given that the Philippines is



We view these Air India flights to the Philippines with great optimism in the wake of our president announcing expansion

a destination like no other, with over 7,600 islands, immense biodiversity and a host of rich cultural and heritage experiences that are available for any type of traveller."

Contd. on page 18 ▶

cozmo
travel

— IS NOW RECOGNIZED BY —
GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA
AS A TRUSTED TOUR OPERATOR



Now get your
South Africa visas at
lightning-fast speed.

Call us today

+91 88283 20338

Voting Started



9 September 2025

Le Meridien, New Delhi

Vote Now

Please contact
devika@ddppl.com, +91 9650196532
www.indiatravelawards.in

Hospitality Partner
Le **MERIDIEN**
NEW DELHI

MICE's money transfer mess

MICE is global. But your payment system? Probably not. And that mismatch is costing time, trust and serious money. At the Travel MICE & Corporate Show, held recently in Chennai, a panel discussion pulled back the curtain on the chaos of multi-vendor, cross-border payments. Panellists not only brought their perspectives to the table but also discussed possible solutions.



It's a story most MICE agents know too well. You have locked in the destination. The hotel contract is signed. AV, entertainment, F&B, transfers, everything is good to go. But one payment is stuck. The vendor in Thailand will not take a wire. The host in Barcelona needs local currency. The AV team in Zurich will not start set-up till funds land in their account. Welcome to the chaos of cross-border payments.

At the Travel MICE & Corporate Show, held recently in Chennai, this chaos took centre stage in a session that pulled no punches. The



Panellists Anjali Chugh, Sandhya Lokhande, Jyothi Varma, Varghese Chettupuzha, Trishal Rao and Ravi Sattavan at the Travel MICE and Corporate Show

panel discussion, 'Managing Multi-Vendor Payments Across Borders', hit a nerve with the crowd, many of whom have quietly battled the same issues for years.

The panellists brought their perspectives to the table and together they revealed a brutally honest picture of how payments are the

invisible stress point in international events and why they need immediate fixing. But it was the moderator, **Sandhya Lokhande**, Regional Category Manager (Travel) – Indirect Procurement AMEA, Syngenta Group, who framed the conversation with a sharp truth. "We have made great strides in how we plan and

scale MICE," she said. "But our payment systems are still stuck in the past. If we don't address this, we are limiting how far and fast this industry can grow."

Trishal Rao, Chief Sales Officer, Skil Corporate Travel Solutions, kicked things off with a real-world example. "One week, we



had four events in four countries — Switzerland, Australia, Thailand and Vietnam. Each had five to six vendors. That is 20 to 30 payments in a single week, across time zones, currencies and local tax systems. It was mayhem."

His team scrambled between SWIFT transfers, NEFT, third-party fintech platforms and whatever else could get the job done. "My finance team was pulling their hair out," he admitted. "It got done but it was not

smooth, and it definitely was not scalable."

Panellists at the event revealed a brutally honest picture of how payments are the invisible stress point in international events

For corporate buyers, the pain point is just as sharp. **Anjali Chugh**, Head – MICE & Strategic Engagements, *Contd. on page 7*



Radisson Blu Resort Goa Caveolossim
CALL: +91 70300 28853
EMAIL: reservations@rdresortgoa.com



Radisson Goa Candolim
CALL: +91 (832) 6719800
EMAIL: reservations@rdgoa.com



Mandrem Beach Resort
CALL: +91 8766781561
EMAIL: reservations@mbhgoa.com



Synergy over segmentation

These are fascinating times for the travel and tourism industry in India — where the boundaries between business, leisure and culture are becoming increasingly fluid. We at DDP Group recently concluded the Travel MICE & Corporate Show in Chennai, where the panel discussion dived deep into the evolution of MICE, which is no longer just about conference rooms and convention halls. It's about experiences that marry local flavour with global standards — turning meetings into memorable journeys and destinations into immersive hosts. For the trade, this is not just an opportunity to sell packages; it is a chance to create stories that participants carry long after the event.

But MICE is not the only space showing promise. There is a renewed spotlight on regional tourism — smaller cities and emerging destinations stepping up with infrastructure upgrades, improved air connectivity and fresh attractions. This opens a world of possibilities for agents and operators to diversify offerings. Adventure travel is getting more structured, with safety protocols and training becoming integral, while inbound markets are showing signs of revival, helped by policy tweaks and improved access. We are also seeing new entrants and partnerships reshaping the ecosystem — insurance, assistance and tech-led services are no longer add-ons but core parts of the traveller experience. The industry is finally recognising that growth depends not just on selling more, but on delivering better.

The bigger message is clear — our industry's strength lies in its ability to adapt, connect and collaborate. The future is not about individual sectors racing ahead in isolation but weaving together MICE, leisure, adventure and niche segments into a single, seamless value chain. If we get that right, India's travel story will not just be about numbers. It will be about leadership, innovation and staying ahead in a fast-changing global market.

Beyond ticketing: What GSAs bring to the table

General Sales Agents do much more than sell airline tickets. They act as a vital link between airlines and regional markets for sustainable growth. Dex Group exemplifies this by bridging global airline strategies with regional realities in Asia.

Dex Group is one of Asia's leading brands offering end-to-end expertise in sales, marketing and communication for the travel and aviation sectors. With a legacy built on experience, ethics and expertise, we represent and partner with global airlines, destinations and travel brands to drive market growth, brand visibility and strategic engagement. Our prestigious portfolio includes leading international brands, such as ITA Airways, LOT Polish Airlines, Air Austral, Air Calin and NOK Air.

Headquartered in India with offices in Delhi, Gurugram, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai, Dex Group also operates international offices in Bangkok and Dubai, enabling a strong regional presence across South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Our services span GSA operations, digital marketing, trade engagement, events and market intelligence, backed by deep local insights and strong industry relationships. We pride ourselves on being the trusted bridge between global brands and local audiences, delivering measurable results with professionalism and integrity.

Role of a GSA

As a GSA, DEX Group acts as an extension of an airline in specific regions or markets, assists and supports airlines in every possible manner to achieve goals and meet expectations as their partner in the market. Key roles as GSA include managing sales, marketing and customer service, thereby effectively mirroring the airline's presence in those areas.

DEX Group helps airlines expand their reach and

manage operations in locations where they do not have a direct presence. We also believe that a GSA's role includes

- ❖ Effective 'Entry and Expansion in Market'
- ❖ Providing 'Local Expertise'
- ❖ Assisting in 'Cost Efficiency'
- ❖ Ensuring 'Compliance of Regulations'
- ❖ Working towards 'Risk Mitigation'

Adapting to hybrid models

As a GSA, we at DEX Group feel that in today's evolving travel landscape, airlines need a robust digital presence and on-ground

✈

Leveraging digital tools, data insights and localised campaigns helps build and nurture trade relationships across markets

market development. Leveraging digital tools, data insights and localised campaigns helps build and nurture trade relationships across the markets.

