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# ITM unites tourism stakeholders

Synergy between industry stakeholders and addressing competition from neighbouring countries are key steps in accelerating India's tourism growth, said **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture, Government of India, at the second edition of India Tourism Mart (ITM).



Manas Dwivedi

**Prahlad Singh Patel** inaugurated the second edition of India Tourism Mart, organised by FAITH with the support of Ministry of Tourism, at The Ashok New Delhi in the presence of **Yogendra Tripathi**, Secretary – Tourism, Government of India; **Meenakshi Sharma**, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; **Nakul Anand**, Chairman, FAITH; **Subhash Goyal**, Chairman, Organising Committee, ITM and Hony. Secretary, FAITH; and **Chander Mansharamani**, Vice Chairman, India Tourism Mart. The Chief Guest for the event was **Nitin Gadkari**, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Shipping as well as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India.



Patel said, "India Tourism Mart (ITM) is the best example of working together to promote tourism in the country with a public-private partnership."

The minister added that since the day he took charge, the ministry has been working tirelessly to explore new areas for promoting tourism. He added that to further tourism in the country, we need to acknowledge competition from our neighbouring countries and work to tackle it. "States should not compete with

each other; they should all come together and become a force to reckon with. We should also focus on getting Chinese tourists to India - they are the largest source market of outbound travellers and even if we get 10 per cent of the total share, I think we can achieve our target in one year," he shared.

The minister also said that tour operators and travel agents were an integral part of the industry. He added, "Several steps have been taken to

provide relief to the industry, like a flexible e-Visa structure and reduced GST rates for hotels." Delighted with the improvement in India's ranking on the 'Travel & Tourism Competitiveness' index, the minister said that the objective now was to feature in the top 10 of the list in the next five years.

To this, Gadkari added, "It is a pleasure for me to attend such a mart for the promotion of tourism. Employment generation is an important

## India's e-Tourist Visa fee reduced

A short-duration e-Visa for tourists with a month's validity and visa fee of \$25 has been introduced for July-March. A five-year e-Tourist Visa with an \$80 fee has also been introduced, besides the existing one-year e-Tourist Visa with a fee of \$40. For Japan, Singapore and Sri Lanka, visa fee during the lean period is \$10 and for an e-Visa of 30 days, one year or five years, the fee is \$25. For other countries where e-Visa facility is available, visa fee in the lean period is \$10 and that for peak season for 30 days is \$25. e-Visa fee for one and five years is \$40 & \$80, respectively.

agenda for the government; we have created 11 crore jobs and our target is to create at least five crore more in the next five years. Almost 49 per cent of capital investment is going to generate jobs in tourism. We are developing good roads and express highways, which would not only benefit Indians but would also provide increased connectivity for tourism."

At this year's ITM, over 240 foreign buyers have been

shortlisted out of almost 1000 registrations received. More than 140 exhibitors will be exhibiting their products during the next two days of the B2B exhibition at The Ashok Hotel. 🇮🇳

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# Unlocking new opportunities!

The second edition of India Tourism Mart promises to be the perfect opportunity for exhibitors to showcase to international buyers a side of India that is waiting to be explored! As many as 250 buyers and 150 exhibitors are attending this year's edition.





# Goldstone goes beyond India

Goldstone Hotels & Resorts continues to meet guest requirements at its existing properties in India, mostly in the north. It is now eyeing opportunities in West and East India, and is all set to launch properties in Nepal, Thailand and Bangladesh.

TT Bureau

Goldstone Hotels & Resorts is a young boutique hospitality management company launched with the vision of creating the right connect between guest requirements and hotel offerings. With an emphasis on quality, its hotels feature extensive facilities for leisure and business travellers alike.

Sharing more details on the company's USP, **Sandeep Singh**, Managing Director, Goldstone Hotels & Resorts, says, "We work with some of the leading think tanks in the hospitality industry. As a hotel business, we focus on providing an honest and discreet service. We see ourselves as leading craftsmen in the world of hospitality, valuing authenticity, passion, precision, and understanding in all we do. Each hotel we have created is a



**Sandeep Singh**  
Managing Director  
Goldstone Hotels & Resorts

tribute to the local architecture and cultural traditions. We believe that our success lies in our strength, that is our employees, our owners, and our values."

In a short span of seven months, Goldstone Hotels & Resorts has witnessed spectacular growth, acquiring seven properties that are mostly in exotic and spiritual destinations.

