

TRAVTALK

**GLOBAL
PANORAMA
SHOWCASE**
*Special
Issue*

TravTalkline

GLOBAL PANORAMA
SHOWCASE

Ahmedabad	Jul 13-15, 2017
Chandigarh	Jul 20-22, 2017
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GPS innovates yet again

The second leg of this year's Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), starting July 13 in Ahmedabad, will bring with it a few more nuances that aim to enrich the experience of the exhibitors and attendees.



HAZEL JAIN

Hitting five more cities through July and August this year is the second leg of the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) – the multi-city trade show for Tier-II and III cities. It will start with Ahmedabad from July 13-15, going on to Chandigarh from July 20-22, Kolkata from July 27-29, reaching Kochi from August 3-5 and ending in Pune on August 10-12. The show will stay in each of these cities for three days.

While the format will remain the same as GPS Nagpur, the organisers have added some more value to the programme for the benefit of the exhibitors and the attendees. To keep the discussion as relevant as possible, GPS will have a session on Goods and Services Tax (GST) for the benefit of the attendees in each city on the first day. This will be conducted by tax expert and CA Manish Gadia, Partner, GMJ&Co.

Harmandeep Singh Anand, Managing Director, GPS, says, "Not just owners, but even frontline staff, Accounts department staff of companies and even peons can benefit from attending this session. We invite everyone to take advantage of this." The session will be followed by Q&A where they can clarify their doubts with the CA.

According to Anand, GST is something that will affect everyone in their day-to-day life. "Everyone is entitled to get Input Tax Credit (ITC) and to avail that, everyone will have to work towards changing the way they transact in order to enhance their business. We also want to offer them infor-



Harmandeep Singh Anand
Managing Director
GPS

mation on how they need to upload GST returns in time to get complete benefit from this system," Anand says.

This presentation on how and when to upload GST returns will be given by an Ahmedabad-based software company, Infozeal e-Solutions Private Limited. Apart from this, there will also be a presentation on CRM by a Pune-based start-up company called Futurica Technologies. Speaking about the reasons behind this, Anand



Tanushka Kaur Anand
Executive Director
GPS

says, "Small entities lose out on business because serious queries and leads get lost or go unanswered due to the manual process. Larger companies have a system in place to collect all business leads. This session will educate them on the importance of having a CRM system, which can help them action all queries and successfully convert them. If not, it will give them an insight on why business was lost. The time has come for everyone to invest in technology."

Cyberspace issues

Again, in keeping with the times, GPS has kept a session on a topic that is on everyone's mind these days – cyber security. Anand shares, "This is a very current issue and we have seen a lot of companies succumbing to malware attacks. We have therefore kept a session on IT-related issues that will include ransomware, virus attacks, e-payments and cyber security. This is mainly targeted at small, individual agencies who suffer the most from this problem." This session will be conducted by team of Prevoyance Cyber Forensic.

These two sessions, that are additions to GPS, will be conducted within a six-hour window on the first day. There will also be a session on the GPS application by **Tanushka Kaur Anand**, Executive Director, GPS and the fourth generation of the Jagsons family. Day 2 will continue with the regular B2B sessions from 10:30 AM to 6 PM, and on

day 3, they will continue from 10:30 AM to 3:30 PM.

Buyers and exhibitors

Speaking about the hosted buyer programme, **Raju Akolkar**, CEO, GPS, says, "We are running a hosted buyer programme this year for travel agents who live around these five cities and will have to stay overnight to attend any of the shows. We are looking at about 100-120 travel agents per city for this. We received a good number of requests for this. We are expecting a total of more than 400 buyers per city to attend GPS." He adds that GPS was not envisioned to be a 'mass' event; the aim has always been to educate and empower Tier-II and III city agents who lack exposure.

The organisers are expecting a minimum of 60 exhibitors in a space that can accommodate a maximum of 84 exhibitors. To this, Akolkar says, "We have designed the

Contd. on page 6 ▶



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35% growth in Q1 from India

Ras Al Khaimah is targeting one million tourists by the end of 2018, revealed **Haitham Mattar**, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) on his recent visit to India.



TT BUREAU

Ras Al Khaimah recently organised roadshows in Delhi and Mumbai, India to meet and interact with travel trade in the country. **Haitham Mattar**, CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) while speaking



Haitham Mattar
CEO, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority

We have seen about 35% growth in Q1 from the Indian market, and a 10% growth in the length of the stay from Indians tourists

at a press conference in New Delhi, revealed that India is a prominent market for them and they are expecting huge growth from the country.

"We have seen about 35 per cent growth in the first quarter of the year from the India market, and interestingly we have seen a 10 per cent growth in the length of the stay from Indian tourists, which means that Indian travellers are finding more things to do in Ras Al Khaimah. Our target is to keep the travellers for more days and enjoy the destination. We are aiming to get 1 million visitors to Ras Al Khaimah by the end of 2018," Mattar said.

In order to achieve that, they are developing new tourism products. "Ras Al Khaimah is a hidden gem and is very different from Dubai and its neighbouring emirates. We are more about natural assets and adventure. One can hike and zipline in the mountains, dive in the sea and can also do a desert safari, all in the same day. We also have five shopping malls and we are located only 45 minutes from Dubai. The biggest advantage is that RAK offers value for money, especially for families. 72 per cent of our business comes from families. We have beach front resorts, which are 5-star products under 4-star brands and pricing. We are a growing market for

India, in terms of weddings as well. We have seen a growth of this segment from India into the destination with high profile weddings, where 300-450 people fly in from India to RAK. Another area we are focusing on is MICE. We also have beach concerts for young millennials," he informed

India is the fourth largest source market for RAK

right now, while Germany is the first. Mattar realises the difference and says that their strategy is to put RAK in the itineraries of Indians travelling to Dubai. "The number of Indian travellers coming to Dubai is 1.6 million, and those coming to RAK is 37,000. We have seen a great appetite from Indian travellers for combination trips like Dubai-RAK

or Abu Dhabi-RAK. For us, it's a huge growth potential, because if we get even a small segment of those coming to Dubai, India would already be our biggest source market," he revealed.

Mattar also signed a MoU with **Guldeep Singh Sahni**, President, OTOAI, for hosting OTOAI Convention in Ras Al Khaimah.

Air India to commence Stockholm and Copenhagen flights from Aug 16 and Sep 16

■ Air India has started operating a non-stop flight from Delhi to Washington from July 7, 2017. This is the only direct flight connecting Delhi with Washington with a B777-200LR aircraft. Washington is Air India's fifth non-stop destination in USA after New York (JFK), Newark (EWR), Chicago (ORD) and San Francisco (SFO). The direct flight takes around

15 hours and 30 minutes to reach Washington from Delhi. Air India hosted a gala evening to launch the flight for the travel trade at The Ashok, New Delhi, which saw the bigwigs of the industry in attendance. Air India will also be commencing operations to Stockholm and Copenhagen with effect from August 16 and September 16, respectively.

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► Contd. from page 3

floor plan of GPS in such a way to ensure enough open space. Almost 70 per cent of all exhibitors are participating in all cities."

Green is the new black

As always, GPS will remain paperless, in that it will go a step further. Exhibitors will not be allowed to carry any brochures and everyone is requested to upload as much information as possible via the GPS app. "It would really help

if everyone downloaded our application before coming for GPS. That way, they will have all the information that they would want beforehand."

GPS educational workshops

Announcing another unique programme that GPS will offer now, Anand says, "We have started working with state as well as international tourism boards to do an educational workshop for travel agents starting this September-October. Titled 'GPS Destination Educational Workshop' (EDW), it will involve interested agents signing up to travel to a particular destination – in India or abroad – to learn about the country at a highly subsidised participation fee."

GPS will short-list about 20-30 travel agents from each city that GPS travels to. The selection will be based on their level of participation, the number of meetings they do, their level of networking and the amount of



Raju Akolkar
CEO
GPS

business or leads they generate during GPS shows. Anand explains further, "They also have to attend all presentations and sessions. These agents will be chosen to attend these educational workshops that we will conduct in association with the tourism boards. The visits will include hotel inspections, meeting local DMCs and travel agents from that destination and doing activities that they can include in their itineraries. It will turn out to be very cost-effective for them."

This will be open only to Tier-II and Tier-III travel agents as they are the ones who don't get enough exposure to the trade as against those in metro cities.

Beyond physical barriers

This year, GPS has also made preparations for sellers located in other countries who want to attend GPS but are unable to due to various reasons – because why should business stop due to geographical barriers. Anand explains, "This is a very unique service that we are offering sellers who cannot travel to our cities. They have an option of registering online to access our database and conduct a video call with those who are physically present at our show. This is open for those sellers who do not have a local presence or don't have a staff member available locally to handle queries. This is especially beneficial for those located in neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Singapore or Malaysia considering the time difference."

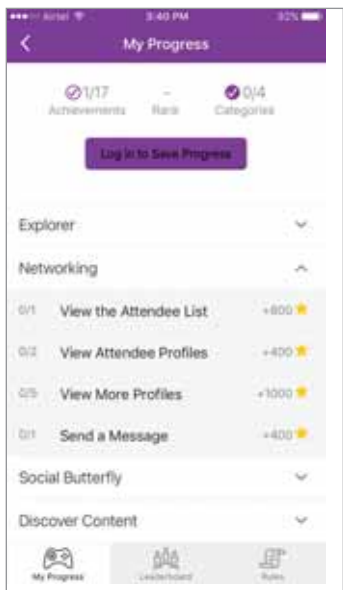
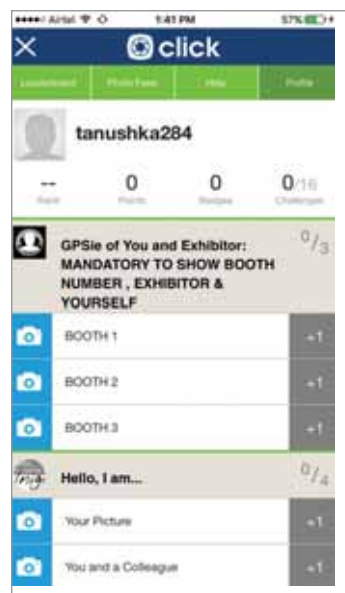
What's 'app-ening'?

With a huge emphasis on its mobile application, GPS is encouraging all its participants to download it as soon as possible. Ex-

plaining the various features that the app offers, Tanushka Kaur Anand, says, "Now that we have discontinued paper at our shows, the application has taken on an even more important role. It also means that our erstwhile 'Prizeport' on which the buyers were required to get stamps from every table to win prizes, will be discontinued. Instead of this, we will have them take a 'GPSie' (selfie) with every table at the end of their meeting and upload it on the app."