Value of Indian trade engagement

Engaging the Indian travel trade through training sessions, webinars and events has immense value for all stakeholders. These fast and impactful modes of connecting with trade partners across the length and breadth of our country, whether for launching a new product, or for conveying updates regarding

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

Beyond ticketing: A GSA acts as an airline's local extension, managing sales, marketing, customer service and compliance while driving sustainable market growth.

Market expansion: Provides critical local expertise, cost efficiency, risk mitigation and regulatory compliance support, enabling airlines to operate in regions without a direct presence.

Trade engagement: Training sessions, webinars and events are fast, impactful tools to equip Indian travel agents with the knowledge to promote and sell effectively.

New route: GSAs ensure commercial viability from day one by combining market intelligence, airport coordination, brand promotion and trade mobilisation.

its services and pricing, equip and enable the trade partners to effectively recommend and promote any product to their clients in shortest possible time.

At DEX Group, we consistently engage with trade partners through training and events that significantly boost brand presence, build long-term partnerships and drive sustained growth of business.

Role of GSA in new routes and airports

As a GSA, there is need to play an indispensable role in ensuring commercial success from day one. Apart from sharing critical market intelligence, regulatory requirements and coordination with airport authorities, initiation of timely communication and promotion to build the brand, create visibility and awareness of the product, is critical. Simultaneously, it is important to mobilise the travel trade through training, events and incentives to sell and fill up the flights.

At Dex Group, we specialise in creating that seamless bridge between global airline strategies and local market realities.

About the author

Ramesh Marwah, an aviation and tourism specialist with over 30 years of industry experience, currently serves as Director, Dex Aviation. He leads the development of airline, aviation and tourism businesses. His extensive aviation expertise stems from senior roles across reputed international airlines. He served as Deputy Country Manager India for Austrian Airlines for over a decade, managing strategic operations and market growth.



Ramesh Marwah
Director
Dex Aviation

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to them.)

Avalon's all inclusive format hit with small groups

With its award-winning ships and immersive itineraries, Avalon Waterways has carved an undisputed niche with its luxury river cruising, offering discerning travellers a refined yet relaxed way to explore Europe's most iconic rivers.



From milestone anniversaries to alumni reunions, ladies' get-togethers and club gatherings, Avalon Waterways transforms small group travel into unforgettable shared experiences. "We are seeing an incredible rise in affinity groups choosing Avalon," says **Varesh Chopra**, Managing Director – India, Middle East & South Asia. "Our intimate setting and seamless services with personalised experiences resonate deeply with travellers who want to connect, celebrate and explore without the usual hassles."

Small groups are there to see more of each other while travelling in an unhurried manner rather than queuing up for each meal or excursion. One of the top reasons such groups love Avalon is the ease of the all-inclusive format and the personalised atmosphere on board. No coor-



Varesh Chopra
Managing Director – India, Middle East & South Asia, Avalon Waterways

inating hotel stays, sightseeing, transportation or meals. Unlike large ocean liners, Avalon's ships carry an average of 150 guests, creating a boutique luxury setting on the water.

Groups numbering anything from 10 to 30 pax, enjoy the spacious suites, sun decks and elegant spaces — all designed for making meaningful connections rather than meeting crowds. The truly all-inclusive format includes stays in award winning Panorama Suites, flexible



gourmet dining options with local wines & beers, services of a professional cruise director and guided sightseeing with choices allowing both organisers

Unlike large ocean liners, Avalon's ships carry an average of 150 guests, creating a boutique luxury setting on the water

and guests to focus on creating memories. Travellers indulge in the local culture through evening entertainment and sampling regional culinary delights. Many itineraries even allow

for active exploration and soft adventures — like hiking, kayaking, cycling and even countryside picnics — ideal for groups seeking to participate in shared activities. "We sailed with a group of 27 on the Danube," recalls a veteran travel advisor.

As Chopra puts it, "Avalon creates journeys that guests remember for a lifetime and can't wait to repeat."

CRUISING ALONG

This Christmas, Avalon invites cruisers to step into a snow globe of gingerbread villages and glowing markets:

- ❖ Christmastime on the Romantic Rhine – Southbound/Northbound
- ❖ Christmastime on the Danube – Westbound/Eastbound

'Smart pay' key to MICE biz

Contd. from page 5

Nuvama Group, explained how tough it is to stay compliant. "You have vendors who only accept cash. Others refuse to give proper invoices. Some insist on local bank transfers in obscure formats," she said. "It's a compliance nightmare. And when your internal audit team gets involved, it's war."

So, how are companies coping? For many, the answer lies in middlemen, agencies or DMCs who step in to make payments on their behalf. "But that comes at a price," Chugh

said. "There is always a convenience fee."

That is where **Ravi Sattavan**, Director – Commercial Solutions, Visa, India stepped in, offering a glimpse into what the future of payments could look like. "Virtual cards are tailor-made for this," he said.

For agents handling multi-country events, it's a huge upgrade over the slow, documentation-heavy process of international wire transfers. "We have seen companies cut down turnaround time from five days to five minutes," Sattavan

said. "And it's safer. You are not sharing bank details or chasing confirmations. It just works." But the real issue, he admitted, is adoption.

"Not every vendor is ready for this. That is why we are proactively helping identify and onboard suppliers."

Varghese Chettupuzha, Global Category Lead – Meetings & Events, Accenture, added another layer of insight. His team often routes payments through their local offices in different countries, which reduces compli-

ance risk and speeds up processing. "But I know that is a luxury most smaller players don't have," he said.

As the session wrapped up, it was clear that for the MICE trade, payments are not just a back-office job anymore. They are central to how smooth or how stressful a project becomes. And in a competitive landscape where clients expect speed, transparency and control, the ability to pay smarter could become your strongest selling point.

