



TRAVTALK



GLOBAL PANORAMA SHOWCASE	
Hyderabad	Jun 28-30, 2018
Chandigarh	Jul 05-07, 2018
Ahmedabad	Jul 12-14, 2018
Lucknow	Jul 19-21, 2018
Kolkata	Aug 02-04, 2018
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New cities, new opportunities

Harmandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), believes that the format of their show, coupled with its operations going completely digital, will definitely make the exhibition a force to reckon with, especially in the secondary and tertiary markets.



GPS 2018

As its chief goal of empowering the travel fraternity from the Tier-II and Tier-III markets across India, the basic purpose of GPS is to reach out to agents in the cities where the event is being held. This year, we have extended ourselves to Hyderabad and the tertiary markets in the states of

Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, even bordering to Mahar-

ashtra will be covered by their presence in Hyderabad. With Lucknow as a new edition, we will be looking at covering the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttaranchal and the agents from around these markets. Our flagship event in Nagpur has witnessed an overwhelming attendance of over 1,300 participants with over 120 exhibitors.

Telangana Tourism Conclave

In Hyderabad, we have tied up with The Federation of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTAPCCI) as our partner for the Telangana Tourism Conclave 2018 (GPS-Hyderabad) scheduled from June 28-30. The event is being presented by GPS

“With Lucknow as a new edition, we will be looking at covering the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttaranchal and the agents from around these markets”

in Hyderabad and organised by FTAPCCI, with Telangana Tourism coming on board as a host state for the event. Other boards like West Bengal Tourism, Maharashtra Tourism, Haryana, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, TruJet and Ramoji Film City are the lead participants and major partners for this event. One of the gala events in Hyderabad is being held at the Ramoji Film City where people will get to experience the ‘Bahubali’ set and other opportunities to relish and experience the hospitality of Telangana.

100 per cent digital

Having launched the GPS App at the 2016 edition in Ahmedabad, we've seen a huge growth. People now understand that they no longer need to carry brochures or visiting cards. We have a feature where visiting cards can easily be scanned via the app. However, everything is at a cost and we are trying to optimise the value proposition that we offer to our exhibitors. Everything is electronically run. Therefore, we make sure that everyone carries their smart phones with the avail-

ability of 3G and 4G network. We are the only platform in the world which is running its event completely electronically. Crowd Compass by Cvent has recently done a Success Story on GPS. The Crowd Compass app built for GPS has created a wave in the Indian travel industry as it is the first-of-its-kind. It has managed our exhibitors to save a cost of over USD 100,000 since 2017 and has also saved many trees from being cut down.

New Initiatives

GPS will launch an educational programme, EDUX for the new generation as well as existing frontline and management to improve their skills

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New property in Mumbai

Moving away from Tier-II cities, Indana Hotels & Resorts is now looking to add a metro city to its expanding portfolio. Mumbai is on the cards.



After a resounding success for its two properties in Jodhpur and Jaipur, Indana Hotels & Resorts is now looking to expand its portfolio by adding a property in Mumbai. Revealing future plans and current strategies, **Meera Pahwa**, Vice President—Marketing and Sales, Indana Hotels & Resorts says, “Our next hotel will open by 2020 in Mumbai near the international airport.



Meera Pahwa
Vice President (Marketing and Sales), Indana Hotels & Resorts

“ We are promoting both our hotels - Indana Palace Jodhpur and Indana Palace Jaipur at Global Panorama Showcase since these Tier-II cities have the potential markets which can drive business for us ”

It will have 260-odd keys for which the work is in progress. Udaipur will follow soon after that.” The hotel is participating in the upcoming Global

meet the client’s requirements. Hyderabad and Pune have huge potential for us from the MiCE point of view. A lot of IT companies and automobile

good connectivity.”

As of now, Indana receives good support from the inbound and domestic markets as well as MiCE and wedding segments. However, it is in the process of working out a strategy for developing high-end clients for its cottage suites at Indana Palace Jaipur which are themed cottages and priced at a premium. “Rajasthan is also a testing ground for many automobile companies hence we are trying to see how this segment can be tapped. Further to that, car rallies drivers and bikers are another interesting segment that we want to develop,” Pahwa adds.

Acknowledging the importance of travel trade, Indana works closely with it by giving them all the assistance to market the product. It also offers seasonal special rates, packages and



Panorama Showcase (GPS) 2018 that will travel to seven cities in India. “We are promoting both our hotels - Indana Palace Jodhpur and Indana Palace Jaipur at this show since these Tier-II cities have the potential markets which can drive the business for us,” Pahwa adds. The 88-key Indana Palace Jodhpur and the 118-key Indana Palace Jaipur are relatively new. The Jaipur property opened its doors only in December 2016.

industry prefer the Rajasthan sector for their conferences and launches. With regards to domestic tourism, we feel that Indana Palace Jaipur should perform better as it is a part of the Golden Triangle and has

value-added offers. “We are also open to showcasing our products to FTO’s and local agents if they want to experience the hotels to sell them better,” Pahwa says.

Facilities at the hotels

Indana Palace Jodhpur has 80 rooms and eight suites while Jaipur offers 108 rooms and 10 themed cottage suites. Indana also offers multiple options of spaces for weddings and MiCE. Jodhpur has a 10,000 sqft banquet hall which opens up to 40,000 sqft manicured lawn, providing panoramic views. Additionally, it has two party rooms. The inner courtyard makes a perfect outdoor setting. Jaipur offers 8000 sqft of pillarless banquet hall which is connected to 2,500 sqft pre-function area and an attached 40,000 sqft landscaped lawn ideal for large conferences and exhibitions. It also has a party room and business centre for MiCE. It can cater to Jain, Rajasthani, vegan food and gluten-free food.

She continues, “Cities like Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh drive the business of weddings - a very important segment for us since we have suitable choices of venues to

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Ark Travels cruises smoothly

Ark Travels continues to sail smoothly across 2018 with exciting offers for the trade – right from Dream Cruises to Norwegian Cruise Lines and Club Med. **Khalid Gori**, COO, Ark Travels, shares more details.



What are the main focus areas for Ark Travels this year?

We have witnessed a great year as far as cruise tourism is concerned. The five-star experience on Genting Dream ship backed by ultimate destinations like Singapore, Phuket, Port Klang, North Bali and others have set the tone among the FITs, Groups and MiCE movements from India. Norwegian Cruise Lines on the other hand has further opened doors to more unique destinations in Europe and

Q How is this season for Ark?

The holiday season was exceptionally good for Ark Travels, with the last-minute bookings coming in. We expect this trend to continue for the next holiday season as vacationers are on the lookout

for value-for-money and unique experiences.

Q What was the reason behind choosing to participate in Global Panorama Showcase?

GPS has given a new dimension to the way we looked at

travel and tourism exhibitions. It helps us to penetrate the virgin markets and hit the right chord with travel partners who wants to learn and sell cruises. Hyderabad, Kochi and Lucknow are relatively new and upcoming markets for Ark Travels.

Q Any offers for the trade?

Currently, we are offering 50 per cent off on the second guest for Genting Dream ex-Singapore sailing (WED sailing on Balcony Cabins only), while kids free promotion is available on its sister ship

World Dream ex Hong Kong. 'Free At Sea' promo is being offered on Norwegian Cruise Lines cruises. For Club Med Mauritius, we are running a special promo of USD 130 per person per night, while Kani and Finolhu properties are being pitched.



Khalid Gori
COO
Ark Travels

the Caribbean region. The recent addition of NCL Bliss sailing straight into Alaska from Seattle is a masterstroke among the cruise service industry. We have our focus set in promoting itineraries ranging from East to West on various cruise lines. Crystal Cruises, Regent Seven Seas and Oceania Cruises are few other products which we aim to establish in the Indian market. Enquiries for Club Med's all-inclusive resorts have witnessed a sharp growth this season with queries also coming in for unconventional winter destinations such as Switzerland, France and Japan.