Singh feels that this is the need of the hour. He adds, "We intend to grow at the same pace, but without compromising or overlooking the aspect of doing justice to each property under our flagship, and ensuring good reputation, good maintenance and good financial returns for our owners. Currently, we have properties in Dehradun,

Singh believes in taking challenges in one's stride, adding that "they are a part of every business and the hospitality industry cannot be an exception."

Be it skilled manpower, staff attrition, technological changes, regular innovation or the constantly changing

“Each hotel we have created in some of the most exciting places in India is a tribute to the local architecture and cultural traditions”

Vrindavan, Amritsar, Vadodara and Dhanaulti, and our heritage flagship hotel Nahan Palace at Nahan. We would soon have our footprint in Prayagraj, Patna, Deoghar, Ranchi, Ghaziabad, Goa, and Chandigarh. Apart from this, Goldstone will also launch properties in Nepal, Thailand, and Bangladesh."

expectations of customers, he says that it is very important to change with the times to sustain oneself. "Political and safety-related challenges also add to the kitty. We, at Goldstone, believe in accepting challenges and resolving them in the most effective manner," he shares.

# Varanasi needs more flights

Though Varanasi continues to attract tourists from afar, better flight connectivity with other tourism hubs is the need of the hour.

TT Bureau


There is no denying that Varanasi is a tourist hotspot in the state of Uttar Pradesh. According to **Rashid Khan**, President, Varanasi Tourism Guild, though the city has seen continuous development, some issues still need to be addressed.

"A bottleneck for the city is air connectivity. Flights to Khajuraho have been closed from quite some time now. I believe, if certain flights were revived, there will be a growth of at least 25 per cent in the number of tourists coming to the city," Khan shares, adding that another issue the city's tourism sector is currently facing is a scarcity of guides who speak multiple languages.





**Rashid Khan**  
President  
Varanasi Tourism Guild

This year, Varanasi Tourism Guild will celebrate World Tourism Day with a four-kilometre heritage walk, which will commence at Taj Ganges and conclude at Shastri Ghat. "We are inviting between 400 and 500 delegates to participate in the walk, and all the arrangements will be taken care of by us," he adds.



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**GOLDEN HAND BRIDGE (DANANG - VIETNAM)**

# Freedom to offer more

Freedom Holidays witnessed steady growth in the first half of 2019 and is ecstatic about celebrating 25 years in the tourism business. It now wants to diversify operations to the hospitality and health sectors.

TT Bureau

With diversification on its mind by at least the end of this year, Freedom Holidays is looking to focus on sectors such as hospitality and health, says **Martin Joseph Thypodath**, the company's Managing Director. Giving details on the expansion plan, he says, "We are looking to expand our business into the hospitality, health, and education



**Martin Joseph Thypodath**  
Managing Director  
Freedom Holidays

“We are looking to expand into the education sector and are also planning to launch our own hotel and wellness centre”

sectors. We are also planning to launch our own hotel as well as health and wellness centres."

The company is also effectively using new technology for ease of doing business and making travel solutions better, and

using social media for promoting its business. Thypodath says that they are also in the process of going online for all their products.

Sharing his view on the growth of inbound tourism in the country, he says that

the future looks bright with all the efforts being put in by Government of India. "We are grateful to the government for reducing the e-Tourist Visa fee. Inbound tourism to India was declining, and I hope we follow the path of countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, Maldives and other Far East countries where a free visa-on-arrival is offered," he shares.

Freedom Holidays has completed 25 years in the industry despite the many ups and downs, and Thypodath says that the company managed to remain afloat and overcome all obstacles.

"We are a group of five companies (Freedom Holidays, Freedom Travel Services, Freedom Aero Services, Freedom Events, and Freedom Exports) dealing in tourism, travel, aviation, entertainment, and exports," he shares.

# ITM gets bigger and better

Around 250 buyers are attending the second edition of India Tourism Mart, which will see inbound tour operators as well as representatives from hotels and states put their best foot forward in showcasing an unmatched diversity of products.



Nisha Verma

India Tourism Mart (ITM), organised by Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH) with the support of Ministry of Tourism (MOT), aims to grow inbound tourism substantially, claims **Subhash Goyal**, Honorary Secretary, FAITH and Chairman, Organising Committee of India Tourism Mart.