HOTEL
POLO TOWERS
GROUP

Agartala | Cherrapunjee | Shillong | Kolkata
Tura | Allahabad | Jabalpur | Neermahal

THINK NORTH EAST
POLO TOWERS

POLO ORCHID RESORT, CHERRAPUNJEE

POLO FLOATEL, CALCUTTA

HOTEL POLO TOWERS, SHILLONG

HOTEL POLO TOWERS, AGARTALA

+91 99867 02889
www.hotelpolotowers.com

TRAVEL NEWS

- Tripura to establish **6 eco-parks**, looking to boost tourism in state
- Kerala to launch **first-ever low-interest loan** to empower women in tourism
- Local experiences driving business** for Indian hotels instead of services: KB Kachru
- India 5th largest aviation market** globally; Delhi–Mumbai 7th busiest route: IATA
- Rajasthan targets adventure, rural, tribal tourism** to boost GVA & employment by 2030
- TAAI Convention heads to Abu Dhabi**, to be held from 17–19 September
- Delhi's HoHo bus service** resumes with new name and new route from 15 August

'Need for city-level convention bureaus'

Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and DG, Ministry of Tourism, GoI, says setting up city-level convention bureaus can unlock India's true MICE potential. The bureaus will boost India's global competitiveness, streamline services and attract major events, tapping into its vast but underutilised meetings & exhibitions potential.

 Surbhi Sharma

India's MICE sector has long been held back not by lack of venues, but by a fragmented ecosystem, says **Suman Billa**, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Addressing a session on 'The Government's Vision for Bringing Global Events and Exhibitions to India' at the South India Thought Leaders Conference (SITLC) in Chennai recently, he added "The country needs to shift from a venue-centric approach to an ecosystem-centric one by establishing city-level convention bureaus — a move that could dramatically elevate the country's standing in the global events space."



Suman Billa
Additional Secretary and DG,
Ministry of Tourism, GoI

India has only a 5 per cent share in the \$850 billion global MICE market. Billa argued that without localised, collaborative institutions, India cannot hope to compete with MICE powerhouses like Singapore, Dubai or Frankfurt. "These global cities have dedicated bureaus that

act as aggregators, offering bundled services, single-window clearances and proactive destination marketing — exactly what India currently lacks."

"The G20 Summit proved that we have the infrastructure and capability to host world-class events. But what we need is institutional architecture that simplifies processes and brings stakeholders — hotels, caterers, AV technicians, florists and venues under one umbrella. You will not be able to achieve this unless you have MICE city bureaus."

The Ministry of Tourism is encouraging state governments to take the lead in setting up such bureaus. These entities, ideally made

up of representatives from government, tourism bodies, hotels and service providers, can be effective

Without localised institutions, India cannot hope to compete with MICE powerhouses like Singapore, Dubai or Frankfurt

engines to attract global conferences, conventions and exhibitions. "The Centre is also open to matching financial contributions from states to help bid for large

events," he said, adding that, "Our goal is to elevate at least 10 Indian cities, especially in South India into global MICE destinations. These cities could leverage their sectoral strengths."

- CITY STRENGTH**
- Chennai**
Automotive events
 - Bengaluru/Hyderabad**
Technology conferences
 - Kochi**
Wellness tourism
 - Visakhapatnam**
Maritime trade summits

Balitrip Wisata concludes 4-city roadshow

Balitrip Wisata successfully concluded its 4-city India roadshow recently, covering Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and Kochi. The event saw new 2025–26 packages unveiled to the trade with a clear focus on quality over quantity. The partners from Bali were impressed with the Indian travel trade, which has been a key market for the DMC.



Moscow: Safe and ready for Indians

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) had all heads turning to Russia with their 2025 convention in Moscow, followed by a Fam trip to St Petersburg. The event was aimed at changing tourist perception of Russia. The Moscow City Tourism Committee ensured that the main takeaway for delegates was an image of a safe and comfortable destination to visit.

 Nisha Verma

The OTOAI event aimed to showcase the destination in a new light. **Evgeniy Kozlov**, First Deputy Head of the Office of the Mayor and the Government of Moscow, and Chairman of Moscow City Tourism Committee, said, “The convention will showcase Moscow, and Russia, as a safe destination to visit and that it is easy to travel for Indians.”

Enthralling Moscow

For Moscow, India is the second largest country in terms of inbound tourist numbers, Kozlov highlighted. “The year-

on-year growth is 40 per cent. Unfortunately, in the first quarter of 2025, only 18,000 Indians came to Moscow. I hope that OTOAI convention will boost the number of Indian tourists to the city. We even had a Festival of India in Moscow, which coincided with the convention. It was widely mentioned on social media in India. Apart from that, we have dedicated India-friendly guides and hotels. Our digital project ‘discover.moscow’ represents all these opportunities for Indian tourists to discover their own version of Moscow. In addition, the B2B meetings at the convention will also



Evgeniy Kozlov
First Dy Head of the Office of the Mayor and the Govt of Moscow, and Chairman of Moscow City Tourism Committee

help boost all the communication and people-to-people connection between tour operators from India and service providers in Moscow and St. Petersburg,” he said.

Beyond the usual


The OTOAI delegation explored Moscow and St Petersburg, the two most popular cities in Russia. Kozlov shared, “Russia is a unique country. One should start from Moscow and St Petersburg and after that one can visit Siberia. Then they (visitors) can go to the north or the south to find the right cuisine and experiences.”

Safe and tech forward

Citing that Moscow is easy to travel to, especially for international travellers, Kozlov highlighted, “I need only my phone or gadget to live in Moscow. The city never sleeps. In

this digital world, one can stay at home and deliver anything at any time. You can also go to some of

He added, “The vibe of Moscow is safe. I am sure that the delegates at the OTOAI convention will be ambassadors of Moscow to India. We are constantly working towards making our city better. Our mayor has a great vision to build and make it the best city of the world.”


The vibe of Moscow is safe. I am sure that the delegates at the OTOAI convention will be ambassadors of Moscow to India



the world's best parks in Moscow and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.”



Tourist transport leaders united in Mumbai for ITTA's landmark Western Regional Meeting.

From EV integration and driver training to expert insights and cultural exchange the event marked a bold step toward a smarter, safer, and sustainable transport future.

Supported by Zonal Chairman Mumbai

With participation from top stakeholders and ministry officials

Steering India's TOURIST TRANSPORT FORWARD

Tourism transport professionals & policymakers came together for a landmark event filled with insights, celebrations & next-gen planning.



Get in Touch with ITTA

- ittaindia@gmail.com | info@ittaindia.com
- +91 98114 50524

Travel 'assistance' new essential?

In today's fast-moving travel landscape, disruptions are no longer the exception — they are an expected part of the experience. What travellers need today is not just reimbursement — they need real-time help. Travel assistance has, therefore, become the new essential for every journey. Asego comes up with a new product, Asego Bolt, to meet the requirements of your customers.



TT Bureau

According to a recent Global Airline Performance Report, over 25 million bags were reported mishandled globally, and more than 35 per cent of all flights faced delays exceeding 60 minutes. While travel demand has bounced back post-pandemic, the quality of the journey has often failed to keep pace. Travellers are facing longer wait times, more lost luggage and higher levels of uncertainty at every step.