The photographs need to have the table number and the exhibitor within the frame. It works on the same concept as before but without the use of paper. She adds that the photograph will also help them visually recall the sellers they met and at which table. The GPS application is available on all interfaces (Android, iOS, Blackberry, Windows), laptops as well as PDAs, and can be accessed via 3G and 4G phones.

The app will also have a tab called 'Game' through which all participants can earn points under four different categories. "They will have to complete various tasks under these four categories and it will all be completely transparent; each individual will be able to see where everyone stands through the app. This will also be one of the criterion on which GPS will choose agents for its GPS EDW. Those who end up on top of these lists – also called the Leader's Board – will stand a chance to be chosen for the EDW," Tanushka Kaur Anand says. GPS has also added Skype to the app for those who want to do a video meeting but don't have the Skype app on their phone.



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Minar sees demand for wellness

Places like Haridwar, Rishikesh, Kovalam and Thiruvananthapuram have been the flavour of the season for Ayurveda and yoga seekers, while regions like Ladakh and the North East have seen a spike in tourist demand, reveals **Madan Kak**, CEO-Tours, Minar Travels.



TT BUREAU

The year first few months of the year have been beneficial for Minar Travels as they report an overall increase in business. Embarking on several new arenas, the efforts are bearing fruit, says **Madan Kak**, CEO-Tours, Minar Travels.

"After three years of low, business from Russia and CIS countries has not only improved in numbers but in quality as well," he says. "We have made our foray



Madan Kak
CEO-Tours
Minar Travels

Tourists from Latin America have also been requesting for Varanasi and Khajuraho. We continue to receive request for yoga tours at Haridwar

into other new areas and are glad that the results are up to our expectations. We expect business to grow in the coming season not only from the conventional markets but from the new markets too."

While the Golden Triangle continues to be the leading destination, Minar Travels has witnessed a demand for Ladakh and North East, informs Kak. He elaborates, "Tourists from Latin America have also been requesting for Varanasi and Khajuraho. At Minar, we have received and continue to receive request for yoga tours at destinations like Haridwar and Rishikesh. Ayurveda treatments in resorts at Kovalam and other places in Thiruvananthapuram continue to be major attractions."

Minar Travels has recently launched their luxury brand 'Vilasa' and have been promoting the segment in the US, Latin American countries and China. With the addition

of ELBON – Meetings and Events, Minar Travels has also made their presence felt in the MICE division.

Another niche segment that Minar sees great potential in is medical tourism for which the travel group has special arrangements for. Kak explains the reason for the rising interest and says, "Medical tourism

in India selling very well and is bound to increase in days to come. This not only because of the price factor, but the world class facilities available in India. A separate desk caters to this sector and if the day to day enquiries are any indication, we will do good."

However, the recently launched GST has left many

disgruntled, owing to the high tax structure of the hotels and restaurants. Agreeing to this, Kak feels that uncompetitive tax structure, is a major hurdle for the tourism industry in India while countries like Thailand and Malaysia are receiving more than 20 million tourists per year, a small country like Singapore gets more than 10 million and

India is still at about 7 million tourists per year. "The government instead of realising the importance of providing impetus to hospitality and tourism sectors, which are one of the highest employment, tax and foreign exchange generating industries, has put a high slab of 18 per cent and 28 per cent on hotels and 18 per cent

GST on food in restaurants. This for sure is a dampener on tourism industry, which has been demanding a lower taxation. The government should realise that countries like Singapore, Thailand and Myanmar levy taxes ranging from 5 to 10 per cent and India cannot afford to have these kind of complex and high GST rates."

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Offbeat locales for experiential travel

The search for exclusive experiences has led travel-hungry Indians to unconventional destinations like Bulgaria, Prague, Croatia, Iceland, Kenya, Zambia etc., reveal travel experts.



TT BUREAU

“Among the emerging destinations, Russia is going to be a big player since there are innumerable unique activities like driving a tank or flying a fighter jet. Iceland is going to be a strong market where one can go whale watching, or indulge in an arctic truck safari, or even fly over a volcano. A lot of East European countries like Croatia are gaining popularity and so are African countries that are big on safaris. In my opinion, countries like Chile and Argentina are going to catch up as well. The world is going to become a smaller place.”



Sushil Shamlal Wadhwa
Founder and CMD
Platinum World Group

“The young travellers are more into adventure like sky diving, water rafting, while the middle-aged group prefer experiences like chateaus or castles or a gourmet tour or sightseeing. The older segment prefers to go to a fabulous resort, relax and take in the ambience and the food. In terms of destinations, the lesser-known ones are fast catching up. Iceland, Bulgaria, Holland, Romania, Russia, and Croatia, basically central Europe is catching up and is bringing about exciting times for us.”



Nagsri Prasad Sashidhar
Senior Consultant – Leisure,
Mercury Travels

“Gone are the days when people travelled only for sightseeing; now they want more experiences like a cooking class, or learn scuba diving. Clients are becoming more mature and are asking for unique activities that are exclusive to the destinations. Experiences like Northern Lights in Canada and Iceland are pushing through while youngsters are travelling for music festivals all over the world. For us, the demand for Vietnam has become dramatically high, combined with Cambodia and has fared very well. Japan is another destination that has caught the interest of Indian travellers.”



Mahindra Vakharia
Managing Director
Pathfinders



Kaushal Bhuvra
Managing Director
World of Vacations

“Safaris have been popular lately so we have been selling a lot of Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia. Those are some of our speciality products for which we also combine a lot of adventure activities as well. The upcoming markets would be Ras Al Khaimah and Oman, which are options we are interested in exploring. The central eastern European markets are gaining demand as well. The demand for places like Prague, Budapest, places like Slovenia and Croatia are particularly increasing.”



Amit Kalsi
Founder and CEO
Experiential Travel Journeys,
India Travel Award winner

“Polar regions like the Arctic and Antarctic are some of the new entrants for luxury travel. Indians have become increasingly open to more diverse experiences and want to explore new destinations like Belize, Costa Rica, Peru, Chile or Bolivia in Central and South America. We see more Indians visiting Asian countries such as Vietnam and Laos while in Europe, the eastern and the Baltic regions have emerged as popular destinations since it showcases a newer side of Europe. More mature safari activities like gorilla trekking in Africa are seeing more takers which reaffirms the fact that Indians are evolving as travellers and want the luxury of experiencing a destination in its truest sense.”



Ketaki Kapur Pantle
Founder
Serendipity and Beyond

“A majority of the demand is for Central & Eastern Europe. There have been many takers for Croatia and the enquiries keep increasing. We've got a solid demand for Iceland as well where travellers want to visit the Blue Lagoon or take a tour of a volcano crater. Oman has become quite a popular choice as well and so is Canada for the aurora borealis or Northern Lights where travellers often camp out to witness the breathtaking phenomenon. In my opinion, next year is going to be just as good as this year since Indians are only getting more and more fascinated with travelling.”



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TravelBullz rages on

TravelBullz is introducing self-drive itineraries in Thailand by July end and is on its way to revamp the company onto a digital platform to offer ease of booking to its travel partners.



TT BUREAU

TravelBullz recorded a 40 per cent growth in the first quarter of 2017 over the same period last year. During the months of May and June, the company's FIT business to Thailand grew by 97 per cent over the same period last year from India and the company catered to 10,000 guests in the month of June alone, informs **K. D. Singh**, Founder & President, TravelBullz.

India is the largest source market for TravelBullz, closely followed by China, while the largest travel segment is leisure, groups and MICE. Singh says, "We shall be launching two new products in India which have never been sold before by July end. One would be self-drive itineraries in Thailand and the other is Half-Board packages, where meals would be at the hotels instead of Indian restaurants. This will give quality food along with the convenience of dining at hotels instead go to restaurants at a very aggressive pricing."



K. D. Singh
Founder & President
TravelBullz

We shall be launching two new products in India which have never been sold before, by July end

He points out that despite the unhealthy sentiment among the travel fraternity towards Hong Kong lately, owing to mandatory PAR process, TravelBullz grew by 40 per cent over last

year in the FIT segment and by 200 per cent in groups and MICE business in the first two quarters of 2017. Also, in Thailand, Krabi and Koh Samui reflected a very healthy growth in percentage terms but Phuket, Pattaya and Bangkok remained the most popular destinations for Indians during the summer holidays season.

"We have recently taken a very bold step of investing into digitalisation of the company over the next 12-18 months and have committed over \$250,000 in to this digital transition focusing on enhancing the experience of the travel agents and guests who book and travel on our network. We also launched the first-ever most exciting 'Booker's Incentive Scheme' in April 2017 for the summer bookings to be made by bookers and we had close to 1000 bookers registered for the same," adds Singh. On popular demand by the trade, the scheme has been extended till the end of August. ↴

New season, new itineraries

Ark Travels is excited about its new itineraries including Star Cruises' trips to Cambodia and Koh Samui as well as Dream Cruises' Surabaya and Bali deployments.



TT BUREAU

Cruising helps travellers experience an old destination in a new way. Building on this fundament is Ark Travels that aims to change the way Indians look at cruising. The company, a Preferred Sales Agent for Star Cruises, is excited to promote its new deployments this season. Sharing more details on this is **Kishan Biyani**, Director, Ark Holidays, who says, "This year, we are looking at promoting Star Cruises' new itinerary ex-Bangkok which will be travelling for the first time to Cambodia and Koh."

Ark Travels is also looking at promoting Dream Cruises' packages more aggressively. Biyani adds, "Dream Cruises is going to do more of five-night and two-night packages. They are coming up with new itineraries for five nights, which will be for Surabaya and Bali. This will also be very exciting as these are destinations that no other cruise lines



Kishan Biyani
Director
Ark Holidays

This year we are looking at promoting Star Cruises' new itinerary ex-Bangkok which will be travelling for the first time to Cambodia and Koh Samui

as of now are doing. This will be every alternate week ex-Singapore. This market should really take a new turn because of the exciting port of calls."

Moreover, Dream Cruises will be announcing its new itineraries post March 2018. "We expect the announcement to come in the market by July-end or August. We are expecting a lot of changes coming up as they have been looking to divert themselves from what the other cruise liners are doing right now," Biyani adds.