Events Galore

Ark Travels is the first PSA to host an Indian wedding on-board Genting Dream ex – Singapore

Big Bang theme of Bollywood Nights and Aqua Zumba for agents and passengers are soon to be held in the next few months

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Travstarz in new markets

In an effort to become the largest B2B brand, Travstarz Global Group has introduced new products for North America and Europe at competitive prices.



Post the acquisition by CTRIP in January this year, Travstarz Global Group has been busy working on the merger of its reservation systems into RezB2B.com. This process, which aims to offer one of the largest inventories in terms of flights, hotels, tours and innovative features for travel agents, is in

for North America and Europe at highly competitive prices which are unmatched in India. As a part of our global strategy to become one of the largest B2B brands, we plan to strengthen our DMC operations with new acquisitions happening across the globe."

According to him, this season of outbound travel has seen a lot of demand for newer



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

“Baku in Azerbaijan has seen tremendous response for FIT, MiCE and leisure groups, besides the Eastern European destinations”

its final stages of completion and shall be launched very soon in India. **Pankaj Nagpal**, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group, informs, "With our global headquarters now in the US, we have introduced some very interesting products

destinations. "Baku in Azerbaijan has seen tremendous response for FIT, MiCE and leisure groups. In addition, the Eastern European destinations like Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, etc have also shown good potential. We have

recently opened offices at Azerbaijan and Egypt besides introducing some great products for Seychelles," he says.

Nagpal believes that with Indian travellers maturing, the outbound tourism industry is bound to grow. He explains that travellers from the metros are open for new experiences and destinations.

JTR hopes for Vietnam rise

With the anticipated VietJet Air flight connecting India with Vietnam to start by October 2018, JTR Events & Marketing is hopeful that the numbers will blossom.



Indian travellers looking for a new destination to visit can finally expect some good news. A new flight is expected to connect India directly to Vietnam this year. Speaking about this is **Robert Tan**, Executive Director, JTR Events & Marketing Co, whose parent company is Lac Hong Voyages Co, a B2B operator and wholesaler based in Vietnam. He says, "Currently, the market is slow due to a lack of direct flight connections. We are hopeful that VietJet Air will start flights from October this year."



Robert Tan
Executive Director
JTR Events & Marketing Co

For JTR, India has huge potential. "New Delhi and Mumbai work very well for us. Even the Buddhist sectors hold good potential," Tan says. The company will be participating at the upcoming Global Panorama Showcase 2018 set to be held in multiple tiered cities in India. "We found GPS as a reliable platform to market ourselves with an increasing market penetration into the non-metro cities," he adds.

He has seen the traveller profile to Vietnam and the surrounding countries change over the years. "With direct flights and lower air fares, the scenario will improve as most Indian clients are looking to visit Cambodia and Myanmar. We may look at adding more destinations to our portfolio. We are also starting to promote India and Nepal in our markets, which may interest the travel trade here," Tan adds.

In 2017, Vietnam received around 85,000 Indian visitors, Tan says, adding that there was a 30 per cent rise in Vietnamese visitors in India.

Offers for Agents

JTR is working on joint marketing programmes through the tourism department and has lined up familiarisation trips for the agents

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Roop Niwas Kothi, Nawalgarh

GUJARAT



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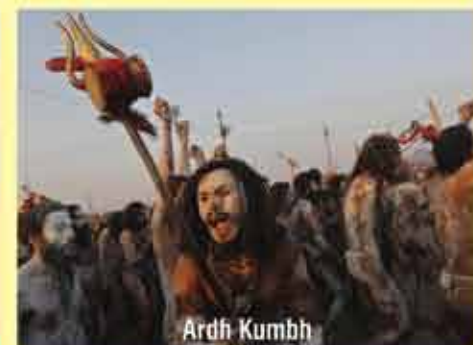
The Sunset Desert Camp



Pushkar



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Tiered cities' untapped potential

Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi, is focusing on Tier-II cities to get an early mover advantage and gain customer loyalty as these markets generate a better ADR than the metros.

 TT Bureau

Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi has recently undergone an extensive two-year renovation and is ready to welcome guests in contemporary and luxurious guest rooms and suites, stylish restaurants with a team of expatriate chefs and Chi, The Spa. Speaking about this is **Alok Chakravarty**, Director—Sales & Marketing, Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi. He says, "The revamp also includes our spectacular Horizon Club Lounge located on the 19th floor of the hotel, offering views of the bustling New Delhi and the most iconic landmarks of the city, including India Gate, Lotus Temple and Jantar Mantar to leave you transfixed. The best in the city, Horizon Club Lounge at Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi, is a soothing,



Alok Chakravarty
Director—Sales & Marketing
Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi

contemporary space for the avid traveller."

The jewel in the crown is The Presidential Suite, spread over 2345 sq ft area, offering expansive living spaces, chic furnishings, stunning views, and a private deep-soaking Jacuzzi. The suite features two expansive bedrooms with en-

suite bathrooms and a walk-in closet, separate living room with dining area, guest wash-room and a kitchenette. The stylish rooms with spectacular views of Lutyens' Delhi offer guests the perfect luxury getaway.

The property is participating in the upcoming Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) 2018 that is travelling to seven Tier-II cities in India. Explaining why the hotel decided to promote itself on this platform, Chakravarty adds, "As emerging markets, hotels are increasingly focussing on Tier-II markets to get early mover advantage and gain customer loyalty. These markets generate a better ADR than the metros and have the propensity to take premium suites and Club rooms."



He adds that corporate travellers prefer staying at his hotel due to the location advantage. Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi is in close proximity to government offices, shopping centres and business districts. The hotel is a 30-minute drive from the

domestic and international airports and a few minutes away from the international grounds of the exhibition centre, Pragati Maidan and most of the embassies. "With the renovated product and best business lounge in the city, more corporate travellers

prefer to stay with us. We are also looking at targeting the international leisure guests with our new modern rooms, amazing dining options and Chi, The Spa," he adds. The hotel offers a trade rate to its travel partners to experience the product. 



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Venturing into the experiential

With plans for growth and expansion, 1589 Hotels is set to open 50 properties by March 2019 and record a growth of 150% in revenue and 250% in profitability over last year.



TT Bureau

1589 Hotels has witnessed unprecedented growth for its properties, claims **Anant Kumar** and **Udit Kumar**, Joint Managing Directors, 1589 Hotels. "The last one year for 1589 Hotels was transformational. We were able to increase our revenue by 100 per cent and our inventory by 50 per cent. We ended the year by adding 15 hotels to our kitty, with 32 operational hotels as of end of March 2018. We also launched our one-of-a-kind procurement system 1589.procsmart.com



Udit Kumar
Joint Managing Director
1589 Hotels

- catering specifically to all our brands. This is greatly helping us standardise our product," reveals Anant Kumar.

Sharing details about their upcoming properties, Udit Kumar says, "We are launching four hotels in July in Ghaziabad, Sultanpur, Jodhpur and Dalhousie. Dalhousie will be launched under our new brand Brij Villa, a boutique experiential property dedicated to discerning travellers by offering local experiences, personalised services and luxurious amenities."

Partnerships and digital media presence is on the cards to create brand awareness. Anant Kumar shares, "This year, we

will be featuring in many blogs, and will focus on growing and retaining our existing customer base through loyalty programmes and memberships."

Travel trade is an important channel for sales, insists Udit

Kumar. "By participating in major travel trade fairs within India, we engage with the travel trade community. In addition, we will feature in luxury fairs in London, Indonesia, Germany, Dubai and local Indian travel marts to promote our brand. Also, we conduct

regular meetings with agents and organise Fams and one-on-one interactions with our team," he adds.

Going ahead, the brand will have 50 operational properties in March 2019 with a 150 per cent growth in revenue and

250 per cent growth in profitability over last year, claims Anant Kumar. "Our focus area will be in developing the Clarks Resort and Brij brands over the next five years while maintaining a steady growth in the RNB and Gen X portfolio," he shares. ↴



Anant Kumar
Joint Managing Director, 1589 Hotels

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Palace Jodhpur

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New Properties

1589 Hotels is investing in four properties over the course of two years—one of them will be in Nepal, while three will be in India

The focus area will be to develop the Clarks Resort and Brij brands

Leading with GPS App

As another season of GPS begins, **Tanushka Kaur Anand**, Executive Director, GPS, says the App will prove to be the perfect tool for the programmes.