"ITM would help us double the tourism figures and take them to 20 million. The objective of the mart

“Apart from USA and China, there are buyers from Europe, South America, Australia, Argentina and many other countries”

is to enable the smallest of operators, who cannot afford to go to international exhibitions around the world, to meet the best of buyers without spending a lot of money," he said.

To facilitate a smooth flow, exhibitors could register through an online system; buyers, on the other hand, were selected by a committee of FAITH and MOT representatives. "This year, we have crossed last year's figure with around 250 buyers. With the lowering of visa fee and GST, India has become an affordable tourism product," he shared.

Goyal also claimed that ITM would allow states to showcase their products to international buyers, adding that this year, more than 25 states will be exhibiting at the mart. Gujarat is the partner state for this edition of ITM, hence, the state's folklore and culture will be showcased on one of the evenings. "Gujarat will also

display the world's tallest statue - Statue of Unity - and the 150-year anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. In fact, most of our post-event tours are centred on the Mahatma," he shared.

At this year's edition, there is a large delegation from USA as well as China.

"China is the largest outbound market and we have around 50 tour operators from China. The Indian em-

bassy in China and the tourist office there have really been working hard in order to get the best of Chinese tour operators. There was a roadshow in the US where the Minister of Tourism was present along with a delega-

tion of inbound operators, where he spoke about ITM. Apart from USA and China, there are buyers from Europe, South America, Australia, Argentina and many other countries," Goyal informed.



**Subhash Goyal**  
Hon. Secretary, FAITH and  
Chairman, Organising Committee, ITM

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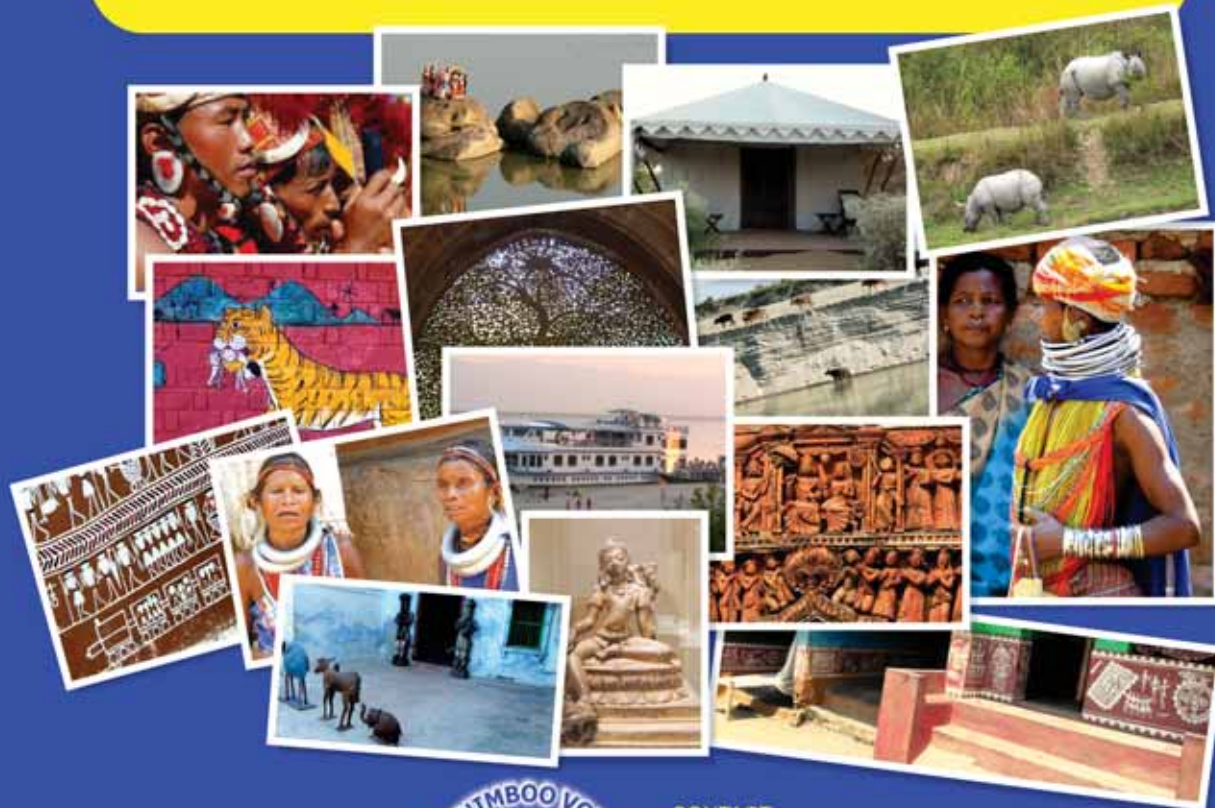
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## Grow with BingoForge

With 30 years of domain experience in the hospitality industry, the BingoForge App provides the complete solution to sales operations that hotels need today to drive revenues.