This is where the gap between travellers' actual insurance requirements and travel reality becomes clear. Insurance coverage may reimburse financial



Dev Karvat
Founder & CEO
Asego

loss after the incident, but it does not show up when a bag goes missing, when a connection is missed or when travellers are stranded in a foreign airport with no assistance. What travellers need today is not just reimbursement. They need real-time help.

Recognising this shift, Asego has launched Asego Bolt, a powerful new standalone assistance bundle created by combining two of its most effective services — TrackMate and WaitMate. Together, they deliver rapid response and real protection, exactly when and where your customers need it most.

TrackMate brings global, real-time baggage tracking across all airlines and routes, with guaranteed compensation of up to ₹66,000 per checked-in bag up to two bags if it is not recovered within 96 hours. On the other hand, WaitMate activates premium lounge access automatically if a flight is



delayed by more than 60 minutes, giving travellers a moment of comfort rather than frustration. The coverage extends across up to four flight segments in a single trip and includes access to over 1,300 lounges across more than 100 countries. This is not just a service upgrade — it's a mindset shift. Travel

assistance is no longer an add-on; it's becoming a baseline expectation. As a travel advisor or booking partner, offering Bolt is more than an upsell; it's about being proactive, customer-centric and aligned with what modern travellers truly value — peace of mind and dependable support.

Asego Bolt empowers travel agents to move beyond selling destinations and start offering dependable journeys. It's time to think beyond insurance and give your customers an added layer of protection that actually travels with them. Whether it's a family vacation, a corporate itinerary or a solo international trip, assistance like this transforms stress into trust.

Note: The information provided is for general awareness and promotional purposes only. ASEGO BOLT and its services, including TrackMate and WaitMate, are value-added offerings subject to specific terms, conditions and eligibility. Services are delivered via third-party providers and may be governed by their respective terms. This is not an insurance product or legal advice. Travellers should review full-service details before purchase. ASEGO reserves the right to modify or discontinue services without prior notice.

Aussie operators meet Indian agents

Tourism Australia recently hosted the 19th edition of Australia Marketplace India (AMI) in Jaipur. The annual B2B event saw over 200 delegates, including Indian travel agents and Australian tourism operators. **Jennifer Doig**, Regional GM for South and Southeast Asia, alongside **Nishant Kashikar**, Country Head-India, Tourism Australia, presided over the event.



Destination certification: The secret to better sales?

Destination marketing certifications are becoming a key tool for travel agents to understand and sell destinations better. Industry experts say the best ones, like the Aussie Specialist Certificate, offer more than just information.



Manoj Saraf
Managing Director
Gainwell Travel

“ Among the most effective and comprehensive online certification programmes are those offered by Australia, Singapore and Switzerland. While the core content across programmes is often similar, **each focuses on USPs that showcase their destination's strengths.** These certifications empower travel agents with in-depth knowledge. ”



Neil Patil
Founder, COO & CTO
Veena World

“ I find that Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA particularly stand out. Their certifications are immersive, structured and rich in local insights. In other words, **they are designed not just to educate, but to truly inspire travel professionals** like me to understand and promote these destinations effectively. ”



Abhishek Goyal
CEO & Executive Director
Aeroprim Group

“ Certifications like the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) and programmes offered by Destinations International and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Academy, are among the best. **They blend global best practices with practical tools for marketing, making them highly relevant for agents.** ”



Jay Bhatia
Managing Director
Tulsidas Khimji Holidays

“ So far, ‘I know Europe’ and ‘I know Americas’, conducted by Globus Cosmos, are the best certifications for Europe and the Americas. They had **detailed classroom training, along with substantial training literature and itinerary samplers** with Rail Europe and other exams. The Aussie Specialist Certificate is another great programme. ”



Krishnan R
Director & CEO
Unimoni, India

“ Some of the best destination marketing certifications currently available include the Aussie Specialist Certificate, the Spain 360° Expert Certificate and the Switzerland Specialist Certificate. **These programmes have been enhanced with features tailored to Indian travel professionals** — offering specialist badges for added credibility. ”



Burjis Mehta
President, Skål International Bombay
144 & CEO, Skyworld Tourism Travels

“ Most destination management certifications are in-depth and cover the destination pretty well. My demand is that the DMOs who, along with tourism boards, design **these courses, should also cover topics of importance in today's evolving tourism scenario**, such as ESG, sustainability, overtourism, geopolitical instability and give regular updates. ”



Kartik Gaggar
CEO & Founder
Slo Mo Experiences

“ The best destination marketing certifications are the ones that equip agents with in-depth geography, culture and knowledge to sell destinations better. New features include online modules with virtual tours, digital marketing trends. **These certifications enhance storytelling, enabling agents to craft personalised experiences.** ”



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

“ Many tourism boards have introduced Destination Specialist Programmes. They give agents a sense of achievement as they get to study the destination in-depth. **It provides a fun and interactive way for the agents to learn about the destination.** Some of the best programmes are Abu Dhabi Specialist, Qatar Specialist and Dubai Specialist. ”



WE ARE HIRING

Lady Guest
Relations Executives



Candidate will be based in Delhi
Required to travel on Maharajas' Express
as per itineraries.

(Please refer to the-maharajas.com)

Location:

- Onboard Maharajas' Express with 3-6 night itineraries

Must-Haves:

- Min. 1 year in Guest Relations/ Front Office
- Fluent in English (verbal & written)
- Well-groomed, confident, guest-friendly
- Comfortable with international guests

Role Highlights:

- Welcome & assist guests
- Guest queries & complaint resolution
- Coordinate with all onboard guests
- Ensure smooth guest experience

Salary: As per experience

Joining : Mid September

Contact:

+91-8263943437

pawan@heritagevillageresorts.com

A unit of
Select Holiday Resorts Private Limited

SKÅL TALK

Published from: ★ India ★ Middle East

Skål India strengthens unity with club visits

Sanjeev Mehra, President, Skål International India, recently engaged with Skål Jaipur and Skål Bhubaneswar to reinforce commitment to fostering unity among Skålleagues.



TT Bureau

Sanjeev Mehra, President, Skål International India, continues his nationwide outreach initiative with recent visits to Skål Bhubaneswar and Skål Jaipur — marking his 13th and 14th club visits of the 19 he plans to engage with.

emphasised the importance of regional leadership, increased collaboration among clubs and the need for stronger networks to drive Skål's vision forward. He also highlighted the role of each club in enhancing Skål's national presence and contributing to its sustainable growth. "A



Skål India President with the Skål Jaipur Executive Board

These visits are part of his commitment to strengthening Skål India's unity and fostering a deeper

key point of discussion was the upcoming Skål India National Congress in Mumbai, which promises to be a landmark event reflecting the dynamism and scale of Skål India," Mehra said. He also acknowledged the growing momentum of the Young Skål movement and the surge in new memberships across the country.