Commenting on the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) 2017 that is commencing from July through August and traveling to five cities, Biyani says, "The idea of GPS is to get in touch with new agents in new cities like Kochi that GPS is traveling to this time. Through GPS, we can meet new agents and inform them about our products. They usually travel to metro cities only during trade fairs, when they meet a lot of products in a short span. At GPS, there are limited stalls so they can spend more time with each product." ↴



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Innovative ways to protect

With an emphasis on innovation and customisation, TrawellTag Cover-More's efforts are directed towards bringing in holistic business growth for its partners.



TT BUREAU

With the foresight of its global management, TrawellTag Cover-More has aligned its strategies towards catering to different customer segments. Speaking about how 2017 has played out this year, **Dev Karvat**, CEO, Emerging Markets, TrawellTag Cover-More, says, "We are focusing on e-commerce, data analytics, technology and education by experience which we believe are inter-related. Our primary focus has always been and will be to enable the travel agents adapt to new business models and capitalise on travel ancillary services in order to evolve their revenue models."

He elaborates on the initiatives that the company is taking to empower its partners. It is the company's partners with personalised marketing support to increase consumer awareness, cutting-edge technology for increased operational efficiency and dedicated relationship managers to enable them to boost conversions.



Dev Karvat
India Travel Award winner and
CEO, Emerging Markets,
TrawellTag Cover-More

Ours is possibly the only brand in the country which gives clients the flexibility to design their own products

"One of our biggest initiatives is our 'Travel Agent's Engagement Programme' which began five years ago with a vision to enrich pioneering minds in the industry. Today, it has become a platform to enable our cli-

ents tap various ancillary revenue generation opportunities and enable them to up-sell," Karvat adds.

TrawellTag Cover-More is the only dedicated provider of global travel assistance services in the Indian market. "To achieve this, we have always focused on personalisation by offering travel-need-specific benefits. TrawellTag Cover-More is possibly the only brand in the country which gives our clients the flexibility to design their own products. We offer more than traditional travel protection; our plans extend to 360-degree travel protection, including concierge assistance services and family protection," Karvat adds.

The bigger picture, he says, is to create risk-free travel experiences for travellers. "We continue to better our services by joining hands with the trade. Apart from this, we are on the verge of making a huge announcement, so watch out, there is more to come from TrawellTag Cover-More," Karvat concludes cryptically.

Glamping: The ultimate joy

The 'glamorous camping' experience propagates responsible tourism and offers a well-rounded holiday with nature as well as local culture to experiential travellers.



TT BUREAU

A concept that was introduced in India by The Ultimate Travel Camp (TUTC), glamorous camping has fast caught the fancy of every traveller that seeks experience over everything else. The camping season is currently on and TUTC's two Ladakh camps, one in Thiksey and the other in Diskit, are running in full swing.

On the growing popularity of the camps, **Rajnish Sabharwal**, COO, TUTC, says, "Our camps in Ladakh have registered a significant growth in bookings this season as compared to last year and that reflects a positive outlook for our company going forward. We've noticed that luxury camping in India is gaining prominence not just from foreign tourists but also from the evolving Indian luxury travellers seeking unique holiday experiences. The number of Indians taking domestic trips with a tint of luxury is definitely increasing and the trend is indeed changing."



Rajnish Sabharwal
COO
TUTC

Luxury camping in India is gaining prominence not just from foreigners but also from the evolving Indian luxury travellers

With the rise of the experiential travel and the continued buzz it has managed to generate, the trend has directly influenced the growth of glamping in India, adds Sabharwal. Comfort, security, great cui-

sines, expert tour guides, local culture and experiences are certain essential factors for decision making and people today have started to take these factors seriously while deciding on a holiday.

Glamping does not just allow travellers the experience of camping in the lap of luxury - it offers a slow travel experience where they get to soak in the beauty of the destination, indulge in good food, take a walk down the village, explore the markets and spend time with the locals and truly immerse in the experience rather than visiting popular sightseeing places.

Sabharwal elaborates, "There is a lot of emphasis on engaging with the local community, whether it is through a walk through the villages with the locals, watching the local folk dances and joining in the celebrations or by savouring the most delicious versions of local culinary delights. Our guests demand for experiences that integrate the local community."

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SW Germany: India's choice

SouthWest German Tourism recorded a growth of 12.5 per cent from India during January-April 2017. The destination is targeting 200,000 Indian overnights in 2017.



TT BUREAU

India is now the fastest growing source market in terms of percentages for SouthWest Germany and the destination is hoping to meet its target of 200,000 overnights from India this year, informs **Hector D'souza**, Representative-India, SouthWest German Tourism.

According to D'souza, an average Indian traveller stays for a record 5.2 days per visit as compared to the average stay of 2.2 days from other international travellers. "South-West Germany can easily be identified with the cars, parks and spas. We are the only city in the world along with Detroit to have two world-class quality museums—Mercedes and Porsche. In fact, the first gasoline powered motor car built 130 years ago is exhibited at the Mercedes museum," he says. He further elaborates that the destination has a variety of unique offerings and activities for families and children.

"SouthWest Germany is renowned for its world-class



Hector D'souza
Representative-India
Southwest German Tourism

We are the only city in the world along with Detroit to have two world-class quality museums—Mercedes and Porsche

quality of theme-based amusement and leisure parks. Europa Park located in the Black Forest at Rust is an internationally acclaimed park with thrilling rides, which attracts nearly 5.5 million visitors every year.

Three other parks located in Stuttgart and the Black Forest further complement the diverse range on offer for children and adults," says D'souza.

Adding further, D'souza informs that SouthWest Germany possesses the second largest reserve of thermal waters in Europe and is the host to a number of spas at Stuttgart, Baden-Baden, the Black Forest, Constance and Freiburg. "Baden-Baden, also known as the Spa Capital of Europe, offers international spas, salubrious climate, luxurious lifestyle and breathtaking scenic beauty. The destination is also known for its vineyards, wine museum, high-quality Riesling Wine, wine institute, and the world's largest wine festival in the city of Stuttgart," he says.

Quick Fact

➔ An average Indian traveller stays for a record 5.2 days per visit as compared to the average stay of 2.2 days from other international travellers

Make Plans for millennials

Make Plans Holidays plans to roll out its online platform in 2017 to spread its presence and is aiming to increase sales by greater participation in travel trade fairs across India.



TT BUREAU

A Maldivian specialist in the Indian market, Make Plans Holidays has maintained a streak of selling high volume of room nights in the South Asian island country. In the past three months, the company sold as many as 1800 room nights, while in the past eight years the company has recorded 28,000 Indian tourist arrivals to the Maldives, informs **D. J. Ashar**, Partner, Make Plans Holidays.

"With around 30 years in the business, we have understood both the Maldivian market and the Indian market well. Being a niche tour operator has allowed us to understand the needs of both our partners in the Maldives and our clients across the globe. Our knowledge of the market combined with our passion has been instrumental in making us different from other players in the market," Ashar says.

The company caters to a large number of B2B



D. J. Ashar
Partner
Make Plans Holidays

In the past 3 months, the company sold as many as 1800 room nights, while in the past 8 years the company has recorded 28,000 Indian tourist arrivals to the Maldives

clientele, along with offering its services to a fair share of direct clientele from within the Indian market. In addition to

Indian clients, the company caters to the Non-Residential Indians. This year, Make Plans Holidays aims to roll out its online platform. "We want to appeal to the millennial generation who operate online. Our vision is to make luxury travel affordable. The millennial generation is deeply immersed in travel and luxury is deeply sought after. We want to use the power of social media to appeal to this generation in order to cater to these needs," explains Ashar. As part of its marketing strategy, the company is a regular participant at travel trade fairs across India and in the near future, the company expects to increase its sales in order to expose more clients to Maldives as an affordable destination.

Aim:

- ➔ To use social media's power to approach the millennials
- ➔ Make luxury travel affordable for the millennials

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Dook promotes multi-country combo tours

The travel company has received encouraging response for their product that seeks to display the beauty and tourism potential of the CIS countries.



TT BUREAU

Encouraging more Indians to travel to CIS countries, the Delhi-based travel management company, Dook Travels offers outbound travel from India to countries like Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. The company is working towards making Azerbaijan and Ukraine the

and Ukraine tours. We've been operating there for a few years now. Besides, we have introduced new multi-country combo tours across Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, etc. These can be connected through flights or by road trips for adventure seekers." He says combo tours in particular have drawn good response and adds that MICE tours, which comprise a ma-

ajor bulk of the business, are constantly being improved.

This year, Dook has seen a strong demand for the CIS countries, remarks **Gopal Kishan Kapoor**, Director, Dook Travels. "This year, business has expanded and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have particularly boomed. We are also overwhelmed by the response we have got for promoting Az-

erbaijan and Ukraine as well as for combo tours like Almaty-Bishkek, Baku-Tbilisi, Bishkek-Almaty-Tashkent," he said.

Adventure sports are quite popular in the region for which Dook offers motorcycle tours, skiing, kayaking and trekking among many others, and cultural and historical tours, along with the Silk Route experience. "We also organise trips in SUVs/

buses in the CIS countries as well as adventure motorcycle tours in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Georgia," elaborates Kapoor.

When it comes to development plans, Gupta mentions that human resource has been added to level up to the increasing business volumes and comments, "Our business development team has been moving around the country and

meeting travel agencies and we have been participating in travel expos and organising roadshows across India."

USPs:

- Combo tours to CIS countries
- Adventure holidays
- Country tours in private SUV/buses



Sandeep Kumar Gupta
Director
Dook Travels

While several of our destinations are keeping us busy, we have been doing the necessary promotion of Azerbaijan and Ukraine tours

next best sellers among the Indian trade for which the promotions have been very well received.

Sandeep Kumar Gupta, Director, Dook Travels, elaborates on their plans and says, "While several of our destinations are keeping us busy, we have been doing the necessary promotion of Azerbaijan



Gopal Kishan Kapoor
Director
Dook Travels

This year, business has expanded and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have particularly boomed

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Gazebo is all set for GST

Gazebo recently launched another version, with back-end automated services, to equip travel businesses for the upcoming changes in tax structure.



TT BUREAU

Finance, cash flows and credit controls are the three lifelines of any business but managing and handling these tasks can often be a tedious task. Such requirements have led to the birth of products like Gazebo, a cloud-based workflow application for mid-back office automation for the travel industry that allows better controls, facilitates multi-tasking, eliminates human errors and brings in accuracy, leading to meaningful execution of commands and reporting.

Pragya Rohatgi, Product Head, Gazebo, says, "The key USP of Gazebo is that it provides a multidimensional analysis of data to enable business owners take meaningful and prompt decisions that impact the business outcomes. It ensures businesses remain compliant and are in tune with changing business dynamics as well as sync operations across locations and



Pragya Rohatgi
Product Head
Gazebo

The key USP of Gazebo is that it provides a multidimensional analysis of data to enable business owners take meaningful and prompt decisions

provide operations harmonised across locations and on-the-fly information."