TT Bureau

The addition of two new cities—Hyderabad and Lucknow—to the Global Panorama Showcase portfolio, according to **Tanushka Kaur Anand**, means that they can cater to more Tier-II and Tier-III markets. “We are looking forward for a positive response in all the eight cities. We are working on improving the quality of GPS as a show by bringing in a mixed bag of products as well as targeting to increase



Tanushka Kaur Anand
Executive Director
Global Panorama Showcase

the footfall year-on-year,” she shares.

What will make a difference for GPS will be the way in which technology is being adopted, especially the GPS App. Anand says, “Following our tagline ‘Go Paperless with GPS’, we have been successful in making our show a complete e-event. Exhibitors

now showcase their products and promotional material on the App. With the use of the lead scanning feature, exhibitors can scan the badge of the attendee, and the scanned data is readily available for the exhibitor in the cloud storage in Excel format, thereby decreasing the manual work. We are developing digital advancements to make the App more user-friendly. The overwhelming response at GPS-Nagpur 2018 has surpassed our expectations. During educational seminars and presentations, the speakers and the present attendees could interact one-on-one through our live Q&A feature. The app enables an attendee to exchange cards, make notes, schedule meetings, message clients, upload company profiles and promote products using our social wall.”

10X Membership

Attendees can avail discounts through this loyalty card. 10X members can interact with each other through the 10X App, where discounts, offers and EDWIN schedules are updated

Ready to get, set, go!

While expectations from GPS 2018 have been high, the EDWIN programmes are taking off well and is garnering interest from the travel community.

TT Bureau

Rishiraj Singh Anand, Joint Managing Director, Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), says that by adding two new cities—Hyderabad and Lucknow—one can expect more educational and informative seminars. “The acquisition cost per data is of just ₹94 for the exhibitors. We are expecting more footfall of buyers in each city, with over 700 buyers in the new cities that have been added. We hope to have more people adopting to the GPS App so as to make this a completely digitalised event,” he adds.

Claiming that GPS is different from many other travel shows, he says, “GPS is a completely electronic event. All the data and product updates are shared electroni-



Rishiraj Singh Anand
Joint Managing Director
Global Panorama Showcase

cally. The networking done at GPS is much different than any other exhibition, thereby giving more PR building time to both exhibitors and buyers.”

Anand says that a lot of new innovations are taking place to help the exhibitors promote their products in a better way. “There will be

at least 60 per cent new exhibitors, opening the market further for the buyers in terms of new product launches.”

Sharing details regarding the EDWIN programme, he says, “EDWIN, which is Educational Destination Workshop International, was launched last year by GPS. Two successful events have already taken place. EDWIN Bali and EDWIN Ladakh had received a phenomenal response from the buyers.”

EDWIN 2018

- Over 100 buyers have been qualified to participate for the EDWIN 2018 to be held in Ladakh in September
- GPS is looking at a few more international destinations for future EDWINs





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Building on new buyers

Ankush Nijhawan, Executive Director, GPS, says that with two new cities for this season, they are going to target a new set of buyers and sellers.



The Global Panorama Showcase 2018 will be held in Hyderabad and Lucknow for the first time, taking the count of the cities it covers to eight this year. Nijhawan says that the addition of these two markets would only increase the size of the GPS family. "The buyer set in these markets is immense. These markets also need a show that could benefit the local buyer and seller communities both. We have got overwhelming response from these markets. We believe that this would help people in these regions work better," he adds.

He claims that GPS would be beneficial for industry players in Tier-II and Tier-III markets, as well as for the new cities that they are adding continuously. "The event proves to be an advantage to both buyers



Ankush Nijhawan
Executive Director
Global Panorama Showcase

and sellers in these markets as they are more comfortable to do their business meetings closer home than going to other big cities. This makes a lot of difference to them and results in better outcome," claims Nijhawan.

Nijhawan is in charge of creating a big buyer support for the show, and says, "GPS

has seen a remarkable growth in the last two years. We have seen a great response with increasing number of registrations. While last year was quite big, in 2018, we have seen a growth of around 10-15 per cent as compared to 2017. All this is because

“Both buyers and sellers in tiered markets are comfortable to conduct their business meetings closer home”

of the quality we bring to the table and the fact that we are a technologically advanced event and have gone fully digital with our state-of-the-art and user-friendly application.”

Membership goes 10x

Claiming that 10X membership will be a game changer, Raju Akolkar, CEO, GPS, believes the latest edition of the event will be highly successful.



While the addition of two new cities would bring an enhanced focus on the Tier II and Tier III city strategy of Global Panorama showcase, Akolkar says that they are expecting huge response from both the new and old markets. "Over the years, GPS has carved its name in the travel industry as a premium B2B Show in the tertiary markets. We are different from the other travel trade exhibitions since we present ourselves as the B2B Platform to empower and educate the travel fraternity, which in turn helps the travel agents to get connected to the suppliers/tourism boards/cruise liners/airlines/DMCs/travel insurance etc," he adds.

However, Akolkar claims that the keyword this season for GPS participants will be



Raju Akolkar
CEO
Global Panorama Showcase

the 10X membership. "10X Membership Card is the new buzz for the buyers, with huge benefits to reap and Eco Connect is a module for the sellers who want to be on board but need to experience it at lower cost. 10X Membership card is going to be the match winner this year and GPS also has been adjudged as the Best B2B Travel Event at the India

Travel Awards South 2018," he says.

Another success, according to Akolkar, is EDWIN. "This year we had EDWIN BALI after a successful EDWIN LADAKH. There were 151 attendees at

“Eco Connect is a module for those sellers who want to be on board but need to experience it at lower cost”

Bali and we had over 10,000 business meetings there apart from the local hotel visits and sightseeing. We have already announced EDWIN@11380 for Ladakh and EDWIN@SEA for DREAM CRUISE is in the offing," he shares.

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Still going strong at 6

Being part of GPS since the beginning, **Madhu Saliankar**, Executive Director—Sales & Marketing, GPS, has seen the event achieve new heights in six years.

 TT Bureau

In its sixth year, GPS has gained popularity as the premier B2B travel trade interaction for the Tier-II and Tier-III markets, says Saliankar. "For the financial calendar, we have added two more cities - Hyderabad and Lucknow, and are hopeful to connect and network with many more agents from its surrounding cities and towns. Connecting India to the world and world to India, has been our primary objective which is possible only if we add on more events into our calendar. Today, we have a loyal and steady footfall of over 8,000 trade buyers and visitors from across six cities and we hope to connect and network with over 10,000 agents in our sixth year."

She says that GPS has become successful because in the last five years, they have



Madhu Saliankar
Executive Director—Sales & Marketing, Global Panorama Showcase

brought many tour operators from far-flung cities and towns of India to attend GPS and gain knowledge about the latest trends and developments of the industry whilst gaining destination information. "Through the buyer attendance, exhibitors too have been able to understand consumer behaviour, which is different for different markets, and this has

helped them present or put forward the right product in the relevant markets," she adds.

Saliankar believes that show's achievements include its presence on the e-platform and the introduction of Educational Destination Workshop (EDWIN). "The agents who have been on the EDWINs are empowered to promote the destination purely through first-hand experience," she reveals.

Fresh Offerings

- ✦ Domestic products are on display with the participation of domestic tourism boards
- ✦ Exhibitors can explore new markets and local tourism body associations

Broadening the horizon

Networking opportunities and technological empowerment are the aims of GPS, says **Mohit Deshpande**, Executive Director (Buyers Programme), GPS.

 TT Bureau

The expansion of GPS to Hyderabad and Lucknow would result in a general increment in the market reach to more than 8,000 travel experts, says Deshpande. "The technology adopted in GPS 2018 is much more superior than the last editions of GPS. Almost everyone is adopting the GPS App, which has become an important feature of GPS. The response to EDWIN has also been exceptional."