The Skål India President's visit to Bhubaneswar included meaningful dialogue around tourism development in Odisha and the potential for future synergies with Skål International's global community. At Jaipur, the emphasis was on heritage tourism and leveraging local strengths to create national impact. As Skål India continues to evolve, these regional visits are more than ceremonial — they are strategic steps in aligning the collective vision of Skål.

connection between the national leadership and regional chapters.

During his interactions, Mehra met with club leaders, tourism stakeholders, hospitality professionals and global Skålleagues, focusing on strengthening the collective Skål spirit across India. He

Singapore Oceanarium reopens with a splash

For travel agents seeking unique, high-impact experiences for their clients, the reimagined Singapore Oceanarium — formerly S.E.A. Aquarium — at Resorts World Sentosa is a must-add attraction to every itinerary.



Lipla Negi

Uncover the ocean's deepest secrets, without any training or even deep-sea diving gear, at the newly opened Singapore Oceanarium — an immersive masterclass in marine history, ecosystems and a vibrant life beneath the waves.

The Singapore Oceanarium features 22 thematic zones and is home to over 40,000 marine creatures. A cornerstone of the oceanarium is its Research & Learning Centre, which is Asia's first marine science hub certified as Green Mark Platinum Zero Energy.

Is it just a grand aquarium? Not quite.

This is a journey across million years of how light and life first found their way into the ocean, before reaching beyond. A story that unfolds in darkness, silence and sublime beauty over nearly three hours.



Thoughtfully curated, the experience goes far beyond showcasing sea creatures — it brings you into the quiet, the mystery and the creatures that have defined our oceans since the dawn of time. The 22 immersive zones blend multimedia storytelling with moments of awe and stillness.

Kick off your Oceanarium experience with **Ocean Wonders**, encapsulating



500 million years of sea jellies drifting through the 'blue' planet. The evolution is set in motion with cylindrical habitats offering a 360-degree view of other captivating species, including Atlantic Sea Nettles, Fried Egg Sea Jellies and more.

A moment of serendipity strikes as you stand before the 6.8-metre-diameter **Kreisel** — one of the world's largest sea jelly habitats. Feather-light Moon Jellies drift like dreams, their umbrella-shaped bells rhythmically pulse and free float in per-

fect synchrony with an evocative soundscape. Step into **Ancient Waters**, which brings back creatures from the pre-historic era. The ocean's equivalent of the dinosaur era, here you come face to face with life-sized animatronics and towering replicas.

The **Singapore Coast** celebrates the island country's mangroves and the resil-

Oceanarium's Research & Learning Centre is Asia's first marine science hub certified as Green Mark Platinum Zero Energy

size skeleton of a whale and witness the ecosystem it feeds, tracing the circle of life in the ocean.

The **Open Ocean** zone contains an 18 million-litre water body with a stunning 36-metre-wide viewing panel, where you get a closer look at the Manta Rays, Spotted Eagle Rays and Zebra Sharks gliding through the water.

A sensorial treat for kids and adults alike, the **Art-quarium** features an interactive touch table, where you can mix different traits to create your own digital fish, while learning how these adaptations help marine species survive in their environment.

The 'Garbage Patch' art installation traces the path of a single discarded plastic bottle as it drifts across the ocean — a stark reminder of human impact on these waters. Detailing the human impact in marine life conservation, the '**Hallway of Hope**' spotlights stories of successful marine protection initiatives.

The launch of the Singapore Oceanarium is part of Resorts World Sentosa's S\$ 6.8 billion expansion, which will further enhance Singapore's position as a must-visit destination. At the launch, **Melissa Ow**, Chief Executive, Singapore Tourism Board said, "The Singapore Oceanarium marks a significant milestone in our Tourism 2040 roadmap. This world-class attraction by Resorts World Sentosa exemplifies our commitment to create diverse and distinctive experiences." Echoing this sentiment, **Thien Kwee Eng**, Chief Executive Officer, Sentosa Development Corporation said, "As we transform and elevate our island's offerings, Singapore Oceanarium is a welcome addition to Sentosa's suite of world-class attractions, strengthening our proposition as a beloved island destination for both locals and overseas guests."

GLOBAL ATTRACTION

Where: Resorts World Sentosa, 8 Sentosa Gateway, Singapore

Timings: 10 am–7 pm

Ticket prices: S\$ 50 per adult, S\$ 42 per child (3–12 years old) and S\$ 42 per senior citizen (60 and above)

experience abu dhabi

teamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi Family Special

05 Days from
US\$ 449*
per person

Inclusions:

- ✓ 04 Nights Stay in Abu Dhabi City Hotel
- ✓ Daily Breakfast
- ✓ Return Abu Dhabi International Airport Transfers on Private
- ✓ Abu Dhabi City Tour with a stop at BAPS Hindu Temple on Private
- ✓ TeamLab Phenomena Abu Dhabi Ticket Only
- ✓ 1 Day Any 2 Parks as Yas Island Ticket only (Select from SeaWorld® or Ferrari World™ or Warner Bros. World™ or Yas Water World)

Remarks: Rates are based on DBL/TWN sharing basis & are Commissionable to Travel Agents. Rates and Offers are subject to change without prior notice & are subject to availability. Valid till 30Sep 2025 *T&C Apply.

Ottila International Pvt. Ltd.