She further explains, "Since the GST comes into effect from July 1, we have

rolled out a GST-compliant version of Gazebo that will take the new amendments into consideration. Additionally, we are working on a couple of products that shall empower a business to take real-time decisions based on powerful algorithms providing robust forecasting."

When asked about the growth of the travel technology sector, Rohatgi comments that a lot of mid-level players are ceding ground to larger multinational companies, primarily due to lack of investment by these players in technology both in front office and back office. "A large numbers of players are family owned enterprises which have not invested in processes, tools, personnel and upgradation. Consequently, either these players are winding up due to onslaught of rapidly changing business dynamics accentuated by advent of technology or are being sold. Consolidation is happening and will continue to happen in foreseeable future."

Pacific crosses seven seas

Pacific Travels is diversifying its portfolio by adding various air and non-air products. It is also planning to offer a host of services to airlines and aviation operations this year.



TT BUREAU

With an experience of over five decades in the travel industry, Pacific Travels believes in innovating and creating new products that hold value to its clients and have commercial benefits as well. **Raza Husaini**, Head-Business Development & Strategic Alliances, Pacific Travels, opines that the ideology of the company is to remain ahead of its time and relevant, simultaneously. The company is a one-stop travel solution for ticketing, visa facilitation, leisure holidays for both domestic and international destinations, MICE travel and all other services in the line of travel.

"We are expanding and diversifying in various air and non-air products and also in the process to provide services to airline and aviation operations. We offer business process outsourcing (BPO) for diplomatic missions and facilitation services to Iran for all types of visas; exclusively



Raza Husaini
Head-Business Development
& Strategic Alliances, Pacific Travels

We are expanding and diversifying in various air and non-air products and also in the process to provide services to airline and aviation operations

provide business visa facilitation in India; process visas for Algeria and Iraq among a host of other countries. Our representation arm facilitates interactions between

international companies with business interests in India and the right buyers," says Husaini. Pacific Travels is also the India representative for ACP Rails, an e-service provider for international rail journeys at B2B level.

Husaini points out that the company caters to the B2B segment with a host of offerings and also travel agents in North and West India with some niche products. Explaining the importance of a show like Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), he says, "With GPS, we see an opportunity to introduce and educate the attendees about our innovative products. GPS offers targeted audience in the right cities, with substantial media coverage. As far as our marketing and promotional plans for 2017 are concerned, we intend to participate and showcase our products at events which offer a focused and targeted audience, which is relevant for our products."



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TT BUREAU

Anchor Destinations and Travel Management specialises as a Destination Management Company (DMC) and is India's rep for many outbound DMCs who have a viable presence in the Indian market. Anchor specialises in creating packages for destinations in Europe, Asia, USA and the Scandinavian region, along with offering wholesale contracted rates for hotels like JW Marriott and Akyran Group of Hotels in Thailand, Sun Siyam Resorts and Adaaran in Maldives etc.

Deepika Khanna, Founder and CEO, Anchor Destinations and Travel Management, informs that business has bounced back post demonetisation with the summer months faring exceedingly well. She states, "From April to June, there has been a good growth this year. The GST implication will definitely streamline a lot of procedures and travel will



Deepika Khanna
Founder and CEO, Anchor Destinations and Travel Management

We plan to introduce group departures for Spain and Portugal, combined with cruise itineraries

be definitely impacted, but we strongly believe that change is always good. We also expect that with the start of direct airlines like Air Canada, long-haul destinations like Canada

and short-haul like Maldives, as well as the Costa Cruise destinations will see good numbers in the coming months."

Anchor has recently become the official representative of Spain with Protugal Tours and Space Travel, DMC of Italy with King Holidays and of Portugal with Top Atlantico, opening more choices for Indian travellers. "We plan to introduce group departures for Spain and Portugal combined with cruise itineraries," informs Khanna. European destinations with the likes of Switzerland, France and Greece, along with Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia have been the flavour of the season, she adds.

While the company's core focus lies on the major source markets of Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai, Khanna also wants to widen their reach in the Tier-II and Tier-III cities. "↓

Global connect for Tier-II & III

Representing over 23 products globally, Global Destinations is connecting India's Tier-II and III cities to the rest of the world.



TT BUREAU

Mumbai-based Global Destinations has stepped into its tenth year and represents 23 products in India. Over the past year, the company welcomed Air New Zealand, Escapades and Co Travel (Morocco), Allied.T.Pro (USA and Canada) Leisure Pass Group, Visit Europe DMC (Central and Eastern Europe) and WinTravel DMC (Bulgaria) to its portfolio.

Starting July 1, 2017, the company represents Tangerine Tours (Sri Lanka). **Pranav Kapadia**, Founder, Global Destinations, says, "The Indian travel industry is one of the most dynamic in the world and we are glad to be moving in pace with its changes. Our product offerings cater well to the evolving requirements of the Indian travellers with a good mix of niche and off-beat products as well as popular and sought-after itineraries." Tangerine Tours offers tour packages to Sri Lanka, special-interest itineraries,



Pranav Kapadia
Founder Global Destinations

Our product offerings cater well to the evolving requirements of the Indian traveller with a good mix of niche and off-beat products

accommodation as well as ticketing and transportation.

Apart from this, Tourism Fiji, which the company represents in India, has planned a six-city roadshow

at the end of July. It will be starting with Mumbai on July 24, going to Kolkata on July 26, New Delhi on July 27, Ahmedabad on July 28, Chennai on July 31 and then finally Bengaluru on August 1, 2017. "We will have 10 Fijian partners coming down for this roadshow. These will include hotels, resorts and DMCs," Kapadia adds. Global Destinations will be present at the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) 2017 in three cities: Pune, Kochi and Chandigarh.

Destinations & Dates

- ↓ **Mumbai:** July 24-25
- ↓ **Kolkata:** July 26
- ↓ **New Delhi:** July 27
- ↓ **Ahmedabad:** July 28-30
- ↓ **Chennai:** July 31
- ↓ **Bengaluru:** August 1



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A bigger and better GPS 2017

The second edition of the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) in Ahmedabad received an overwhelming response with increased B2B interactions and networking over three days. TRAVTALK catches up with **Rishiraj Singh Anand**, Joint MD, GPS, and **Ankush Nijhawan**, Executive Director, GPS, to get a sneak peek into the upcoming editions.



SHAHZAD BAGWAN

The second edition of GPS Ahmedabad started with presentations on various topics like Cyber Crime, Foreign Exchange and the much awaited GST session. Commenting on the success of the Ahmedabad leg, **Rishiraj Singh Anand**, Joint Managing Director, GPS, said, "The second edition of GPS Ahmedabad was a phenomenal one for us and we recorded 666 attendees for the presentations on day 1, including the GST session by team GMJ & Co. Overall, we had 1100+ registrations, including the presentations on day one and B2B meetings on day 2 and 3. We saw a number of business transactions happening between the buyers and sellers during the course of the event as well post the event."

Ankush Nijhawan, Executive Director, GPS, pointed out that the Ahmedabad edition of Global Panorama Show-

case was a very well organised and focused show. "We saw as many as 1100 attendees at GPS Ahmedabad, which was an increase of almost 40 per cent over its 2016 edition."

The upcoming edition of GPS at Chandigarh is expected to be way better than the last year. As many as 70 exhibitors will exhibit over 150 products at the show and over 600-700 buyers are expected to attend GPS Chandigarh this year. Nijhawan added, "We are expecting buyers from Delhi, Agra and even J&K at the show. Chandigarh has emerged as one of the fastest growing cities in India. With an international airport also coming up and cities like Amritsar and Jalandhar emerging as high-potential tourism markets, we are hopeful that this edition of GPS will be very successful."

Introducing EDWIN

EDWIN, which stands for Educational Destination Workshop International, is a product



Rishiraj Singh Anand
Joint Managing Director
GPS

Both Maharashtra and Gujarat will get their suppliers to exhibit at GPS next year. Soon we will see many other state tourism boards at the event

which was launched at GPS Ahmedabad to target agents from Tier-II and III cities. "On the



Ankush Nijhawan
Executive Director
GPS

As many as 70 exhibitors will exhibit over 150 products at the show and over 600-700 buyers are expected to attend GPS Chandigarh this year

basis of participation and registration of agents across India, we will be shortlisting around

100 agents and taking them for educational tours. Some of the international destinations where we will be having our programme includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Greece, Tanzania and Philippines. Singapore Airlines and Genting Hong Kong have partnered with us for the EDWIN programme. For domestic destination, we are currently working on Leh-Ladakh in collaboration with Ravine Trek, which is an adventure and leisure tour company. In this, we plan to take agents at highly subsidised rates for 4N/6N/7N itineraries depending on what materialises. The package will be all-inclusive, with air fare etc. plus a one-day B2B session with the locals of that particular region," Anand added.

App's the way forward

The GPS App is still new and people are getting used to it slowly. Anand said, "At GPS Ahmedabad, we witnessed people getting more app savvy with the exhibitors, and buyers registering on the app itself and

using the various features of the app for their benefit. We have also added some features to the app for the exhibitors with the help of which they can create and generate the reports of the business they have done during the three-day event. So, we have a feature where the exhibitors can make a report while they are doing meetings while somebody at the backend of their office will get updates on the requirements and can take the necessary action immediately rather than waiting for the exhibitor to get back."

Participating States

Gujarat Tourism confirmed that they will be exhibiting with GPS at Chandigarh, Kolkata, Kochi, Pune and Nagpur in 2018. "We also have Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) as the partner state for GPS and both the states will be getting their suppliers to exhibit at the event. Soon we will see many other state tourism boards at GPS," Anand confirmed. ↓

A chance to rejoice

Vivek Pathiyan, GM, Chances Resort & Casino, says they offer the best stay and gaming combination in Goa, making it stand out among all the properties in the state.