TT Bureau

Launched in February 2017, BingoForge App is a unique solution developed to help the hotel sales team maximise conversions. Armed with more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Zubin Bilimoria, Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder, BingoForge, created this solutions-oriented App after realising that there was no real tool available for



Zubin Bilimoria  
Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder  
BingoForge

the sales team to drive up revenues. "That is why we decided to develop this CRM that automates the entire sales process for the team. Today, we have not just international hotel chains but also stand-alone properties that use this product," he says.

The App includes the DSR (Daily Sales Report) tool that can help sales personnel file DSRs on the fly from the customer's meeting venue itself. The solution auto-populates data such as date, time, and location. From the DSR, one can create a sales pipeline. Bingo Sales CRM will also auto-forecast revenue of each query.

Bilimoria explains further and says, "Users can create their own dashboard. It is also very easy to use. Our clients have recorded almost 25-26 per cent growth in sales revenue after using the App," he claims.

### Some more key features

- ❖ Send sales proposal within two minutes and convert a proposal to proforma
- ❖ Add follow-up action to leads as well as assign to colleagues or departments for follow-up
- ❖ Manage customer RFP contracts and negotiated rates
- ❖ Mark leads as 'won' or 'lost' with reason for loss of sales
- ❖ Track loss revenue and build loss revenue reports with multiple drill-down functionalities
- ❖ Build pivot tables and drill down to any level of information
- ❖ Customise reports and save them under 'Favourites' or add to dashboard for real-time access

## A thrilling experience

Thrill Factory is an adrenaline-boosting destination in Rishikesh that offers options for families and MICE groups, with the added advantage of commissions for agents.



TT Bureau

Thrill Factory, located in Shivpuri, Rishikesh, is an adventure and entertainment destination designed not just for families with children but all age groups as well as MICE groups. There are vari-

activities like bowling, cricket simulators; archery using Artificial Intelligence; arcade games; pool table and entertainment in the form of DJ nights, live band performances, etc. The F&B options include a multi-cuisine restaurant and a bakery.

yoga, meditation, Qigong and zumba; as well as sight-seeing tours of lesser-known places in Rishikesh. It also arranges for hotels, camps, as well as transportation.

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



ous options available for adventure seekers and corporate team-building alike in the form of reverse bungee; rope course with 20 obstacles; night treks;

The attraction primarily offers customised packages which include sessions on personality development that are conducted by experts; stress-buster sessions like

*Thrill Factory works on a 20-25 per cent commission for agents. It also provides special rates for group bookings depending on the requirements of the group, since it caters to every special need. It has a separate team that takes care of these B2B transactions.*

## Experience slow tourism

To cater to a growing demand for unexplored destinations, Bloo Nimboo Voyages, through its bespoke products, will launch wildlife tours and promote the lesser-known parks in India.



TT Bureau

As specialists in boutique and à la carte tours for clients who prefer to do 'slow tourism', Bloo Nimboo Voyages is excited to announce its new plans for wildlife enthusiasts. Philip Thomas, Managing Director & Co-Founder, Bloo Nimboo Voyages, reveals, "We will soon be launching our wildlife document and promoting the lesser-known parks in India. We will also launch



Philip Thomas  
Managing Director & Co-Founder  
Bloo Nimboo Voyages

IATO, and our ethos is based on the bespoke and boutique business," Thomas adds.

Speaking about the company's USP, he says that the local knowledge, the implicit understanding with their guides and drivers, their conviction that without respect and integrity nothing is possible, make it all a deadly combination to ensure that a trip with Bloo Nimboo Voyages is memorable. "But as we commonly say, details are important. Therefore, we handle all our clients with 'kid gloves' to make sure that they enjoy every moment of their stay," Thomas adds.

**“We will also launch a day at Kabini for fishing for Mahseer; we remain committed to clients who seek the lesser-known routes of the Indian subcontinent”**

a day at Kabini for fishing for Mahseer. Everyone wants a quiet holiday and we remain committed to clients who seek the lesser-known routes of the Indian subcontinent."