Mumbai (Registered Office & Corporate Headquarters) : 022 6720 5000

Ahmedabad: +91 93761 20982

Bengaluru: +91 96 0648 4185

Chennai: +91 44 4555 8582

Coimbatore: +91 99527 17750

Hyderabad: +91 88 8501 5970

Indore: +91 731 4911 374

Kochi: +91 75938 63903

Kolkata: +91 98301 19561

New Delhi: +91 11 4141 4242

Pune: +91 89 7636 5200

Nashik: +91 253 231 0044



For Enquiries & Bookings, please contact any of our offices | **B2B Portal:** www.ottila.net

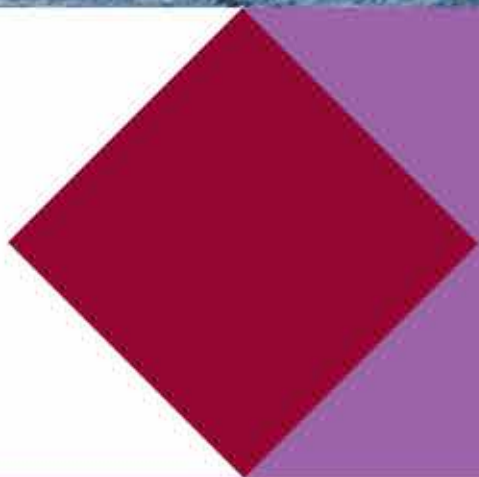
Travel
MICE & CORPORATE SHOW

witnesses 1,200 meetings

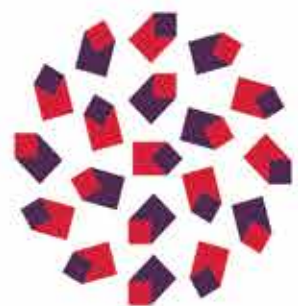
The 12th Travel MICE & Corporate Show, held recently at The Radisson Blu Hotel and Suites GRT Chennai, saw 1,200 meetings between top corporates and industry leaders. The two-day event witnessed conversations that went beyond networking to address some of the industry's toughest challenges and explore solutions for future growth.



see more pic on page 16 ▶



Experience
عمان
OMAN



Networking for biz solutions @ Travel

MICE & CORPORATE SHOW





We are now part of the **oneworld** alliance

Fly farther, smoother. With access to over **900 destinations, 700+ lounges worldwide**, and travel across 15 top airlines - your journey with Oman Air just got bigger.

If you are a Sindbad member, your tier is now aligned with **oneworld** – giving you even more recognition and benefits globally. And if you are not a member yet, there's never been a better time to join.

Some of the perks include:

- Global mileage earning and redemption across all oneworld airlines
- Access to airport lounges (for eligible tiers)
- Priority check-in
- Additional baggage allowance (for eligible tiers)
- A digital Sindbad card accepted across the alliance

Not a Sindbad member? Join today to unlock exclusive benefits.



1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

EVENT TALK

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

SEPTEMBER 2025

Date	Event	Time
2	Switzerland Tourism Webinar	3:00 pm
2-4	ITB India 2025	10:00 am
5-7	36 th Philippine Travel Mart 2025	10:00 am
8	India Cargo Awards	8:00 pm
9	India Travel Awards	8:00 pm
10	Switzerland Tourism Webinar	3:00 pm
11-12	GPS-Pune	10:00 am
11-13	BLTM 2025	10:00 am
17	Red Carpet Webinar	3:00 pm
17-19	TAAI Annual Convention	10:00 am
18-20	FHRAI Annual Convention	10:00 am
19-20	GPS-Kolkata	10:00 am
20-22	Tamilnadu Travel Expo 2025	10:00 am
24-25	GBTA Mexico Conference	9:00 am
25-28	Tourism Expo Japan 2025	9:00 am
28-30	25 th WTTC Global Summit	10:00 am

India, Philippines come closer

► *Contd. from page 3*

“We view these Air India flights to the Philippines with great optimism, especially that our president has also announced intentions to further expand connectivity, not just from Delhi to Manila, but also from other cities in India to other islands in the Philippines,” she added.

Challenges & promises

Frasco identified two major past obstacles in attracting Indian visitors. “Two hurdles — the lack of a direct connection and the non-liberalised visa process at the time. With these two very critical components of tourism for the Philippines having been unlocked, we are ready to receive more Indian tourists to the country.” She added that the Philippines boasts a wide variety of offerings.

MICE & biz focus

On the subject of India’s

growing outbound MICE segment, Frasco mentioned that the Philippines’ MICE Plus programme under the Tourism Promotions Board provides specific incentives for group events. “These include facilitation of preparations for arrival, coordination with local government units, as well as sponsorships of events to make the MICE event as unforgettable as it can be.”

India a priority

While South Korea and the US remain the top two source markets for the Philippines, India’s growing relevance is notable. “We are looking at India, recognising that it has one of the biggest outbound traveller numbers in the world and offers high value in terms of tourism spending and yield,” Frasco underlined.

She added that despite the previous lack of connectivity and visa ease, Indian

travellers showed strong intent. “We had already received a good demographic of Indian travellers from 25 to 44 years old, staying an average of nearly 10 nights with many of them professionals and a repeat visit rate of over 66 per cent.”

✂

The Philippines is looking at India, recognising that India has one of the biggest outbound traveller numbers in the world

Targeted marketing

The Philippines is aligning its marketing strategy to better target the Indian market. “We are engaging in joint marketing promo-

tions, especially with the private sector. Together with Air India, we are planning a big launch for the inaugural flight and a familiarisation trip for travel and tourism stakeholders. We intend to have a targeted marketing and promotional approach to India.”

Catering to Indians

Acknowledging the culinary requirements of Indian travellers, Frasco said, “We fully intend to collaborate with our private stakeholders, as well as our culinary industry, to make sure that the offerings meet the specific tastes of Indians.”

Highlighting the government’s Filipino Brand of Service Excellence Programme, she added, “It ensures world-class hospitality that is authentically Filipino, as it is a programme that stands on the foundation of our values, one of which is cultural sensitivity.” ✂

NEW OPENINGS

Flights	Hotels
Route: Mumbai–Tashkent (Uzbekistan) Frequency: Four times weekly Airline: IndiGo	Hotel: Fairfield by Marriott Jaipur Tonk Road Rooms: 115 Brand: Fairfield by Marriott
Route: Mumbai–Tbilisi (Georgia) Frequency: Three times weekly Airline: IndiGo	Hotel: Siddharth The Fern – An Ecotel Hotel, Jaipur Rooms: 74 Brand: The Fern Hotels & Resorts
Route: Phuket–Mumbai Frequency: Four times weekly Airline: Thai VietJet Air	Hotel: Fortune Select Lucknow Rooms: 93 (to open in 2026) Brand: Fortune Hotels
Route: Kathmandu–Kolkata Frequency: Four times weekly Airline: Buddha Ai	Hotel: Bangaram Island (IHCL SeleQtions Resort) Rooms: 60 Brand: IHCL
Route: Amsterdam–Hyderabad Frequency: Three times weekly Airline: KLM	Hotel: Taj Naina Tikker, Himachal Pradesh Rooms: 120 Brand: IHCL

Rewind, Relive, Repeat

Former SITA and Kuoni professionals came together to celebrate the milestones achieved during their inbound tourism journey. The cheerful gathering was a tribute to the passion, vision and pioneering spirit that once defined the two iconic brands.



Webinar

Click here to register



Interlaken, BLS Interlaken Lake Cruises & Geneva.