TT BUREAU

A unique five-star boutique resort, Chances Resort & Casino, Goa, is known for its elegance and personalised service, which is meant to suit the taste of connoisseurs. Its General Manager **Vivek Pathiyan** says that the property's location gives them a huge advantage over others. "We are perfectly placed, being a short drive from Panaji. The nearby cosy beach offers the solitude that ensures our guests always have a relaxed stay. Known for its genuine service, the resort warmly welcomes families and guests of all ages. Situated in the heart of Goa's beautiful Dona Paula, we represent the best in comfort, delectable dining, casino, gym and pool. Once our guests manage to part from their luxurious, heritage-rich rooms, they can step into our famed casino, Goa's oldest and largest, thus leaving with a big smile



Vivek Pathiyan
General Manager
Chances Resort & Casino

Once our guests manage to part from their luxurious heritage-rich rooms, they can step into our famed casino, Goa's oldest and largest, thus leaving with a big smile

What makes the resort different from its competitors in the region is the warmth exuded by its staff. "Most of our patrons have known us for quality service being offered over two decades. The hotel rooms ex-

ude generous luxury and are the largest in their category. As owners of Goa's first land casino, Dr. Britto and Mrs. Britto have lovingly nurtured this icon of hospitality. Even today, it is possible for our clients to experience gaming in a private and confidential atmosphere, where the staff are trained to provide discreet and unobtrusive service, unlike commercial gaming. One should come to Chances Resort & Casino to truly experience the hospitality we offer," said Pathiyan.

Last year, the hotel experienced a growth of 16 per cent in occupancy, he revealed. Pathiyan is currently working with the Global Distribution System, to support the hotel's marketing initiatives. "We are also connecting with travel agents across India so that Chances gains a larger customer base. Our hotel has existing arrangements with agents and service providers online. At Chances Resort & Casino, we are always willing to innovate so that we may also provide a platform to our service providers," he concluded. ↓

Making digital waves

GroupFarez.com, a unit of Worldwide Travelwale, has gone digital in order to keep pace with the changing trends in the industry and offers faster service to its clients.



TT BUREAU

GroupFarez.com caters to domestic and international travellers, offering them group air travel and fixed departures; holiday packages; hotel bookings; cruise holidays; travel insurance and international calling card, among other services. The company also offers services for passports and visas and facilitates foreign exchange for its clients. According to **Dr. Gursharan Singh**, Managing Director, GroupFarez.com, in the first quarter of 2017, the company provided services to around 913 customers, including corporate clients and achieved a turnover of ₹56.20 lakhs from 39 groups that they catered to. He says, "We have introduced an online platform to cater to the market requirements, wherein the client can provide details online and get quotations faster. Also, one can view fares from our inventory of 5000+ seats for fixed departures and save both time and cost. Other group requests for hotels, cruises, visas, travel insurance, etc. can also



Dr. Gursharan Singh
Managing Director
GroupFarez.com

We have introduced an online platform to cater to the market requirements, wherein the client can provide details online and get quotations faster

be placed online to enable faster response."

Singh believes that the company is different from all others in the market as it focuses not on retail but serves

the group travel market like corporate groups, school groups, MICE, etc., which he feels is larger than the individual travel market in India. Talking about GPS, he elaborates that GPS provides a good opportunity to bridge the gap between large suppliers and various travel agencies in the Tier-II and III cities.

Identifying trends in the industry, Singh says, "We have observed that the young generation prefer to invest heavily in tourism and its related activities with an increase in the disposable income component. Also, there is an increased awareness amongst the travellers of today regarding various destinations and the traveller today is more demanding. An emerging trend that we have witnessed is that a large number of group travellers and MICE travellers are seeking adventure tourism over leisure travel products." In 2017, the company is planning to market itself aggressively through online marketing platforms and also invest in print media to spread awareness about the brand. ↓



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Iris Reps eyes expansion

Having completed five years this June, Iris Reps has grown its client portfolio over the years with a recent addition of five new clients.



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Mumbai-based Iris Reps India completed its five-year milestone this June 2017 but it is not resting on its laurels. "This is just the beginning and there's a lot more to come. We have recently shifted into new office space and have added a few more clients to our ever-growing portfolio. It is exciting to be a part of this evolving phase of the company and we look forward to growing it even further with absolute zeal," says **Alefiya Singh**, Director, Iris Reps.

Some of the new clients that Iris Reps has added include MGM Macau, Coco Collection Maldives, LN Garden Hotel Guangzhou, Swiss-Garden Group Malaysia and IMT Travel Services – a DMC from Greece. The team has since been busy planning a strategy for each of these clients to spread awareness for the products among the trade, getting the right sales partner and participating in road shows and trade fairs.



Alefiya Singh
Director
Iris Reps

The agents have slowly realised the importance of specialisation and diversification so they are moving into the online and mobile app space now

Speaking about the India market, Singh says, "This market is no longer predictable; it has become very dynamic in nature. There is no clear segmentation in terms of B2B and B2C markets. The travel-

ers are now more evolved and confident of planning their own itineraries and booking tickets as well as hotels online through various OTAs. The agents have slowly realised the importance of specialisation and diversification so they are moving into the online and mobile app space now."

Iris Reps has also evolved along with the changing market needs. "As the market evolves so do its needs and demands. We have therefore tried to connect the principals with the OTAs, running campaigns on the social media space, and are actively promoting our products on various travel trade WhatsApp groups," Singh says.

Updates

- Swiss-Garden Beach Resort Damai Laut to get a fresh look with the swimming pool being transformed to a mini waterpark
- Coco Prive from the Coco collection opening up to the India market

Competitive rates by Atlas

Having conquered the ticketing space and created a large user base, Atlas Travels Online has now branched out into hotel bookings and packages as well.



TT BUREAU

Atlas Travels Online believes in doing traditional things in a non-traditional way. It has recently launched a new web page offers.atlastravelsonline.com on its portal where its customers can see all the promotions and share the same on all social media platforms. **Hussain Patel**, Director, Atlas Travels Online, says, "Our implementation strategy with any new offer or promotion is extremely fast. The idea is to keep our booking engine updated so that our customers can take advantage of the latest offering. We are able to provide our agents the best rates in the air ticketing space by having a large user base. Moreover, we have branched out to strengthen our foothold in hotel bookings and packages."

The online company's mission is to provide end-to-end service and fulfillment for all its customers, especially for the Tier-II and III city agents. "Being able to



Hussain Patel
Director
Atlas Travels Online

Moreover, we have the best availability and deals for regional carriers providing point-to-point accessibility to/from Tier-II and III cities

fulfill all their travel requirements makes the entire process hassle free. Moreover, we have the best availability and deals for regional carriers providing point-to-point accessibility to/from these

regions. Our technology and focus on automation reduce agent's costs. They can earn good commission by enrolling themselves with Atlas and start servicing the emerging travellers in their cities," Patel explains.

The Tier-II cities in India have a lot of untapped potential for travel trade investment. As per a recent report by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), India has 450 million Internet users as of June 2017, thereby overtaking the US in total Internet users. A lot of this growth has come from rural India which has witnessed a 99 per cent surge in mobile Internet users. Patel says that almost 75 per cent of Internet users from rural India are in the age group of 18-30 years and they are the ones who aspire to travel as much as they can within budget. "We want to urge travel agents and encourage them to become Atlas agents and facilitate this huge chunk of emerging travellers," he adds.



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Creating 'Synergi' in Kerala

Dedicated to offer hospitality and not just a stay option, Synergi Hospitality is set to expand and is currently looking at properties in and around Kerala.



TT BUREAU

S Synergi Hospitality Marketing aims at promoting and extending visibility to properties that offer more than just accommodation. "With over 20 years of experience in hotel marketing, we could feel the shift in guests' requirements and wanted to fill the gap. All properties connected with Synergi are generally off-beat, experiential in nature and offer an array of activities to their guests," says **Shruti Pandey**, Proprietor, Synergi Hospitality.

Synergi works in tandem with each of its properties with the sole purpose of guest satisfaction and offering warm hospitality to generate repeat customers. "Our USP is also the off-beat properties and destinations that we promote. We keep a note of the pulse of today's traveller requirements and work towards filling in the gaps," adds Pandey.

Pandey observes that the new generation of trav-



Shruti Pandey
Proprietor
Synergi Hospitality

All properties connected with Synergi are generally off-beat, experiential in nature and offer an array of activities to their guests.

ellers is always searching for new, unexplored destinations. "Being a circle of off-beat and experiential properties, we have seen a boom in guests who have an urge to explore," she says. To tap

this segment as well as other kind of travellers, they work on all planes of marketing. "We meet our trade partners and corporate clients for their guest movement. We do promotions through mailers, exhibitions, travel marts and fam trips. Our Facebook page and website regularly update our followers on each new activity. We are always open for new opportunities and to meet new people to further the avenues," she adds.

In her opinion, the travel trade needs regular flow of information regarding products. "Regular contact with the trade partners and updating them with new information is the mantra. The next step is to keep an update on each guest to ensure perfect hospitality and good feedback. A trade partner is best assured when they know that we are taking care of every requirement of their guests," says Pandey, adding that they are planning to expand in South India with new liaisons in Kerala. 📌

Innovations in B2B segment

After getting the right footing in the B2C market, Ezeego1.com is taking major steps to strengthen its B2B segment.



TT BUREAU

In the ever-growing world of Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), Ezeego1.com has carved a niche for itself. **Neelu Singh**, CEO and Director, Ezeego1.com, says the company owes its success to adapting to constant changes in technology. "The ability to keep adapting and adjusting to new travel technologies remains our core strength. We are known for using the best technology platform in the Indian travel industry that includes: Meta search capacity for deriving instant search results and cutting edge in-house booking system that provides convenience to our customers in planning their holidays," she says.

The company is working to strengthen its footing in the B2B market. "Our primary focus in B2B market is to reinforce relationships since this market thrives on mutually beneficial relationships. All our promotional efforts are directed towards this objective. We have been working on strategic partnerships with many



Neelu Singh
CEO and Director
Ezeego1.com

Our primary focus in B2B market is to reinforce relationships, since this market thrives on mutually beneficial relationships

major tour operators and travel agencies across Tier-II and III markets," she reveals.

"Ezeego1's real-time interface with major suppliers across the globe ensures that we are

able to offer destination packages for all types of travellers – family, youngsters, backpackers, honeymooners, all women groups. Direct contracting and real-time inventory ensures competitive positioning, which lets us give the best prices to our customers and suppliers. We offer innovative distribution channels for both B2B and B2C. One can choose from a range of products offered from multiple suppliers, compare and choose the best fit option for their clients," Singh says.

Singh further adds, "We have enhanced our online hotel product this year with a target to reach out to 10,000 travel agents across India who cater to all kinds of budget, and the response to this product in the B2B market so far has exceeded our expectations. Ezeego1 offers hotel options to agents at cheapest price possible. We have introduced the 'Best Price Guarantee' scheme for travel agents where if they find an equivalent offer for the same hotel at lower price, Ezeego1 will honour that." 📌

STH's overseas office to open in Belgium

STH Group saw a growth of 49 per cent in Q1 2017 over the same period in 2016. The company is adding new destinations to its portfolio and is soon going to set up an office in Belgium to cater to Indians travelling to Europe.