The company started its journey in 2016 and currently, its business comes mainly from four European countries. "We are growing each year as per our expectations. Today, we are also members of TOFT and

*Bloo Nimboo Voyages belongs to Valerie Chalopet, a French national, and Philip Thomas. Both are travel veterans who started their careers in 1990 and 1982, respectively. The company also offers Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka tours according to any budget requirements.*

## GHR in Tier-II, III cities

New Delhi-based Global Hotel Representations has spread far and wide, representing hotels in Tier-II and III cities in India and one in Nepal. Today, it has 16 hotels in its portfolio.



TT Bureau

Having been in the business for more than five years now, Global Hotel Representations (GHR) today has 16 hotels under its umbrella, spread across the country and beyond. According to OP Mendiratta, Managing Director, Global Hotel Representations, in times to come, more hotels will opt for the franchise model and management contracts with large



OP Mendiratta  
Managing Director  
Global Hotel Representations

Radha Brij Vasundhara Resort & Spa, Govardhan (UP); Riva-tas by Ideal and The Amayaa in Varanasi (UP); Four Points By Sheraton Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra); Hotel Centre Point, Nagpur (Maharashtra); Orchha Palace & Orchha Resort (MP); and Radisson Hotel Kathmandu (Nepal).

Global Hotel Representations promotes these hotels in Delhi-NCR via social media, bulk mailing and traditional sales calling, and covers a number of sectors such as MICE business, tour operators and B2B operators, event managers, and corporate houses.

**“We keep in mind the market mix and RevPAR, and leave no stone unturned in grabbing any opportunity that comes our way”**

hotels. He believes that the marketing business will grow substantially and make its presence felt, as it is a viable option for promotion.

The New Delhi-based company represents Swosti Group's

hotels in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) – one in Chilika and the other in Gopalpur-on-Sea; Hotel Madhuban Highlands in Mussoorie (Uttarakhand); Eil Bee Ganga View, Rishikesh (Uttarakhand); JC Residency, Madurai (Tamil Nadu); Shri

"We have already entered tiered cities. We always keep in mind the market mix and RevPAR, and leave no stone unturned in grabbing any opportunity that comes our way. Hotels associated with us have seen healthy growth," Mendiratta says.

# AirAsia India adds routes

AirAsia India will be adding Agartala to its network from October, making the most of an increase in demand during the upcoming festive season. The airline is also keen to expand to other Tier-II and III cities.



TT Bureau

On Air Asia's agenda for this year is expansion of routes and destinations. "We have recently launched our New Delhi-Chennai route keeping in mind the demand for it. We will also be expanding our presence to Agartala from October, to meet the demand during Durga Puja celebrations and the upcoming festive season. We are looking forward to expanding our presence to Tier-II and Tier-III cities, to strengthen our regional network as well," says



Sanjay Kumar  
Chief Operating Officer  
AirAsia India

rankings, according to the latest DGCA reports. "We have

systems and processes to keep our operating cost lean, while also standing by our core value of making flying accessible to everyone and connecting/adding as many destinations as we can to our domestic mandate," he says. The airline is also looking forward to inducting a few more aircraft to its fleet by year-end.

Claiming that their sales teams across the country are constantly engaging with travel agents within all segments, he says, "We have various incentives, programmes, and promotions that encourage the travel trade to support the AirAsia network. With the aim to promote tourism in India, we conduct travel fairs across the country. We urge flyers to visit these travel fairs and avail exciting offers we have in store."

Speaking about India Tourism Mart, he says that it gives an opportunity to come together and contribute to tourism. 📌

**"We have concrete plans to amplify our network grid across India in times to come, owing to the conducive and flourishing aviation ecosystem"**

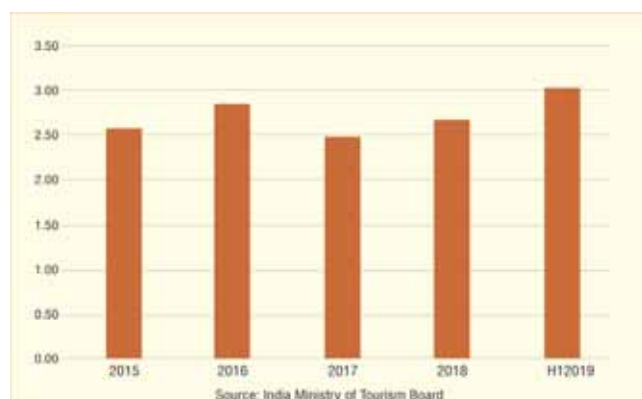
Sanjay Kumar, Chief Operating Officer, AirAsia India. He also reveals that AirAsia India is one of the top-spot bearers in the 'On Time Performance' and 'Passenger Load Factor'

concrete plans to amplify our network grid across India in times to come, owing to the conducive and flourishing aviation ecosystem. As a budget airline, we continually revisit our