The Interlaken Holiday Region situated in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, and Geneva situated in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, are two of the most sought after destinations by Indian travellers. They provide access to a wide range of unique touristic offerings throughout the year.

Through this webinar, we will showcase the following:

- **The Interlaken Holiday Region**, a hub for activities, excursions and adventure
- The scenic cruises on lakes Thun and Brienz offered by **BLS Interlaken Lake Cruises**
- **Geneva**, a vibrant cosmopolitan city, as well as the home of watchmaking.

Date	Day	Webinar	Time	Registration QR code
21st August 2025	Thursday	Interlaken – BLS Interlaken Lake Cruises & Geneva	3.00 PM IST	

Attend all our webinars for a chance to **win a trip to Switzerland in 2026!***

View our previous webinar recordings: switzerland.com/STIndiaWebinars

Register and complete our e-learning program to become a **Switzerland Travel Expert**:
india.switzerlandtravelacademy.ch/

Follow us on **LinkedIn** for the latest news and updates: linkedin.com/company/st-in

* Terms & conditions apply

MOVEMENTS

AIRBUS New Delhi

Airbus has appointed **JÜRGEN WESTERMEIER** as the President and Managing Director for India and South Asia, effective 1 September 2025. Currently the Executive VP and Chief Procurement Officer, Westermeier will succeed Rémi Maillard, who will become Executive VP Engineering for Commercial Aircraft and Head of Technology. In his new role, Westermeier will spearhead Airbus' business in India and South Asia, across Commercial Aircraft, Defence & Space and Helicopters.



TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND Mumbai

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has appointed **NATTACHIT OONSIAM** as the Director of its Mumbai Office, where he will lead destination marketing efforts and deepen trade and media partnerships across Western and Southern India, one of Thailand's most vital source regions for inbound tourism. A senior tourism professional with nearly two decades of experience at TAT, Oonsiam brings a strong track record in regional strategy, international marketing and stakeholder engagement.



AIR NEW ZEALAND Auckland

Air New Zealand appoints **NIKHIL RAVISHANKAR** as the Chief Executive Officer. Ravishankar succeeds Greg Foran, who steps down from the post in October. Currently working as the Chief Digital Officer with the airline, Ravishankar will officially take over as CEO on 20 October 2025. In his almost five years of service with Air New Zealand, he has led major advances in the airline's technology backbone, loyalty programme and customer proposition.



SHERATON GRAND WHITEFIELD, THE ARTISTE KOCHI AND MARRIOTT EXECUTIVE APARTMENTS UB CITY Bengaluru

VARUN MEHROTRA has been elevated to the position of Multi-Property Director, Sales & Marketing, Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Centre, The Artiste Kochi – a Tribute Portfolio Hotel and Marriott Executive Apartments UB City. The elevation comes following Mehrotra's successful tenure at Sheraton Grand Whitefield.



FORTUNE HOTELS Amritsar

Fortune Hotels has appointed **ANURAG BHARADWAJ** as General Manager of Fortune Ranjit Vihar, Amritsar. An accomplished hospitality professional with over 15 years of experience, Bharadwaj is known for his strategic vision, operational expertise and commitment to service excellence. In his new role, he will oversee the hotel's operations, focusing on delivering exceptional guest experiences, enhancing team performance and driving the property's growth and overall business performance.



HILTON GARDEN INN TRIVANDRUM Trivandrum

Muthoot Pappachan Group (MPG), the ownership group of Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum, has appointed **BHARATHI PERUMAL** as General Manager of the hotel. In his new role, Perumal will be responsible for all aspects of hotel operations, including guest services and hotel administration, in addition to overseeing marketing efforts. With more than 22 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Perumal has worked with leading brands, including IHG, Marriott International, Radisson and EHG Bahrain.



NHCC AND HICC Hyderabad

Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) have appointed **MD MOHIUDDIN** as Associate Director of Events. In his new role, he will lead the planning and execution of events across both venues, supported by a team of five. He brings valuable experience in event operations and management, with a focus on delivering smooth, guest-centric experiences.



NOVOTEL VISAKHAPATNAM VARUN BEACH Visakhapatnam

Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach has appointed **VINAYYAK RAVICHANDRA** as Revenue Manager. Ravichandra brings with him over a decade of proven expertise in revenue management across some of the world's most respected hospitality brands, including Hyatt, Accor, Radisson, Hilton, Marriott and IHCL. In his new role, he will be responsible for leading the property's revenue strategy, optimising profitability and driving continued commercial success across all segments.



GRAND MERCURE BENGALURU AT GOPALAN MALL Bengaluru

SURESH REDDY has joined Grand Mercure Bengaluru at Gopalan Mall as Revenue Manager. With more than 14 years of experience in top domestic and international hospitality brands, Reddy brings a data-driven mindset to revenue strategy, pricing intelligence and optimising business performance. In his new role, he will manage revenue strategy, pricing, forecasting and distribution among other things.



Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre (NHCC) and Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC) have appointed **UDIT JOSHI** as Associate Director of Sales. Joshi takes on the role of managing the National and International Association portfolio. With over 12 years of experience in the industry, his expertise will be crucial in driving new opportunities and strengthening HICC's presence in the global MICE space. The appointment comes at a time when NHCC and HICC are witnessing growing momentum in both domestic and international events.



RENAISSANCE BENGALURU RACE COURSE HOTEL Bengaluru


Renaissance Bengaluru Race Course Hotel has appointed **SHRANOTH SURESH** as the Director of Sales. Suresh brings over 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry, with a strong focus on sales strategy, business development and client relationship management. Prior to this, he served as Associate Director of Sales at The Westin Chennai Velachery. His professional journey spans leading hospitality brands.



SAROVAR HOTELS Gurugram

RAJAT JAITLEY joins the Corporate Development team of Sarovar Hotels as Director – Technical Services. The appointment is part of Sarovar Hotels' ongoing efforts to strengthen its leadership team and deepen its capabilities in delivering high-quality, future-ready hospitality projects across the country. Jaitly brings with him over 17 years of experience in hospitality engineering and project management, with a strong track record in hospitality project execution, MEP services design and delivery excellence.