Sharing his expectations from the event, he comments, "We expect to educate and empower the travel fraternity through our efforts in GPS. We wish to broaden the horizon of the travel industry and help its members adopt modern technologies as well as make them well-versed with taxations like GST which



Mohit Deshpande
Executive Director (Buyers Programme), GPS

can directly affect one's business."

What makes GPS special is seamless interaction between buyers and sellers where they crack instant deals, claims Deshpande. "We are one of the only events that is almost completely digital. We take pride in the fact that we have minimal usage of paper in our

events and everything from scheduling meetings to sharing information is done via the GPS app. Another highlight is the GPS 10X membership, which enables someone to attend all the events of GPS on discounted prices. We have also launched an Xclusive Club for the exhibitors," says Deshpande.

He adds that EDWIN as a programme expands the experience of participants to a large array of products as we have tourism boards, visa facilitators, insurance companies, anything and everything related to a travel industry along with the hotel chains and airlines. "With the GPS App, our event has gone completely paperless, promoting our efforts of going green, making us the first event in the travel and tourism industry to go digital," he says. ✦

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New hotel in the offing

With new properties in the luxury segment, continuous profits and plans of restructuring itself, Justa Hotels & Resorts is sure to scale new heights.

TT Bureau

Justa Hotels & Resorts has witnessed an impressive growth in the last one year. **Rohit Katyal**, Head of Sales & Marketing – Delhi NCR, Justa Hotels & Resorts, agrees, “Last year was a positive year and we experienced 10 per cent increase in occupancy pan India and an increase in ADR as well. The fourth quarter specifically ended on a high note for us.”

Moving ahead, the company is focussing on restructuring itself. “Going forward, our motto is to control distribution cost and ensure better presence on the digital medium. We have just launched our new website,” shares Katyal.

Regarding new properties, he says, “We are working on two new projects and are



Rohit Katyal
Head of Sales & Marketing – Delhi NCR, Justa Hotels & Resorts

confident that by the end of the year, both will be operational. Rajasthan and metro cities are preferred locations for us, but at the same time, we are exploring possibilities of acquiring new hotels in Tier-II cities as well.”

The Design Hotel Chennai by Justa opened last year and it’s been doing very well,

according to Katyal, “We have seen better occupancy in the last 12 months. Our endeavour is going forward to maintain occupancy level and optimise on ADR,” he adds.

“We are working on two new projects and are confident that by the end of the year, both will be operational”

Several initiatives have been undertaken to create brand awareness. “For the last four months we have been doing roadshows in multiple cities and creating awareness about our new banquet facility at Rajputana Udaipur,” he shares.

Aiming for the stars

With three properties in its kitty, Starlit Suites is planning to open a new one every ten months for travellers on both short or long-haul trips.

TT Bureau

Sophisticated and timeless, Starlit Suites offers personalised offerings for its discerning guests. **Kavita Manchanda**, Director—Sales & Marketing, Starlit Suites, claims that their wide range of suites and serviced apartments, added with state-of-the-art facilities and dedicated services, makes sure that guests get every comfort suited to their preference. “We aim to provide our guests with extraordinary comfort through technological and modern architecture, offering a home-like ambience. Whether it is for leisure or work, Starlit Suites is an ideal solution for extended stays of a week, a month or even longer,” she says.

With properties in Kochi, Neemrana and Bengaluru,



Kavita Manchanda
Director—Sales & Marketing
Starlit Suites

Starlit Suites offers a home away from home, claims Manchanda. “While we offer value for money, comfort, safety, experience and a ready-to-move-in apartment for patrons, the strongest message for us is that we aspire to provide a ‘home every time a guest checks in,’” she adds.

The company aspires to grow

at a steady rate, according to Manchanda and hence, they try and launch a property every ten months. “Last year, we introduced the country to Starlit Suites Neemrana while in the previous year, we introduced Starlit Suites Kochi and Starlit Suites Electronic City in 2014. We have seen tremendous growth from the different markets we cater to,” she reveals.

The brand looks at actively increasing its footprint across the length and breadth of the country.

New Properties

Starlit Suites is set to launch four new hotels in the next 10 to 12 months at Shirdi, Tirupati, Nainital and Hyderabad, besides other projects in the pipeline at key gateway cities

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Brand awareness is integral

Travel Café is striving hard to increase the brand awareness at national and international levels. The company, apart from using traditional forms of promotions, will focus on driving its strategy through digital marketing tools.



Travel Café prides itself as holiday designers with specialisation in offering in-depth knowledge, service and flexibility. “We have been able to consistently maintain a cent per cent growth YOY. The key here is not to be persistent to religiously meet the target every year but derive new strategies to beat the existing target,” says **Durgesh Sharma**, the company’s Director.

Travel Café offers a variety of products and services to its clients such as domestic and international flight tickets, three-star and above hotels in domestic and international destination, domestic and outbound holiday packages,



Durgesh Sharma
Director
Travel Café

foreign exchange, travel insurance including travel card, visas, etc. The company caters to MICE segment too, including corporate and school groups and is also the official wedding partner with Bali Tourism Board. Sharma adds, “We also provide other complimentary services related to music, sports, education, festivals, etc which will be implemented soon in our range of products.”

In 2018, Travel Café will focus primarily on brand awareness and promotion at national and international level. “We have created animated video ads for brand promotion to be run in theatres. We have similar projects in the pipeline for traditional media platforms

“Clients now want to invest their time and money not only for comfort and luxury but also once-in-a-lifetime opportunities”

and social media. We want to invest smartly with a digitalised marketing strategy in the near

future,” adds Sharma. Identifying some trends in tourism and hospitality industry in India,

Sharma points out that the pre-defined or the traditional travel has undergone a drastic change in the recent years with the advancement in technology. Sharma feels that technology has provided access to knowledge and information. She says, “Clients now want

to invest their time and money not only for comfort and luxury but also once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, adventures and natural experiences. The advent of homestays, hostels and independent accommodation facilities has changed the hospitality spectrum.”

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Brand Promotion

Travel Café has created animated video ads for brand awareness to be run in theatres

The company has been optimising its website regularly and aims to be one of the most user-friendly and attractive travel websites

Tech to rule the roost

Cygnett Hotels and Resorts, with its focus on technology, is set to reach new heights with the introduction of revolutionary hospitality concepts.

TT Bureau

Offering a panoply of brands across all segments—right from luxury to budget—Cygnett Hotels & Resorts has a portfolio that is unrivalled in the hospitality industry. **Sarbendra Sarkar**, Founder and Managing Director of Cygnett Hotels and Resorts, says, "Our endeavour is to be ahead of the curve without compromising on the traditions that forms the basis of great hospitality. Thus, today we are a company that is almost unrivalled in its versatile offering across all segments from economy to luxury with the same consistent excellence in quality and service at the industry's most competitive pricing."

The brand has incorporated the best that technology has to offer in all aspects of



Sarbendra Sarkar
Founder and Managing Director of
Cygnett Hotels and Resorts

operations including guest relations, guest behaviour analysis, feedback mechanisms, internal controls and communication and reputation management. "Cygnett is a very strong tech-savvy and progressive brand. It stands for 'Versatile Offerings. Great Prices. Cygnetture experiences.' Technology is a core enabler

in our USP to deliver the ultimate Cygnetture experience. Cygnett has its next-gen technology, CygnettCX. We use technology as a tool to constantly analyse and improve the experiences we provide at our hotels. We have also introduced revolutionary hospitality concepts like 'Customised Manchising' hospitality industry dynamic and responsive to the changing market," says Sarkar.

Their future plans, according to Sarkar are, expansion, innovation, improvement. "We're now entering markets in South East Asia, Middle East and Africa. We're introducing new hospitality concepts to maximise value for customers and investors. Cygnett will be opening soon by the end of this year in Itanagar, Belgaon, Sikkim, Kolkata and Goa," he shares. ↴

A hub for weary souls

Shreyas Retreat near Bengaluru offers the best in Ayurveda and caters to selected guests, which makes it an exclusive getaway for patrons.