# Chinese inbound grows

A recent study shows that there has been an increase in the number of Chinese travellers coming to India. They now value experiences over obligatory visits to landmarks, and India can serve up a good mix.

Market share of Chinese travellers for total Indian incoming market 2015-H1 2019



A recent report by China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI) - a leading independent research institute for consulting, research, information, training, and quality assessment relating to the Chinese outbound tourism market - reveals that in the first half of 2019, a y-o-y increase of 21 per cent in Chinese arrivals to India was recorded, reaching a historical high at three per cent of total Indian arrivals - during the period.

For India, it can be expected that given a successful branding strategy, the high-end market will see a stronger than average growth, especially if suitable touristic products are offered in fields like health, nature, and special interest which are unique for India. Compared to package group Chinese tourists, free individual travellers (FITs) and customised travel visitors are mostly wealthier upper-middle-class Chinese visitors who have already gained more experiences in outbound travel. Many FITs and customised travel visitors thus have the potential to stay longer at each location, disperse wider, avoid peak seasons and crowded attractions, while at the same time still purchase tourism services and activities.

Source: China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI)

# Document all memories

Travographer is a B2B company where travel agents can book a photographer for their clients to capture their memories when they travel, at a cost much less than booking directly.



TT Bureau

When Kapil Arora, Co-founder & CEO, Travographer, was on a desert safari in Dubai, he noticed one crucial problem: as enjoyable as the trip was, he was unable to look back at those memories because neither did he get time to take selfies, nor did he get any pictures clicked. "This is when we came up with the idea of having a local vacation photographer accompany travellers to cover their journey, at a cost that was lesser than that of hiring a local photographer directly," he shares.

Thus came about Travographer, a B2B company that works with travel agents as a selling channel partner. Agents can simply log onto the website, book a 'travographer' for a particular date and location, and simply make capturing memories easier for their clientele. Explaining further, Arora adds,



Kapil Arora  
Co-founder & CEO  
Travographer

"We not only deliver pictures, we make them a piece of art in the form of WhatsApp stories, Instagram stories, etc., and market them as well. The biggest advantage for tour operators is that we can help them earn good margins with our new and innovative products." He claims that their products are approximately 50 per cent cheaper than the prevalent market price with the turnaround time just one-third of market standards.

With business serving up well for the last three years and as many as 60,000 photoshoots in its kitty, Travographer now wants to reach every single travel agent in the country within the next two years and empower them with a high-rewarding revenue and a high customer retention option. "We have a web portal as of now; in the next couple of months, we will be launching an App with a simple, easy login facility for travel agents. With every booking, our clients get reward points, which can be redeemed after reaching a certain milestone. We have plans in the pipeline to provide a first-hand experience to travel agents and offer them Fam trips," shares Arora. 📌

**Travographer is giving away a free photoshoot to one travel agent every month. They can use Travographer to increase conversions, revenue, and repeat business.**

# Meeting all leisure needs

Through tailor-made packages, Hotel Park Ocean in Jaipur offers a flexibility that its trade partners desire and caters to clients based in Europe, the Far East, as well as GCC countries.



TT Bureau

Hotel Park Ocean in Jaipur is located in the heart of the city at Sikar Road. Its plush and spacious interiors take the zing up a notch. Based on bookings, Hotel Park Ocean focuses on the leisure market from Asia, the Middle East, CIS nations, and European countries.

Sharing more details, Sandeep Jain, Managing Director, Hotel



Sandeep Jain  
Managing Director  
Hotel Park Ocean

requirements, especially market-specific requirements as there may be different business needs from different regions such as the European market, the Far East, and the GCC market. We then design market-specific, tailor-made packages with our travel partners," Jain explains.

Hotel Park Ocean is aggressively tapping markets on a global level by attending all travel trade exhibitions in India and abroad. It also conducts tactical promotions from time to time. It has a dedicated sales team to approach the market, with sales offices in key metro cities like New Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai.