TT BUREAU

In the first quarter of 2017, STH Group saw an incline in business, where the company registered a growth of 49 per cent over the same period in 2016, informs **Gagan Kumar**, Director, STH Group. "Tier-II cities have been our primary source markets from where the business spring boarded and reached a promising figure, accounting for a double-digit growth to start the first quarter for



Gagan Kumar
Director, STH Group
India Travel Award winner

the company. We catered to our partners ranging from the

The most popular outbound destinations this summer amongst the avid Indian travellers were mostly of Eastern Europe, especially Prague, Vienna and Budapest

budget category to high-end luxury requirements," says Kumar. The company plans to expand its portfolio this year and to this effect, some island nations are being added to its list of destinations.

The STH Group is in the final stages of setting up its office in Belgium and with this new setup, they will be able to cater to Europe more extensively. Kumar points out that they have seen a dramatic change in travel patterns and

itineraries of Indians where earlier the guests would choose pure shopping to today where picturesque destinations and natural beauty of a destination rank high on their priority list. "The summer of 2017 saw Indians travelling far and wide to off-beat destinations. The most popular outbound destinations this summer amongst the avid Indian travellers were mostly of Eastern Europe, especially Prague, Vienna and Budapest," says Kumar.

In 2017, STH Group plans to reach out to potential customers in Tier-II and III cities and will focus on educating the market about their brand. Future strategies will be devised during the course of the year which will focus on showcasing the strength of the company and promoting the brand. Kumar feels that Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) is instrumental in promoting the potential markets of Tier-II and Tier-III cities. 📌



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Free activities, priceless smiles

Mt Titlis has continued its tradition of adding more and more free activities in the summer to ensure that it attracts visitors of all demographics, and it is proving to be a big hit with the Indians.



TT BUREAU

Continuing with its tradition of adding free fun activities to its entertainment space every now and then, Mt Titlis has added some more free activities in the last couple of weeks at Trübsee. Sharing more details about these activities is **Rayomand Choksi**, Regional Director – Titlis Cableways, who says, “One of them is the ‘Air Bag

at fair price, makes it a perfect inclusion to any travellers’ itinerary to Switzerland. Our new Titlis Xpress cable car system takes them from the bottom to the top in 25 minutes with the last stage being on the world’s first revolving cable-car – the Rotair.”

Commenting on the kind of potential he sees in Tier II and III cities, Choksi says that the growth from

these cities has been phenomenal. “Our analysis has showed that the potential from these cities is double that of the big metros. We shall continue to work with tour operators and agents from the Tier II and III cities and facilitate them in their growth enhancement. The good thing about travelers from these cities is that they make our shoulder season very strong,” he adds.

For this reason, Mt Titlis has been part of the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS), which, Choksi adds, has now established itself by extending its presence in cities with good potential. “Awareness of our product through such events will strengthen our presence in the itineraries and suggestions made by agents to their clients as they will gain an insight into our offerings. The GPS has

not only made a step, but an actual leap forward this year,” Choksi says.

Changing market dynamics has contributed to this. “Fifteen years ago, almost 90 per cent of the business was brought by the top 10 producers. This has changed drastically now with the top 10 bringing only 50 per cent of the business. The smaller tour operators and agents

have truly developed as world-class service providers and have expanded their client database and service offerings. We expect this trend to continue. Whilst the big boys will continue to do well and be the market leaders, the smaller ones will continuously get a bigger share of the pie, which too is growing, especially given the expanding Indian outbound market,” Choksi says.



Rayomand Choksi
Regional Director
Titlis Cableways

The good thing about travelers from these cities is that they make our shoulder season very strong

Jump’ where clients can do free-standing jumps from three-, five- or eight-metre platforms. We already see many Indians courageous enough for the daring leap.”

The second activity is the opening of Switzerland’s first summer curling rink on the terrace. Here, travelers can try a popular winter sport called ‘summer style’. “Our adventure park attendants are always around for guidance and assistance. I would also like to bring their attention to the winter ‘snow Xperience’ where clients can learn to ski, drive the snow bikes and visit the Igloo Hotel. This experience costs only CHF 70 and is commissionable to operators and agents. Rental of basic ski equipment like skis, poles, ski outfits and gloves is included,” Choksi says, adding that this was the first winter of this experience and it proved to be a big hit with the Indian and other Asian travellers.

The Titlis Resort, a collection of apartments, is attracting a multifold of clients from India as more and more operators are offering this to their clients. Choksi says, “Our guaranteed snow experience and ease of accessibility

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Air Canada launches Toronto-Mumbai flight

■ Air Canada launched new, non-stop Toronto-Mumbai service on July 1, the only non-stop flight from Canada to India's business hub. The four times weekly service will be operated with Air Canada's most modern aircraft, the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. Toronto-Mumbai will operate year-round with Air Canada's state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. The aircraft features 30 International Business Class lie-flat suites, 21 Premium Economy and 247 Economy Class seats. "This flight is the third route we

have started to India in less than two years, demonstrating our commitment to this vibrant market as well to our continuing international expansion strategy. This is the only non-stop service between Canada and Mumbai and positions Air Canada as offering the best coverage of any carrier operating between Canada and India," said Benjamin Smith, President, Passenger Airlines at Air Canada. With the new Mumbai route, Air Canada now offers three Boeing 787 Dreamliner routes between Canada and India.

Digital key to growing business

Travstarz is focusing on its Online Reservation System (ORS) which offers worldwide inventory with net pricing. It is also promoting its visa application service for UAE to agents who can apply for it remotely.



TT BUREAU

Digitisation is the key word and that is what Delhi-based Travstarz Global Group is focusing on. Their Online Reservation System (ORS), which now has worldwide inventory of hotels, transfers and sightseeing tours, includes the 'Hop-On Hop-Off' tours across five continents.

Sharing more details on this product is Pankaj Nagpal, Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group, who says, "Our Online Reservation System, which has over 3,000 active agents, also offers real-time confirmations and ticket validity of three months and with net pricing everywhere. We are the only portal to offer this in India. Apart from this, we have started visa application serv-

ice for the UAE on our system and agents can apply for it while sitting in their offices."

The company is also focusing on its new DMC locations in Mauritius, Thailand and Eastern Europe apart from its focus locations where it has directly contracted properties, like Seychelles, Maldives, the UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bali.



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director
Travstarz Global Group

We see Tier-II and III cities becoming prominent on the outbound travel map

Speaking about the importance of tiered cities, Nagpal says, "The real strength of India lies in the interiors and travel industry is no exception. As the digitisation spreads across the country and the fast Internet connectivity brings more people online from these cities, so the wide exposure will lead to greater travel and holds immense potential for outbound sector."

Indian market has been going through a radical change and is maturing fast. "We see Tier-II and III cities becoming prominent on the outbound travel map. Travellers are becoming more evolved and have in-depth knowledge of the destinations they want to travel to and so travel agents need to evolve too," he says.

Acknowledging this potential, Travstarz Global Group is participating in select cities that the Global Panorama Showcase (GPS) is travelling to. "It has turned out to be a good platform for networking. We expect it get even better and present good business opportunity for the participants as well as the attendees," Nagpal adds.

Focus areas

Travstarz is focusing on its new DMC locations in Mauritius, Thailand and Eastern Europe apart from its focus locations where it has directly contracted properties, like Seychelles, Maldives, UAE, Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bali

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Lord of the hospitality ring

The hotel chain is eyeing several Tier II cities and has signed up two new properties in Mysuru and Morbi. Their 4th property in Nepal is set to open by 2017 end.



Operating in the mid-market hospitality segment, premier chain Lords Hotels and Resorts, alongwith its four brand segments is swiftly expanding in and around India. After launching the latest addition, Vishal Lords Inn in Gujarat in the first quarter of the year, the group is constantly exploring new territories to open more properties.

Rishi Puri, Vice President, Lords Hotels and Resorts, elaborates on their plans and says, "The group has two new properties queued to come under its wing soon, one in Mysuru and the other in Morbi. Additionally, we have narrowed down a couple of potential properties in Lucknow and Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh and also one in Rishikesh in Uttarakhand."

Moving beyond national borders, Lords has also signed up on their fourth hotel property in Nepal. Says Puri, "This 105-key hotel, which is to commence operations by the end



Rishi Puri
Vice President
Lords Hotels and Resorts

We have also founded Lords Institute of Management in Surat, Gujarat for aspiring Hotel Management students

of 2017, is located near the Budhanilkantha temple and will be named after it as Lords Resorts, Budhanilkantha.

"Other than Nepal, we will be looking at our neighbouring

south-east Asian countries and have also identified a few destinations in the Middle East and the Africa for expansion."

However, properties aren't the only thing they have their sights on. Regional Sales Offices have been set up in Ahmedabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune, with new ones to open in Hyderabad and Cochin. "Alongside, we have also founded Lords Institute of Management in Surat, Gujarat for aspiring Hotel Management students and we recruit a good number of its alumnus into Lords Hotels & Resorts."

This year, the group has registered a good all-round increase in tourist inflow across traveller segments including pilgrimage, leisure and business. The two hill station properties in Saputara, Gujarat was a natural choice amongst leisure travellers this summer, while the property in the eco-tourist destination of Thrissur in Kerala was also a favoured option. Lords Resort Silvassa, and Vishal Lords Inn, Gir Forest too, fared well during the season, states Puri.

Tech intervention in hotels

With their technology-oriented 'Cygnature Experiences' as their trademark for customers' delight, Cygnature Hotels & Resorts has created a niche for itself in the hospitality industry.



Cygnature Hotels & Resorts promises to offer a universal quality-centric customer service framework, combined with next-gen technology and strong partner alliances. **Alok Verma**, Chief Executive Officer, Cygnature Hotels & Resorts, said, "So far, we've opened eight hotels in 24 months, receiving outstanding user and industry appreciation and working to open 103+ hotels across 75 cities over India and South Asia within the next five years," he added.

Their versatile offerings, great prices and dedicated experiences, which they call 'Cygnature Experiences', makes them stand out amongst peers, claimed Verma. "Cygnature not only has just the right space for you at prices that are great on your pocket, but also serves these with its gourmet Cygnature experience delivered through its proven best-in-class processes, people and a next-gen technology engine," he added.