TT Bureau

A member of the Relais & Chateaux group, Shreyas Retreat is an exclusive wellness retreat offering the authentic practice of yoga,



N Balaji
CEO
Shreyas Retreat

meditation, naturopathy and Ayurveda in a sprawling 25-acre verdant retreat. "Located just 45 km from

Bengaluru, this retreat accommodates just 25 guests in the lap of nature. Its elegantly appointed rooms comprise three poolside, eight garden cottages and one three-bedroom cottage. At Shreyas, we aim to demonstrate that yoga can be learnt and practised

The facilities include an Infinity Pool, outdoor jacuzzi, gymnasium, library, home theatre, spa, walking trail and cricket nets. There is also a brand-new 16,000 square feet spa that offers the entire gamut of Ayurveda therapies. Balaji adds, "Rated as one of the finest yoga retreats in the world,

Guests of all experience levels, from beginner to advanced, are welcome at Shreyas, and Yoga classes are customised to suit their requirements

by all, irrespective of age, health and faith. Guests of all levels of experience from beginner to advanced are welcome at Shreyas, and Yoga classes are customised to suit their requirements," reveals **N Balaji**, CEO, Shreyas Retreat.

a stay at Shreyas promises to be an unforgettable experience. We cater to a small group of guests, and hence can provide personalised attention at each step, from detailed wellness consultation at the beginning as well as at the end." ↴

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Make Plans enlists Seychelles

The Maldives specialist is interested in selling niche destinations that matches its profile. Currently, Make Plans Holidays has already begun operations in Seychelles to add more destinations to its portfolio.



Maldives specialist Make Plans Holidays has been making strategic strides. It is in the process of creating an online platform to bridge the gap between online consumers and Make Plans Holidays which currently exists. **DJ Ashar**, Owner, Make Plans Holidays, says, "Social media has a lot of avid travellers who are interested in the Maldives. We want to increase the awareness of our offerings



DJ Ashar
Owner
Make Plans Holidays

online to tap into the millennial segment of the market that is always connected online."

The company is also looking to expand its offerings and add more destinations to its portfolio. Confirming this is Ashar who says, "We are interested in niche destinations that will resonate with our profile. So currently, we have already begun operations in the Seychelles."

However, Maldives remains popular as ever for Make Plans Holidays. Speaking about how the destination has been performing for them, Ashar says, "Maldives used to be a fairly unknown destination to tourists when we had started Make Plans Holidays. However, with the proliferation of social media and the increased spending in travel, Maldives is now not only a very well-known destination, but this popularity is converting into sales for us. In a nutshell, Maldives shows even more growth potential for us because of its popularity as well as its proximity to India."

“GPS will help us to not only increase our awareness in the market but also learn about the current happenings in this sector”

Make Plans Holidays has positioned itself as a luxury travel agent for the Maldives.

Its clientele mainly includes honeymooners, HNI's with a taste for luxury as well as those

interested in scuba diving. The company is now participating in the upcoming GPS 2018 that is travelling to seven cities. Underlining the reason behind choosing GPS as a platform for promoting Make Plans, Ashar adds, "GPS offers an excellent platform for us to connect with

others in our line of business. It will help us to not only increase our awareness in the market but also learn a lot more about the current happenings in this sector. We are constantly working towards offering the best we can in terms of market competitive prices."

Target Group

The clientele of Make Plans Holidays mainly includes honeymooners, HNI's with a taste for luxury as well as those interested in scuba diving

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Morocco is now closer

With its recent DMC operations to Morocco, Anchor Destinations & Travel Management will soon add Tunisia to its list of destinations for trade partners.

TT Bureau

A 100 per cent B2B travel company, Anchor Destinations & Travel Management has recently started DMC operations to Morocco. Speaking about this is **Deepika Khanna**, Founder and CEO, Anchor Destinations & Travel Management. "Morocco is a perfect combination of sea, sand, snow and sun. It is African yet very European in its essence. We have been already working to develop this destination since the last eight months as it has great



Deepika Khanna
Founder & CEO, Anchor Destinations & Travel Management

potential for the Indian traveller," Khanna says.

Anchor Destinations generally caters to four and five-star luxury segments of travellers and is competitive in terms of quality services for various destinations such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Maldives, Bali, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Greece, Italy,

Spain and Portugal.

Khanna adds, "We are a complete B2B company and so we get repeat clients in terms of our agency partners which enthruses us to work harder as we now understand their specific requirements."

She feels that Morocco is not for the first-time traveller. "It is experiential in nature and a great destination to do in combination with destinations such as Spain or France.

Flight connections are viable, and the destination is very affordable. It has various activities and experiences to offer from staying in the desert, quadbiking, hot air ballooning, river rafting, luxury stay at the most beautiful palaces in Casablanca, visit to the movie studio in Quarzazate, nightlife and great entertainment," she says.

Future Plans

Anchor Destinations is set to introduce its destination focussed meetings and presentations from Western India with interactive sessions and shall gradually move citywise

India outbound varied

New segments like women solo travel & culinary tourism are gaining popularity, believes **Vikas Tyagi**, Group Director—Sales & Operations, Tybros Group.

TT Bureau

In 2018, Tybros Group recorded a healthy growth in various business divisions like MICE, luxury events and high-end weddings. The company also offered an array of offbeat destinations to its clients. Going forward, the company plans to expand all its verticals as well as add new offices. Tybros Group also operates Essence of Nature, a wellness retreat situated between Ranikhet and Corbett.

According to **Vikas Tyagi**, Group Director—Sales and Operations, Tybros Group, solo women travel is gaining popularity. Insisting on mobile photography-based tourism, Tyagi says, "This type of tourism has huge scope, especially among the youth with the advent of Instagram, Pinterest and other similar



Vikas Tyagi
Group Director—Sales and Operations, Tybros Group

platforms. Also, other trends like responsible tourism and culinary tourism are gaining traction. These segments are expected to grow by 57 per cent by 2019. Travel agencies simply cannot ignore this market since it makes up a massive portion of potential clientele." He further points out that nowadays, short getaways have become more prominent,

with travellers seeking lesser known destinations which are 7-8 hours away from Delhi.

Talking about the services offered by Tybros Group, Tyagi

“Trends like responsible tourism, culinary tourism and solo women travel are expected to grow by 57 per cent by 2019”

informs about different ventures of the company in travel, wellness, hospitality and F&B. "We cater only what is proven to be the best to our clients. We want our guests' journey to be different and dynamic," adds Tyagi.

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Hora Tourism spreads wings

From being a DMC for mainly South Africa, as well as Australia and Thailand, Delhi-based Hora Tourism is planning to enlist itself as a DMC for New Zealand and Fiji as well.



Hora Tourism is a B2B wholesaler in the India market and sees good support from many states in terms of numbers. It has contracted wholesaler rates for multiple destinations, including Bali,

Maldives, Australia, Dubai, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. It is also the acting DMC for Australia and Thailand apart from South Africa.

Hora Tourism also represents Australian DMC 'Pricebeat Travel Sydney' in India. Shar-

ing more details is **Ashish Sehgal**, Managing Director, Hora Tourism & Hospitality Consulting Services and Director—Sales & Marketing, PriceBeat Travels – DMC Australia. He says, "Very soon, we will announce Hora's fixed departures to

“South Africa is rich in history, culture, diversity, nature, wildlife, marine life and everything else that a tourist needs”

South Africa along with New Zealand and Fiji which will help us increase tourist num-

bers to these destinations. South Africa is one country that offers many attractions



Ashish Sehgal
Managing Director
Hora Tourism

for all age groups and types of passengers.”

Speaking about why South Africa as a destination does well with his clients, he says, "It is rich in history, culture, diversity, nature, wildlife, marine life and everything else that a tourist needs. It just needs a platform to promote itself to get the potential tourists and Hora is giving just that. According to the reviews of many of my clients, South Africa is the most beautiful country they have ever visited which shows great potential for the destination in India."

He has chosen the upcoming Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) 2018 as a platform to promote itself. Sehgal explains, "GPS is a great show, particularly its EDWIN programme which is one of the largest B2B travel interaction event in India where different travel agents from all over India participate. GPS is a platform where you can gather knowledge on products and at the same time develop real-time relationship with fellow industry stakeholders some of whom are now friends. It also helps to promote our products and inspires new ideas in terms of new product that we can add to our portfolio."