**"We design tailor-made packages for different business needs from different regions such as Europe, the Far East, and the GCC market"**

Park Ocean, says, "We also organise business networking events and familiarisation trips to update the trade about our product. In order to meet the expectations of our business partners and enhance the guest

experience, we upgrade our product on a regular basis."

He adds that travel partners prefer them because of the flexibility they offer. "We work very closely with them in order to understand their business

"Since our maximum business comes from foreign tourists, we design our itineraries based on their demand and business trends in order to provide them bespoke services. Our packages cater to their requirements," Jain adds. 📌

## Clubside gets adventurous

Clubside Tours & Travels seeks to grow its adventure tourism business next year, while also expanding operations to Nepal and the Andamans, driven by increased connectivity to the two regions.



TT Bureau

Clubside Tours & Travels registered a steady growth in its domestic and inbound business this year and looks to grow its adventure tourism business in 2020, driven primarily by domestic tourists.

Sharing details on this is **Suresh Periwal**, Managing Director, Clubside Tours & Travels, who says, "The millennial population does not just look for a regular cultural



**Suresh Periwal**  
Managing Director  
Clubside Tours & Travels

are a major draw for this section of the population."

tourism in these regions has the potential to grow by leaps and bounds," Periwal feels.

He adds that owing to an economic slowdown, domestic numbers for the forthcoming holiday season, as compared to the corresponding period last year, may drop. However, the company is hoping to



“The e-Visa fee reduction will provide a boost to tourism, especially from the Far East, and promote India for MiCE”

or leisure tour, but wants it to be combined with a bit of adventure. This is what we are looking to address. I feel, trekking and wildlife activities

Clubside Tours is now looking at expanding its footprint with operations in Nepal and the Andamans. "With better connectivity,

compensate the same with a forecasted growth in the number of inbound tourists after the implementation of the new e-Tourist Visa fee. "The e-Visa fee reduction will provide a boost to tourism, especially from the Far East. It will also help promote India as a MiCE destination," he shares.

## 4 new hotels by 2019 end

WelcomHeritage is set to open four new properties by the end of 2019, offering 'unique experiences' to both inbound and domestic guests. It already has 34 properties in operation.



TT Bureau

WelcomHeritage presently has 34 operational properties and is set to open four more in the coming months. Sharing details is **Sanjeev K Nayar**, MIH, General Manager, WelcomHeritage, who says, "Tadoba Vanyavillas Resort & Spa, in the forest reserve of Tadoba near Nagpur, will be launched this month. Inderpura Resort in Udaipurwati (the Shekhawati



**Sanjeev K Nayar**  
MIH General Manager  
WelcomHeritage

destination offers something different and we endeavour to showcase its cultural and traditional brilliance," he adds.

The group is now looking to tap the burgeoning wedding segment as well as those looking for experiential travel. While its properties receive a horde of inbound leisure travellers and conventional MiCE groups, there has been a rise in travellers on a holiday with the family or those attending alumni reunions, Nayar shares.

“Each Indian destination offers something different and we endeavour to showcase its cultural and traditional brilliance”

region of Rajasthan) and Mount Valley (planned as a resort in Ranthambore in the foothills of the Aravalli range) are expected to open in October. Badi Kothi will be a heritage property in Prayagraj and will open before the end of 2019."

For foreign guests, Nayar claims, their properties offer experiences rather than a normal hotel stay and introduce them to true Indian heritage. "Local food of the region and its traditional dances interest inbound travellers. Each Indian

Speaking on India Tourism Mart, Nayar adds, "It would provide a platform for all stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry to interact and create business opportunities. This is the second ITM and we are quite enthusiastic that it will help India showcase its hidden treasures to potential markets, enabling more footfalls in the coming years."

## Bilateral tourism to grow

With increased connectivity between Vietnam and the Indian cities of New Delhi and Kolkata, Lac Hong Voyages is expecting family and MiCE groups to travel, resulting in a good growth of numbers.



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Lac Hong Voyages, one of the leading tour operators in Vietnam, is hopeful that the three new flights connecting India and Vietnam will increase traffic between the two countries. Speaking about this is **Robert Tan**, Executive Director, JTR Events & Marketing, whose parent company is Lac Hong Voyages – a B2B operator and wholesaler based in Vietnam. Tan says, "We are pleased to hear that VietJet



**Robert Tan**  
Executive Director  
JTR Events & Marketing

application for foreigners and make it more flexible to

not just for the Buddhist circuit but other segments as well."