Alok Verma
Chief Executive Officer
Cygnature Hotels & Resorts

Right from planning an event, to check-in, through the stay and much after check-out, CygnatureCX makes it easy, all the while remembering guests' favourite choices

He also said, "Technology is a core enabler in our USP to deliver the ultimate Cygnature experience. Cygnature's next-gen technology engine, 'CygnatureCX', comprises of several inter-meshed components

that include the information rich and user-friendly website, the Central Reservations System (CRS), Online Reputation Management (ORM) and a service-monitoring module, all supported by Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics to understand and deliver a personalised hospitality experience to every single customer. Right from planning an event, to check-in, through the stay and much after check-out, CygnatureCX makes it easy to explore, book a space, check-in, request for amenities, order food, all the while remembering guests' favourite choices to continue to delight and surprise them again."

One of the most popular properties under their umbrella is Jameson Inn Shiraz, Kolkata. Across all hotels, they have clocked over 70-75 per cent occupancy. "Our newer launches have established themselves in a short period of 120 days and started producing 55 per cent and above occupancy."

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Redefining cruising in Maldives

The Grand Vacationist is promoting its first B2B product – a unique cruising experience called the Cruisôtels Maldives experience – to the exponentially growing segment of travel enthusiasts in the Tier-II and III markets.



TT BUREAU

The flagship travel brand of The Vacationist LLP, Mumbai-based The Grand Vacationist not only represents extreme adventures like 'The Edge of Space' and 'Zero Gravity' experiences but is also the sole distributor in India for the world's top two scuba liveaboard companies: Emperor Divers and Aggressor Fleet. On the experiential

in bespoke experiences, add adventure to their travel style and aspire to taste true luxury like the Europeans and Americans," Shah says.

That is why, Shah adds, Cruisôtels Maldives will allow agents to promote to their esteemed clients and also help them grab the experiential travel space for their clients. The experience offers relaxa-



Nishant Patel
Co-founder
The Grand Vacationist

tion, a yachting experience unlike any other, scuba diving experience, water sports such as fly boarding, wake boarding, jet skiing, kayaking and a BBQ under the stars or full moon on an uninhabited island – experiences that are perceived to be accessible only for the rich. "Then there is the added advantage of a fabulous commission model offered to agents," Shah adds.

The goal, according to Nishant Patel, Co-founder, The Grand Vacationist, is to design and develop fabulous experiences. Cruisôtels Maldives will soon be followed by Cruisôtels Red Sea and Cruisôtels Indonesia next year. "We are also introducing Scuba Diving Certifications and Dive Travel in a big way for the Indian market this year with our worldwide net-

work of Dive Liveaboards and Gold Star PADI Dive Centers – a space currently dominated by Indian Dive Centres. We work with travel companies and travel agents to facilitate and train them in selling scuba experiences through our scuba advisory service so that travel companies can also take advantage of this growing space," Patel adds.



Mit Bhatt
Co-founder
The Grand Vacationist

travel space, it has co-developed an experience that will be a first for the Indian vacationist – Cruisôtels – that redefines the way they will see Maldives as a destination.

Talking more on this product is one of its three co-founders, Mit Bhatt, who says, "We are promoting our first B2B product—the Cruisôtels Maldives experience—to the Tier-II and III markets. Cruisôtels Maldives is a unique cruising experience unlike any other that rede-



Rishabh Shah
Co-founder
The Grand Vacationist

defines the way vacationists will see Maldives as a destination. Many firsts have been added to the experience to make it a truly amazing experience for Indians."

Rishabh Shah, Co-founder, The Grand Vacationist, feels that Indian vacationists are evolving from being tourists to experiential travelers. "This was a space that was earlier reserved for a segment of high net-worth individuals but is now spread across the spectrum of young vacationists who would like to indulge

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A sea of growth for Park Ocean

By nurturing trade relations, offering impeccable guest service, and great marketing efforts, Park Ocean, Jaipur has seen remarkable growth in occupancy in the last one year.



TT BUREAU

Offering premium service and comfort, Park Ocean, Jaipur, stays true to the brand ethos by offering plush and spacious interiors in the beautiful Pink City. **Sandeep Jain**, Managing Director, Park Ocean, said, "Park Ocean pampers the style conscious and upbeat travellers with its personalised services, premium

in-room amenities, award-winning restaurants and fun experiences. The hotel, with its 48 smartly furnished rooms and suites, offers a wide array of accommodation options, with room categories including Superior Room; Deluxe Room; Premier Room; Junior Suite and Executive Suite. The guests can enjoy a cosy stay at a comfortable price along with all the facilities, such

as meeting and banquet space, spa, swimming pool and international cuisine restaurant."

Being centrally located, the property enjoys easy access to market, central bus stand and Jaipur Railway station. Also, the Jaipur International Airport is 25 minutes' drive from the hotel. Jain said that it is their service which is appreci-

ated by their guests and that's what makes them stand out in the competitive market of Jaipur. "The interiors and F&B are also appreciated by all guests. It is mandatory for us to keep upgrading our product from time to time, and we have added a Spa and rooftop Tamasha lounge to our property," he informed.

The hotel's occupancy

has been growing in double figures. Jain agrees, "We have seen a remarkable growth of 12 per cent in the occupancy as compared to the same period last year." In order to boost this growth further, they are adopting various marketing and promotional strategies. "Our sales team is aggressively approaching the market, and we are targeting to have our own repre-



Sandeep Jain
Managing Director
Park Ocean

We have seen a remarkable growth of 12 per cent in the occupancy as compared to same period last year

sentative in major metro cities like NCR, Mumbai, Kolkata and Ahmedabad. We already have presence in NCR and rest of the metros are also in our business plan. We are active on social media and print media. We are attending all major travel trade shows and our marketing team is doing tactical promotions on social media, print media and electronic media as well," he explained.

Engaging with travel trade is also focal to growing the business, claims Jain. "We have huge business share from travel partners and that is because we are very flexible with all of them. We work very closely with them to understand their business requirement, especially market-specific needs, like those from European Market, Far East Market or GCC market. According to that, we design tailor-made packages with our travel partners. We also organise business networking events and Familiarization trips to update them about our product," he added.

USPs:

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Luxury rules the roost

W Maldives is the ultimate beach destination for Indians, as it has already clocked a growth of 38 per cent growth in bookings from India.



TT BUREAU

Sit back and relax at your private island with white sandy beaches, turquoise lagoons and natural reefs at the W Maldives. **Sandeep Raghav**, Business Development Director-South Asia, W Maldives and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa, informs, "W Maldives boasts of 77 individual escapes, including single and double room spaces as well as junior suites called WOW Ocean Escapes and one Extreme WOW Ocean Heaven, which is a 2-bedroom villa. Guests can relax at the 'Away' spa and relish the local and international delicacies at the six restaurants at the property."

Raghav affirms that Maldives is a great market for them. "The high season in the Maldives is between September and until May with June and August being quieter months for us. We have seen a sharp growth from India market for luxury bookings at W Maldives. We have



Sandeep Raghav
Business Development Director-South Asia, W Maldives and Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa

We have seen a sharp growth from India market. We have achieved 138 per cent growth in bookings for W Maldives from India as compared to 2016

achieved 138 per cent growth in bookings for W Maldives from India as compared to last year," he says.

He further informs that W Maldives puts in a lot of effort

in collaboration with many different artists. "W Maldives is part of W Hotels, which are famous for their happenings around design, music, fashion and fuel. Hence, we partner with many new artists, DJs, fashion designers and other creatives, which makes our destination a perfect escape, both for those who want to enjoy the slower pace of life and those enjoying the electrifying W vibe. We have sponsored few luxury events like BBC Golf Event, Mega Maldives launch in India and many others," he added.

Raghav claimed that they are aggressive in their sales and marketing activities across the world, and make sure to engage with travel agents as part of their promotional strategies. "We showcase our brands in all major trade events like SATTE, OTM, Marriot Global Sales Mission, ILTM Shanghai, Amex luxury showcase etc. We organise familiarisation trip, product presentations, to key luxury agents and share our newsletter on regular basis," he claimed.

Clarks Inn eyes 100 mark

With 21 new openings in 2016, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels is now aiming at establishing 100 properties by the end of this year.



TT BUREAU

Clarks Inn Group of Hotels recorded its highest growth in 2016 as it added a total of 21 new properties, including 12 operational hotels last year with the tally now reaching 75 hotels, reveals **S. N. Srivastava**, President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. "The company is now eyeing another year of sustained growth in 2017 and beyond and hopes to have a portfolio of 100 hotels by the year end. Clarks Inn has strong development goals in the pipeline, and given the goodwill and industry confidence in our ability to deliver profitable partnership, we are confident of achieving this target," he says.

According to Srivastava, the USP that has catalysed this unprecedented growth is their tremendous delivery on its brand promises that is essentially the ability to deliver world-class value-for-money hospitality experience across its hotels. "Our customers and owners trust our focus



S. N. Srivastava
President & Co-founder
Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

Clarks Inn has strong development goals in the pipeline, and given the industry confidence in us we are confident of achieving this target

on services, personalised attention, affordable rental and promise to provide great value world-class hospitality as well as unique offering of local, regional, Indian and international cuisines. Our record of repeat customers and customer retention

is very strong. Besides we maintain excellent post-stay connection with our guests. The unobtrusive customer database management is a huge advantage and customers feel very good about it, not only because of the seamless check-in and services that it helps us offer, but also because they are accorded due acknowledgement as our patrons," he adds.

Claiming that their marketing and promotional activities are comprehensive and 360 degree in nature, he says, "Our promotional outreach encompasses consumer, trade, online space, among others. We have aggressive presence in the digital space, as well as with OTAs and other such channels, besides offline initiatives like corporate networking, participation in trade roadshows and fairs in India and overseas." He concludes that travel trade has been part of their success since the beginning and they will continue to remain strong partners.

Palace on Wheels chugs on

Royal Rajasthan on Wheels will be rebranded as the new Palace on Wheels. The upgraded Indian luxury train will now offer an enhanced travel experience.



TT BUREAU

Prominent heritage train Palace on Wheels (POW) will acquire a significantly different appearance during the coming tourist season. The original Palace on Wheels, in existence since 1982, will be discontinued as it has completed its life-cycle. Royal Rajasthan on Wheels (RROW) will be rechristened as Palace on Wheels (POW). The refurbished version of the train will provide a much richer travel experience with wider cabin space and unique interiors.