5

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4

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5

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Boosting team morale

Attending an award ceremony in itself creates a buzz. The team looks forward to a good night out with their colleagues and industry peers, and if they win an award it is even better. Getting back to office with a shiny trophy is recognition of the hard work put in by team and highly motivating.

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Traveller Profile

A majority of Hora Tourism's travellers are honeymooners, FITs and group travellers

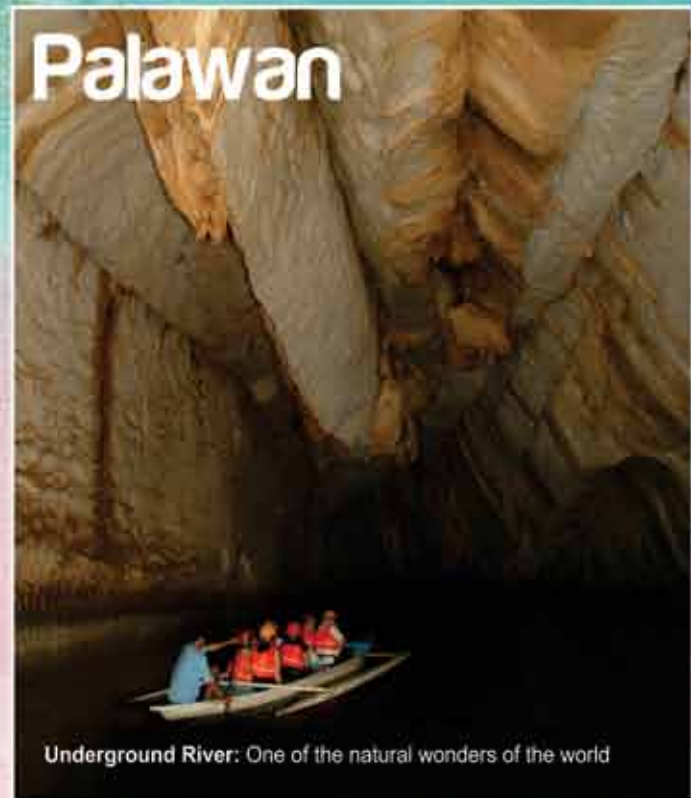
The traveller profile to South Africa has been changing and evolving quite a bit over the past few years

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Vietnam on Go Smart's list

B2B travel company Go Smart Tourism, which offers destinations like Dubai, Oman and Cambodia, will now be adding Vietnam as a leisure and MiCE destination to its portfolio for the travel agents.



B2B travel company Go Smart Tourism, which offers destinations like Dubai, Oman and Cambodia, will now be adding Vietnam as a leisure and MiCE destination to its portfolio for the

travel agents. Revealing more information on this is **Jeetendraa Wagh**, Founder & Owner, Go Smart Tourism. He says, "We will soon be adding Vietnam to our portfolio. Vietnam is packed with history, stunning landscapes, cultural highlights and

amazing food. It is one of the most exciting destinations in South East Asia. Vietnam has at least eight UNESCO listed sites including Ha Long Bay, Hue's historic sites, the old town of Hoi An and the Champa complex at My Son Sanctuary."

“ Vietnam has at least eight UNESCO listed sites including Ha Long Bay, Hue's historic sites, Hoi An and the Champa complex ”

The company works closely with B2B travel agents pan India to offer customised

packages, leisure tours, incentive tours, conferences and ground operations. "We

recognise that the world is changing, and we must look ahead to understand the forces and market trends that will shape business in the future. With more than 20 years of experience, we value our travel partners and believe in long term

The Chilworth

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Jeetendraa Wagh
Founder & Owner
Go Smart Tourism

business partnership," Wagh adds.

The company is also planning to organise familiarisation trips to Cambodia and Vietnam for its travel partners for them to get a first-hand experience of the destinations. Speaking about how the other destinations are working for them, he says, "More and more travellers from India are visiting foreign destinations. With an increasing number of Indians preferring to travel to newer destinations, Go Smart Tourism offers a variety of packages for Dubai, Oman and Cambodia. Passengers choose as per the number of nights they want to travel to. For Dubai, we have packages starting from three-night, four, five and even six nights. For Oman, we have five different packages and for Cambodia, we offer three packages."

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Canopus shines bright

Covering the entire world with safe and knowledgeable locations, Canopus Holidays offers incredible experiences to travellers. It is now actively working in creating a mobile application to garner a wider reach.

TT Bureau

Mumbai-based Canopus Holidays has grown rapidly within the last decade and thrives to provide a world-class travel experience with dedication. It provides pan-India services and has

its supporting team situated in New York (USA), Ontario (Canada), Belgium (Europe), and Dubai (UAE). **Dr Kunal Pathak**, Founder and President, Canopus Holidays, says, "We have always aimed to offer incredible experiences to travellers, the finest agendas

“Customisation of every destination increases the number of passengers with a minimum size of 85 to 110 per batch”

and accurately-planned itineraries. All tours are conducted by professional,

experienced, enthusiastic and seasoned tour managers. Our team is well trained and has

commendable experience in educational travel as well.”

Covering the entire world with all the safe and knowledgeable locations across the globe, Canopus Holidays caters to a wide range of travellers from students, to MiCE, FITs and



Dr Kunal Pathak
Founder and President
Canopus Holidays

even GITs. Pathak adds, "Creativity and customisation of every destination increases the number of passengers every year with a minimum group size of 85 to 110 per batch. In a year, we organise around 30 batches per destination and it works well for us."

Speaking about how he has seen the traveller profile from India change over the years, he says, "Surprisingly, the guest profile earlier was mainly the HNI clients. However, as the days passed, the passion for travelling increased so much that people started obtaining EMI options to travel which we provide to our clients." The company, whose name means the brightest star in the southern constellation, is currently working actively in creating an application which will be supported on Android devices and iOS devices.

Pathak adds, "Our unique selling proposition is to create affordable and luxurious travel packages for all age groups. Our intentions have presented us with wonderful opportunities to explore new avenues in tourism. We are the pioneers of innovative holidays, international tours and domestic trips under the brand name of Canopus Holidays."

Mission Canopus

Canopus Holidays has always aimed to offer incredible experiences to travellers, the finest agendas and accurately-planned itineraries. All tours are conducted by professional, experienced, enthusiastic and seasoned tour managers



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Tue	Juneau, Alaska Cruise Sawyer Glacier	7:00 am	1:30 pm
Wed	Skagway, Alaska	7:00 am	5:30 pm
Thu	Relaxing day at sea	—	—
Fri	Victoria, British Columbia	4:00 pm	10:00 pm
Sat	Seattle, Washington	8:00 am*	

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Jun 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
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Odisha of Buddhism & Beaches

The eastern Indian state of Odisha is aggressively promoting its Buddhist circuit and beaches along with wildlife sanctuaries, apart from the already popular destinations of Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

Buddhism in Odisha

The antiquity of Buddhism in Odisha is as old as that of Buddha, though he had never visited Odisha (Kalinga) during his lifetime. Chinese travellers Fa-Hian and Huien Tsang's account of Buddhism in Odisha, Ashokan and post-Ashokan pillars, bell capitals, copper plates and images speak about the state of Buddhism in Odisha.

With the 'Diamond Triangle' of Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udaygiri hills, located 90 km from Bhubaneswar and 60 km northeast of Cuttack, the Diamond Triangle attracts many Buddhist tourists from Asia and beyond every year.

Ratnagiri

By the river Birupa, about 90 km away from Bhubaneswar, Ratnagiri has a rich concentration of Buddhist antiquities. A large-scale excavation has unearthed Buddhist shrines, large monasteries, a big stupa and a number of votive stupas. Established way back in the 6th century AD, it appears that Buddhism was fostered at this place unhindered up to the 12th century AD. In the beginning, this was an important centre of Mahajan form of Buddhism.