SanJeet
Editor & Publisher

Editorial Team:
Devika Jeet
Nisha Verma
Sushil Kumar
Hazel Jain
Janice Alysius

Design Team:
Sudhir Mudgal
Nityanand Misra

Production:
Anil Kharbanda, General Manager
Ramesh Gupta, Manager

CIN: U22210DL2012PTC230432

Advertising Team (Delhi)
Nikhil Jeet
Arumita Gupta
Jaspreet Kaur

Advertising Team (Mumbai)
Suchita Saran
Harshal Ashar
Samantha Perera

Advertisement Designers
Nitin Kumar
Aditya Pratap Singh
Anil Kharbanda

Circulation:
Ashok Rana

DDP is a publication of DDP Publications Private Limited. All information in DDP is derived from sources, which we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The publisher regret that he cannot accept liability for errors and omissions contained in this publication, however caused. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared by DDP. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers are advised to seek specific advice before acting on information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the readers' particular circumstances. Contents of this publication are copyright. No part of DDP or any part of the contents thereof may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publication in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extracts used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action. The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material solicited or unsolicited nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.

This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or services offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the Indian and International Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.

DDP is printed, published and edited by SanJeet on behalf of DDP Publications Pvt. Ltd., printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110020 and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001 Ph.: +91-9818767141, +91-9650399920

MUMBAI:
504, Marine Chambers, 43, New Marine Lines, Opp. SMDT College, Mumbai - 400 020, India, Ph.: +91-22-22070129; 22070130

MIDDLE EAST:
Durga Das Publications Middle East (FZE) Z1-02, PO Box: 9348, Saf Zone, Sharjah, UAE Ph.: +971-6-5528954, Fax: +971-6-5528956

INDEPENDENCE DAY
SPECIAL OFFER
FOR GPS NAGPUR

3 CITIES #
FOR THE PRICE OF ONE



LIMITED PERIOD OFFER VALID TILL 31ST AUGUST 2025*

BOOK NOW

GPS Nagpur + 2 EcoConnect cities. *T&C Apply



PUNE
11-12 Sep 2025
Sheraton Grand

KOLKATA
19-20 Sep 2025
The LaLiT Great Eastern

KOCHI
7-8 Oct 2025
Crowne Plaza Kochi

NAGPUR
29-30 Jan 2026
Hotel Centre Point

HYDERABAD
13-14 Feb 2026
Marigold Hotel

CHENNAI
6-7 Mar 2026
Hotel Greenpark



JAIPUR
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

SURAT
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

BHOPAL
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

VARANASI
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

GUWAHATI
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

PATNA
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

TRICHY
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

DEHRADUN
11 AM - 5 PM
*TBA

Exhibitor enquiries:

Call: +91 9225248070, +91 9820224272, +91 9096399222 email: harmandeep@gps-india.com | madhu@gps-india.com | raju@gps-india.com

50% of Oman Air volumes come through NDC

This has been a good year for Oman Air as it added two new routes, apart from strengthening the existing routes. In an exclusive with **TRAVTALK**, **Sunil VA**, Regional Vice President – ISC & FE, Oman Air, shares 'oneworld' alliance benefits for the trade.



Hazel Jain

Despite geopolitical challenges earlier in the year, Oman Air has demonstrated remarkable results, bolstered by an uptick in both leisure and business travel. **Sunil VA**, Regional Vice President – ISC & FE, Oman Air, highlights the airline's successful expansion, including its recent induction into the oneworld alliance, which unlocks seamless global connectivity for passengers across 900+ destinations. "This year looks promising despite the challenges we have had. January to March was revolutionary and we did extremely well. But then we had geopolitical issues that pulled us back a little, but we see India has bounced back. Of course, when the season starts for Oman this October, we expect a lot of arrivals."

Oman Air recently also celebrated 30 years of operations between Mumbai and Muscat. Sunil says,



Sunil VA
Regional Vice President
– ISC & FE, Oman Air



"Mumbai is the second route for us in India and one of our flagship routes in India. Having operations to the commercial capital has helped us change the traffic mix we carry; it has changed the image of the airline. It has helped us get into all verticals of business and, most im-

A huge achievement for Oman Air, joining the 'oneworld' alliance will allow the airline to offer more than 900 destinations across the world

portantly, it's been helpful in promoting Oman as a destination, especially after COVID when we saw people looking at Oman for weekend get-aways." The airline has seen a steady load factor of 80s, proving that Oman is now a year-round destination. "We are operating to all the 10 points where we have traffic rights. We are looking at new destinations," he says.

Joining 'oneworld' alliance

A huge achievement for Oman Air, joining the 'oneworld' alliance will allow the airline to offer over 900 destinations across the world with partners.

"We are in the process of aligning connectivity and getting products in place. We have seen good traction for people traveling beyond, especially on British Airways and American Airlines. These are the two products that have really started doing well. We are looking at doing a lot more with the other partner airlines," Sunil adds.

The airline currently has a few aircraft in order — a mix of wide and narrow body aircrafts — to be delivered in 2025 and 2026.

For the trade, the alliance will offer better fares and more products for their clients. Most of their customers are already frequent flyers of 'oneworld' — they will enjoy the facilities and benefits of the 'oneworld' loyalty programme. Oman Air recently launched a promotional programme for the trade on its 30th anniversary that allows travellers to move around the world on Oman Air network on special fares. This was launched on 24 July and will help the trade get attractive fares for travel till the end of the year.

NDC teething problems

Commenting on certain challenges faced by agents adopting New Destination Capability (NDC), Sunil says, "Oman Air has been one of the pioneer airlines to launch NDC in India. We launched it pre-COVID and since then have progressed well. I can proudly say that we are one of the leading airlines in terms of NDC penetration. We are close to above 50 per cent of our volumes coming through NDC, which is a great achievement. We have certain teething issues at times, but I think we have come out with solutions for most of it."

FOCUS OMAN 2025

Oman Air will also be part of 'Focus Oman 2025' show that is scheduled to take place on 18–20 August in Jaipur with the support of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. "We are happy that the ministry will host almost 200 trade partners, wedding planners and MICE operators from across India to attend this three-day event that will also see more than 25 sellers from Oman," says Sunil.

CROSS
HOTELS & RESORTS

CROSS
VIBE
BANGKOK
SRINAKARIN

CROSS VIBE
BANGKOK
SRINAKARIN
IS NOW HERE IN
BANGKOK



Book with your DMC partners
or contact us for reference:
sandeep.raghav@crosshotelsandresorts.in
+91 9599076699

Hyderabad to Amsterdam and beyond

Starting from 3rd September 2025



Find out more at
klm.co.in



Royal Dutch Airlines
Travel Well

AIRiQ
www.airiqonline.in

60,000+ Hotels in
INDIA



Radisson

GINGER
An IHCL Brand

THE FERN
HOTELS & RESORTS

PRIDE
HOTELS & RESORTS

ROYAL ORCHID
HOTELS

Sterling
Hotels Different!

www.airiqonline.in



+91 8100 600 600 | hotelsupport@airiq.in