According to **Manish Saini**, Director, Worldwide Rail Journeys (WRJ), the company is very pleased with this decision to continue the journey of The Palace on Wheels, given the immense popularity it has garnered across borders, by taking over Royal Rajasthan on Wheels. Speaking about the upgrade of the train, Saini, says, "We are very happy with the initiative taken by the Indian Railways



Manish Saini
Director
Worldwide Rail Journeys (WRJ)

We are very happy with the initiative taken by the Indian Railways and RTDC and giving a more superior product to the customers

and Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation by converting Royal Rajasthan on Wheels to Palace on Wheels and giving a more superior product to the customers. We have already done the pre-pur-

chase of Palace on Wheels for the next two years in order to do aggressive marketing to retain existing business and to attract new customers."

He further elaborated that in a short span of time, the Royal Rajasthan on Wheels got myriad recognition for its extravagant interiors and state-of-the-art facilities. "While the compelling interiors and the three-cabin structure of the train is being retained, the exterior of this luxury train will be transformed into the trademark colours of the Palace on Wheels which will enable a much lavish tour for the passengers," he adds. Worldwide Rail Journeys is a unique and first-of-its-kind rail tourism company that enables travelers to book their trip online with ease, enquire for booking information for various Indian luxury trains including the Deccan Odyssey, the Golden Chariot, The Maharajas' Express and the Palace on Wheels.

Indana's 'I do' to weddings

After opening their latest property in Jaipur, Indana Hotels and Resorts is planning to capture the growing wedding segment in the state of Rajasthan.



TT BUREAU

Indana Hotels and Resorts opened Indana Palace Jaipur in November last year. They already have an 88-room five-star property Indana Palace Jodhpur in the Blue City. **Meera Pahwa**, Vice President Marketing & Sales, reveals, "Indana Palace Jodhpur has venues for both large and small ceremonies with its huge 10,000 square feet banquet hall, which opens up to a 40,000 square feet manicured lawn, providing spectacular panoramic views and the ultimate setting for a wedding."

Talking about the 118-key Jaipur property, Pahwa says Indana Palace Jaipur offers a banquet hall of 8000 square feet with the state-of-art facilities, a pre-function area of 3,000 square feet and a 40,000 square feet lawn. It also offers a party room, as well as varied F&B outlets, swimming pool, spa, health club, business centre, and a shopping arcade. In terms of growth, Pahwa claims to have witnessed



Meera Pahwa
Vice President Marketing & Sales, Indana Palace Jodhpur

In Jaipur, we have started operations recently and expecting good business from segments of weddings, MICE and inbound

an upward swing in occupancy in Jodhpur, owing to weddings, which is a major contributor towards revenue. "As Jodhpur is a popular destination for film shoots, we have managed to capture good business from this

segment. In Jaipur, we have started operations recently and expecting good business from segments of weddings, MICE and inbound," she adds.

Since both Jodhpur and Jaipur are leisure destinations, Pahwa says their market segment primarily is inbound, domestic, weddings and MICE. "We work very closely with our travel partners and give them all the assistance to market our product. Fam tours are being arranged for FTOs and local agents on regular basis," she adds.

Wedding constitutes a big segment for Indana Hotels and Resorts and the hotel is concentrating on attracting wedding planners and event companies through Fam tours and e-Mailers. "We participate in exhibitions to showcase our product to new agents. We have a mobile-friendly website, and we've tied up with all the important OTA's who play a vital role in pushing sales and have seen a good contribution," she concludes.



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A walk down the GPS memory lane

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There's nothing quite like pictures from the past to bring back memories of the time spent networking with friends and colleagues from the industry at the Global Panorama Showcase. Here's a glimpse into the GPS editions held in different cities in 2015, 2016 and January 2017.



Contd. on next page ►

The best of culture & spiritual healing

Vedaaranya is a village revival initiative that aims to showcase Shekhawati culture to guests through architecture, nature walks, workshops on healing and Ayurveda to name a few.

TT BUREAU

Ramgarh Shekhawati in Rajasthan is known for its havelis from the 18th and 19th century that speak of the life and the heritage back in the day. The culturally-rich town holds innumerable wall frescoes which lends the name 'the open art gallery of Rajasthan' and is home to several forts, stepwells and johads.

Recognising the potential of the town, **Shruti Nada Poddar**, Founder, Shruti Foundation and MD, Nada Vibrionic, has embarked on a project called 'Vedaaranya,' to convert Ramgarh Shekhawati into a heritage town and offer an all-encompassing experience. From wellness to history, art to nature, the comprehensive project covers all aspects. She elaborates, "Through this, we are trying to revive the culture as well as age old practices and immerse visitors in the glory of yesteryear. This includes a homestay, wellness and Ayurveda workshops, nature walks, and many more that are yet to be introduced. Other elements like a museum and a library are all in pipeline to make this an all-rounded experience."

Poddar also hosts corporate retreats on Nada healing, or vibrational healing that uses the power of vibrations from the body, like feet sounds, breathing, chakras, mudras and explains their impact to the guests. In August, she had a theatre residency lined up on Shakti tradition and often hosts different workshops.

While foreign tourists from Europe are regulars at Vedaaranya, it appeals to many Indians fascinated with history, art and wellness too. She adds, "Throughout the year, we have different workshops and residency programmes because the town has to be experienced as a whole. It has so much to offer that we create packages so that visitors can experience every element. Monsoon is the best time to be here as the temperature cools down and there is greenery everywhere." She has also been actively promoting the project

Cruise 'Carrot' offered to Indians

As the only authorised agent of Celestyal Cruises in India, Cruise Carrot has been promoting cruises in India and has seen good results so far.

TT BUREAU

Cruise Carrot is a leading cruise company catering to all types of cruises across the globe. Being the only authorised agent of Celestyal Cruises in India, this cruise line's medium-sized ships gives Cruise Carrot a distinct competitive advantage in forms **Neeraj Sharma**, Managing Director, Cruise Carrot. He says, "We can steer the guests towards every nook

and cranny of the Eastern Mediterranean, helping them explore all of its hidden gems. We've designed our ships in such a way that guests experience the highest standards of hospitality and comfort all while creating unforgettable memories on the cruise."

Apart from the Celestyal Cruises, the company also witnessed a good number of Indian travellers for other cruise lines like Costa



Neeraj Sharma
Managing Director, Cruise Carrot

Cruises, Princess Cruises, Star Cruises and Norwegian

Cruise Line, among others. Sharma further says, "We specialise in the B2B market and work with all respective travel partners pan India, offering them a variety of cruise packages. We have been making aggressive efforts to grow the cruising market from India. GPS is one such platform where we can showcase our products and inform the partners about the offers in various markets across India."



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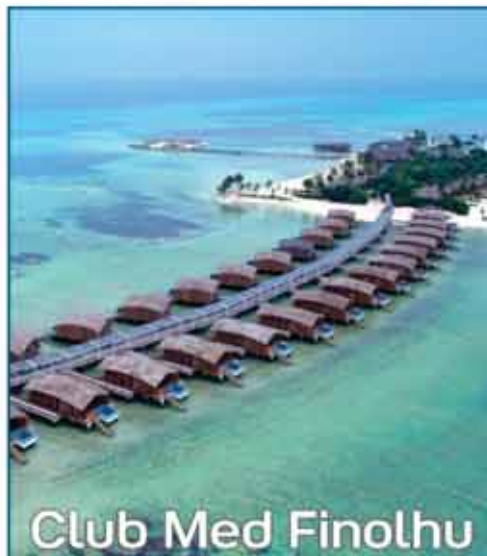
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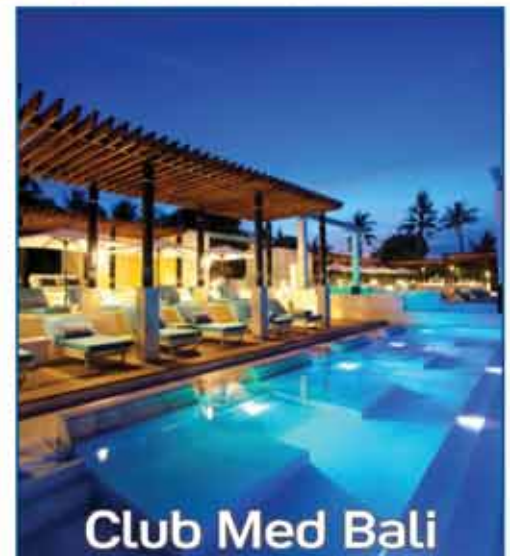
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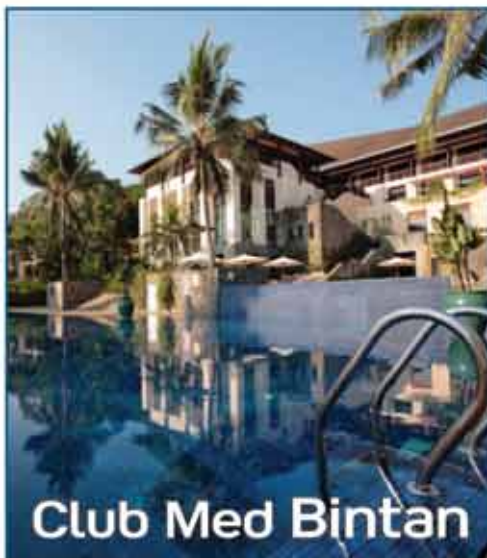
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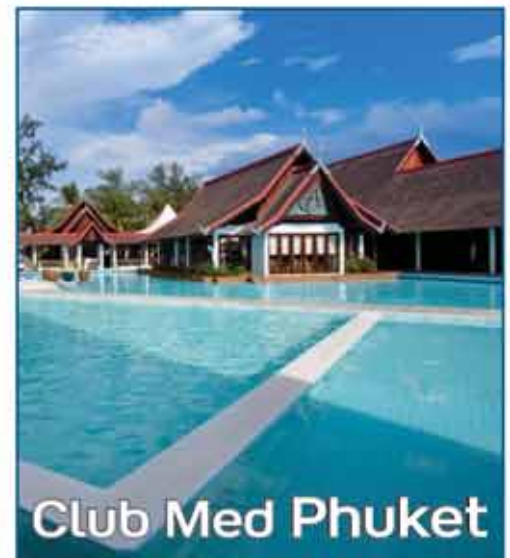
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Wide Range of Hotels to Choose From



Over 5,00,000
Hotels Worldwide



Access to worldwide
suppliers & deals



Real-time inventory &
best price



Book on time limit
option & print your own
e-voucher

Overall Fulfillment and Support Service



Online marketplace
to cater all travel
needs



24x7 customer
support center



Touch points across
voice, email, chat,
SMS & voice mail



Robust CRM
application, with
real time interface



Dedicated pool of
well trained
professionals