Bhitarkanika

Lalitgiri

The majestic ruins of the huge brick monastery, the remains of the chaitya hall, votive stupas and a renovated stone stupa at the apex of a small rugged sandstone hill dominate the rural greenery around. In addition, the museum displays a large number of Mahayana sculptures consisting of colossal Buddha figures, huge Bodhisattva statues, statues of Tara, Jambhala and others. The discovery of caskets containing sacred relics, probably of the Tathagata himself, from the stone stupa at the top of the hill, further enhances the sacredness of the stupa as well as of Lalitgiri for Buddhists around the world.

Udayagiri

Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves command a unique position in the field of history, rock-cut architecture, art and

religion. The caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri are essentially dwelling retreats of the Jain ascetics. Udayagiri provides visitors a grand sight with its newly excavated monastery complex that must be reached through a long stairway. The unexcavated area poses a mystery to archaeologists, art lovers and lay visitors alike with prospects of the hidden treasures that lie buried.

Into the wild at Bhitarkanika National Park

Considered as one of the most impressive wildlife sanctuaries of Asia, the Bhitarkanika national park is special due to reasons more than one. Housing the dynamic and salt tolerant species of trees—the Mangroves,

Bhitarkanika has a luxuriant green, rich and pulsating ecosystem. Located in the estuarial region of Brahmani-Baitarani, in the north-eastern place of Kendrapara district,



Red Crabs of Talsari Beach

the sanctuary is home to over 215 species of birds, including winter migratory birds from Europe and central Asia. Another rarity that the sanctuary has to its account is the inhibition of its ecosystem by the Giant Salt Water Crocodiles and numerous varieties of other animal species. The attraction is also rich in avifauna, reptilian and mammalian population.

Sun, sea & sand at Gopalpur

Located at a mere distance of 16 kilometres from Berhampur, this seaport can be a real retreat to sea lovers. Ideal for both sailing and surfing, the



beach is isolated and remains undisturbed by day trippers. Avid beach combers have time and again declared the beach as one of the finest ones at the eastern coast. Watching Gopalpur's endless empty shoreline getting swarmed with fishermen with their hand-nets

districts of Angul, Cuttack, Nayagarh and Boudh, Satkosia gorge sanctuary with sylvan beauty and excellent natural features is an attractive destination for scientists and nature lovers. The area supports dry and moist deciduous forests and



Waterfall near Belghar Nature Camp

full of catch is interesting to while away time in the stunning stillness. Beautiful objects made of seashells available in abundance are worth buying souvenirs. Sand sculptures made by local artists are a feast to the eyes.

Satkosia

Satkosia gorge is a unique feature in the geomorphology in India. Located in the

moist peninsular Sal forests and is stronghold of tiger, leopard, elephant, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, mouse deer, nilgai, sloth bear, wild dog along with varieties of resident and migratory birds. A major attraction of the sanctuary is the gorge, river Mahanadi, the Gharial Research and Conservation Unit at Tikrapada, hill slopes and boating.

Konark Temple





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Personal touch, key to success

Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO—India & Emerging Markets, TrawellTag Cover-More, shares that their longterm relationship with the travel trade and passion for technology is the secret to success.



For TrawellTag Cover-More, the last one year has been quite significant after Zurich acquired the Cover-More Group, reveals Karvat. “We have also captured a good market share in the e-commerce business by making a difference to their offerings. With cutting-edge technology and product innovations, we have added value to our OTA and airline partners. I am proud to say that, as a group today, we are the official insurance providers of the fans of Arsenal Football Club, catering to their insurance needs.”

For Karvat, the focus has been in providing real-time assistance to the end customers. “For this, we are planning to leverage on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and

make our offerings more relevant to our customers before, during and after their trips. Apart from this, our constant focus on innovation and customisation has enabled us to conceptualise new products to be launched shortly,” he adds.

TrawellTag Cover-More exclusively works with the travel agent community. “There has been a huge change in the attitude and outlook towards travel assistance and insurance. There is an overall increase in awareness about the importance of ancillary services. Travel agents want their customers to have a holistic experience and therefore, provide a complete travel package including travel assistance and insurance to customers. This change in the mindset has enabled

us to innovate, as it is now much easier to reach out to them and understand their customer needs to design tailor-made benefits,” he shares.

Attributing a majority of their success to their clients, who

“We are focusing on integrating our global technology capabilities with our clients to enhance sales and operational efficiency”

are travel agents, Karvat says, “I believe in nurturing and cultivating a personal rapport in our business relationships over time and many of our clients have actually seen me grow as a young entrepreneur. For instance, the longest association that we have with a client is about 15 years, which is testimony

to the faith that they have in our capabilities.”

“We always strive to align our strategies with our clients’ requirement resulting in mutual business growth. We are also focusing on integrating our global technol-

ogy capabilities with our clients to enhance sales and operational efficiency. Our Travel Agents Engagement programme has entered into its fifth year with a motive to enable them upsell and in turn boost revenue,” he adds.

Karvat has also plans to venture into the Middle

East market, but he says that the project is still in a planning stage and more details will be revealed soon.

Terming GPS as an ever-evolving event, he says, “We look forward to it every year with a lot of anticipation. This year, like every year, GPS will take place in newer cities, which gives us a wider platform for networking and creating business opportunities. Also, it is one of the most relevant events today due to its complete dependency on advanced technology.”



In the ‘Preferred’ ring

JA Manafaru, a five-star property in the Maldives, has now been accepted into the membership of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Legend Collection.



Award-winning JA Manafaru, part of Dubai-based, international hospitality group JA Resorts & Hotels, has been accepted into the membership of Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Legend Collection. This is JA Resorts & Hotels’ five-star property in the Maldives located in the northern Haa Alif atoll.

Speaking about this development is **Anthony Ross**, Chief Executive Officer, JA Resorts & Hotels, who says, “We are delighted to be pushing the boundaries of industry distinction at JA Manafaru. Our guests experience the JA Resorts & Hotels’ unique blend of ‘Heartfelt Hospitality’ and ‘Casual Luxury’. Its recognition as a ‘Legend Collection’ property is a seal of excellence for our paradise island. Through this partnership, we look forward to welcoming the



Anthony Ross
Chief Executive Officer
JA Resorts & Hotels

returning guests whilst also hosting new Preferred Hotels & Resorts guests from across the globe.”

The resort offers its guests activities such as dolphin watching, cruise trips, Maldivian fishing excursions, local cooking masterclasses, sunrise beach yoga and PADI diving sessions. The onsite Marine Research Centre – ‘Seatopia’ also allows guests

to discover the wonders of the underwater world. The island also boasts of several dining destinations offering a variety of local and international cuisine across seven restaurants.

Preferred Hotels & Resorts is the world’s largest independent hotel brand that represents more than 650 distinctive hotels, resorts, residences, and unique hotel groups across 85 countries. The Legend Collection is the ultimate portfolio of exceptional properties in the world’s most remarkable destinations.

Property Details

JA Manafaru is located on a 35-acre private island and comprises 84 luxurious villas and suites, all with their own private pools

Get customised safaris

With an increasing number of outbound travellers from India to Sri Lanka, Helanka Vacations is expecting a rise in footfalls from this market.



Sri Lanka has always been a popular travel destination and to cater Indian travellers more efficiently, Helanka Vacations is looking to lure travellers with new offerings and products. **Rishantha Mendis**, Director, Helanka Vacations says that his company is expecting good amount of business from the India.

“In the last one year, we have seen ample amount of growth in inbound tourism with Sri Lanka getting more popular among global travellers,” says Mendis, who is delighted to host Indian travellers in his country. Being a destination marketing company, Helanka offers personalised services to clients with lucrative vacation packages.

Laying special focus on customer support and services,



Rishantha Mendis
Director
Helanka Vacations

Helanka provides an option to travellers in planning their trip via fully customisable itinerary. Planning to offer some new products to the customers, Helanka is looking to expand its offerings.

Talking about the company’s strategies to strengthen its presence in the tourism industry, Mendis says that Helanka is not leaving any stone unturned. “We regularly attend major exhibitions

around the world, including India International Travel & Tourism Exhibition (IITT), Arabian Travel Market (ATM) and World Travel Market (WTM).”

Helanka claims to provide full support in terms of inquiry, transport and accommodation. The company also has a dedicated team working in the field of MiCE. Providing services to business travellers as well, Helanka arranges accommodation, airport transfer and even keeps a check on meetings, if required by the customer.

“We offer personalised services to all our clients with exotic and customised vacation packages. We also operate with Sri Lanka Events in the country,” adds Mendis. Helanka is keen on boosting its business volume from the Indian market.

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India on top of their minds

Four products from Switzerland, each with a unique offering and appeal for the Indian outbound, are keen on tapping this market further - be they for groups, families, FITs, honeymooners and MiCE.

 TT Bureau

Individual attractions and tourism products have understood that Switzerland always had a strong appeal for Indian travellers which continues even till date. This includes four products that have something new to offer to the Indian market.

Rayomand Choksi, Regional Director, Titlis Cableways says, "These four products are participating in all the cities that the Global Panorama Showcase are sales partners because they are interested in tapping different segments of groups, families, FITs, honeymooners and MiCE."

Mt Titlis
The Titlis Adventure Park opened in June this year. It has Flying Fox, Slackline,



Rayomand Choksi
Regional Director
Titlis Cableways

Kayaking, BagJump and a lot more. The activities are free of charge and visitors only need a ticket for Engelberg-Trübsee. Choksi says, "Halfway up Mt Titlis, we have already started promoting this in India. We also have an ice skating rink open even in summer. It will be open till June end as it is not cold enough to maintain it

after that." The place also has an igloo hotel with 37 rooms which comes up in December and melts around Easter, as well as an introductory skiing lesson for an hour.

Lake Lucerne Navigation Company

They do Indian Dinner Cruises on Lake Lucerne. For this, they have the MS Saphir yacht, the new MS Diamant which has a Nautilus Cabin below deck with underwater views and an aqua terrace with lake water footbath apart from other amenities. They also have the new MS Bürgenstock started in May 2018 which provides an hourly service from Lucerne to Kehrsiten-Bürgenstock.

Zentralbahn

The Zentralbahn is the main train that connects Lucerne and Engelberg and also




runs between Lucerne and Interlaken East. Interlaken and Engelberg are the two hotspots for Indian travellers and the train company works a lot with the India market because of the large number of Indian FITs using this service.

Verkehrshaus

The Swiss Museum of Transport has gained a

new attraction. The Swiss Chocolate Adventure is developed in conjunction with the Lindt Chocolate Competence Foundation. Choksi says, "You sit in a small train for a 30-minute ride and at the end of it everyone gets free Lindt chocolates. You go into a tunnel below the museum. While this has been around

for almost two years, it is new for the Indian market. At the end of it, there is a big chocolate outlet that offers the best prices for Lindt. Apart from the museum, there is an IMAX and a planetarium. They also have these crash cars and simulated space rides." A museum has never been so much fun before! 

Looking back through the years



In the last six years, Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) has scaled new heights with the participation of an increasing number of buyers and sellers for B2B meetings, networking and business. The addition of new products and offerings to GPS' portfolio has made the show a force to reckon within the travel and tourism industry, especially in Tier-II and III markets.



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Multilinking across channels

Multilink is dedicated to offer customised technology solutions for its agents across the country with a range of products and services.



For **Nikhil Shah**, Director, Multilink, the travel industry is a growing sector flooded with opportunities. "We started Multilink in 2009 to provide business opportunities to many people. It is a franchise business which is simple and easy. Having covered more than 20,000 travel agents across India, we now plan to go international. Multilink is India's leading B2B portal having 20 products in it and we earn good revenue from flight ticket bookings," he claims.

Multilink offers its clients, training and support for flights operations, quality metrics and making a profit earning model. It also provides customer care assistance on the client's behalf, as well as offer an effective and fast search engine. It has all airlines inventory integrated on portal and has important PNR Facility (for GDS flights). With best competitive fares in the market it offers lowest service charges in refund. Other facilities include, fast and effective customer support offered 24 x 7 x 365 and customised in-built reporting system.



Nikhil Shah
Director
Multilink

With rising competition and popularity of online marketplaces, it is inevitable to have presence on a B2B trade

portal like Multilink. "It offers improved visibility for new and existing businesses along with cost effective web presence and marketing. Clients can network better with the help of the community and gain access to quality leads apart from gaining insights about the product, industry, and competition. Multilink helps to diversify and create alternate sales channel, allowing clients to take advantage of platforms customer service and best policies," he shares.

Marketing and promotions remain a strong part of their

strategy, which includes both online and offline channels. Also, it's important to engage with travel trade, wherein they focus on specialisation and personalisation, according to their needs. "We develop a repertoire of unique experiences and special access for them. We prefer working with net rates instead of taking commission and focus on developing a trusted brand for them. Our website is a great tool for the agents and engage with them on social media," he says.

At GPS, Multilink is expecting

a substantial number of clients. "We want to explore our business all over India and want to attract more clients to boost our B2B business," claims Shah. Going forward, their strategy is to help their travel agent clients perform well. "We want them to earn profit with the franchisee who makes them earn more than ₹1,000 per day and become their own brand. We offer state-of-the-art technology, which is dynamic in every way. Not only is this accessible, but also provides fast results," he concludes.

Innovation on plate

Taj Mahal Tours is currently working on a platform where travellers will be able to book hotels along with flights offline, without checking the availability online.



Taj Mahal Tours is a wholesale B2B company specialising in groups and FITs. Its USP, according to **Deepak Khurana**, Director, Taj Mahal Tours, lies in organising fixed departures

"We are working for Bali departures in the next season. It has a variety of activities, nightlife, beaches and a number of luxury hotels"

to all leisure and regular business sectors. "This is especially true for leisure travellers to Goa and to all seasonal destinations like

Srinagar, Bagdogra, Ladakh and Thailand," he says.

Sharing his perspective on how he has seen the profile of travellers change over the years, Khurana says, "Goa in summers used to be slow but this year, it has shown unexpected high demand from all age groups, whether it is families, friends or corporate incentive tours."

The company has plans to grow further and add more destinations to its portfolio. Khurana says, "We are working for Bali departures in the next season. This destination has a variety of activities, nightlife, beaches and a number of luxury hotels that are good value for money."

The company is also very active in the online space. "We



Deepak Khurana
Director
Taj Mahal Tours

have a portal where you can simply check all our airfare blocks live at www.goafixdepartures.com. We are not stopping at this. We are currently working on a platform where agents will be able to book hotels along with pre-purchased flight blocks in which they don't need to check the availability online," he reveals.

Smile off to the hills

Dharun Sharma, Founder & MD, Smiling Trips & Holidays, talks about plans of expanding its business by opening properties in Leh and Himachal Pradesh.



After witnessing a good growth in 2018, Katra-based Smiling Trips & Holidays is looking forward to make use of the popularity Leh and Himachal Pradesh enjoys with the domestic tourists. Sharma believes that other sectors like Uttarakhand, northeast states and pilgrim destinations are also witnessing a huge demand. According to him, "Leh sector has been exceptionally good this year and has seen a huge demand and potential for it in the near future."

Keeping a keen eye on the domestic market amidst surge in the number of travellers, Smiling Trips is planning to come up with its own properties in Leh and Himachal Pradesh



Dharun Sharma
Founder & Managing Director
Smiling Trips & Holidays

by March 2019. Sharma feels that tourism industry has been hit hard post demonetisation and implementation of the GST. The Kashmir region has seen a steady decline in business over the past three years, he says.

To compete with online travel platforms, Sharma says that

his company keeps altering its marketing strategies according to market dynamics. They make sure that their product offerings are unique in order to sustain and stay ahead in the market. Talking about the company's travel trade engagements, Sharma says, "Every year, we participate in all mega travel trade events, conferences and roadshows."

With a strong presence in J&K, Smiling Trips has branch offices in Srinagar, Leh and New Delhi. The company claims to provide customised solutions to its customers with tailor-made itineraries to suit travellers of every budget. "Working with reliable suppliers with long standing association, we aim to provide comfort and flexibility to travellers," adds Sharma.

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