Tan says that there is a vast outbound opportunity for India for wellness tourism. "It is the same for the India market to Vietnam, as we now have a variety of Indian restaurants," he adds. The company is also scouting for new packages with competitive rates from Indian suppliers for the Vietnam market. "I am also keen on MiCE in India and looking for options such as gala dinners, theme ideas, etc., for the incentive market," he says.

“The Indian government has taken steps to ease visa application for foreigners and make it more flexible to increase tourist arrivals”

Air will resume its flight from India to Vietnam and that IndiGo is also flying to Hanoi in Vietnam. We have noticed that the Indian government has taken steps to ease visa

increase tourist arrivals. Likewise, we have already had several bookings from India and also from Vietnam to India which our agency (Lac Hong Voyages) is pursuing,

*VietJet will launch Delhi-Ho Chi Minh City, four times a week, from December 6 and Delhi-Hanoi, thrice weekly, from December 7. Meanwhile, IndiGo will start daily flights from Kolkata to Hanoi with effect from October 3.*

## A 50-key resort in Bhimtal

Ahmedabad-based Trulyy India has opened its 12<sup>th</sup> hotel, a 50-key property with world-class MiCE facilities, in Bhimtal (Uttarakhand). It is now in talks to open a wellness resort in Rishikesh.



TT Bureau

With a focus on the mid-market segment in India as well as the growing inbound traffic, Trulyy India is looking to expand its portfolio and offer tourists a wider variety of hotels to choose from. It currently has 11 hotels spread across Gujarat and Rajasthan, and its 12<sup>th</sup> hotel has just opened in Bhimtal, Uttarakhand. Sharing more details is **Naresh Arora**, Founder &



**Naresh Arora**  
Founder & Chief Executive Officer  
Trulyy India

Trulyy India also has two properties in Kumbhalgarh near Udaipur: one, a 60-room hotel and the other, a 27-room wildlife nature camp. Most of their hotels are in the luxury segment with seven to eight acres of land built like palaces and forts. As a result, their target audience is leisure and MiCE travellers. That said, they have also started conducting weddings, since that is another growing segment. "People are exploring new destinations for weddings and it is becoming a big chunk of the market. In fact, our property in Jaisalmer is doing almost 10-15 weddings a year," Arora shares.

“We are also adding 50 more rooms in Jaisalmer, which currently has 57 rooms, and it will be ready by October end”

Chief Executive Officer, Trulyy India, who says, "Prince Residency by Trulyy India has 50 rooms and will start operating from Oct 1. It is a complete resort with a beautiful location and world-class facilities for MiCE."

With huge demand from tourists, their Rajasthan hotels are seeing huge footfalls. "So, we are adding 50 rooms in Jaisalmer, which currently has 57 rooms, and it will be ready by October end. We are now looking to open a wellness resort in Rishikesh," he says.

*Prince Residency offers well-appointed suite rooms, superior rooms and super deluxe rooms, each with some exclusive features like pool view, garden view, lake view, valley view, balcony/terrace, and in-room facilities.*

# 5 stars for Clarks Shiraz

**Debasish Bhowmik**, Chief Operating Officer, Clarks Shiraz Agra, says that the hotel is ready for the upcoming season with the recent refurbishment of its restaurants and rooms.



TT Bureau

Despite all the competition and a sluggish market, Clarks Shiraz Agra registered a respectable growth of around 12 per cent in the last financial year 2018-19. According to **Debasish Bhowmik**, the inbound business this year was quite low for multiple reasons. He says that the business was



**Debasish Bhowmik**  
COO  
Clarks Shiraz Agra

country. That said, domestic tourism has grown to an extent for us. We are looking forward to doing good business in the upcoming season starting from October 2019," he says optimistically.

Sharing updates on the recent refurbishment at the property, Bhowmik adds that the hotel has undergone tremendous transformation. "We have had a total of 90 rooms refurbished. Overall, the hotel has received changes in all aspects. We have re-launched the menu at 'The Mughal Room' and have a new approach to 'The Sunset Lounge', which overlooks the Taj Mahal. The hotel has also recently been re-classified to a five-star deluxe property, so this is another feather in our cap," he says.

For the next financial year, the hotel expects a growth of around 12-15 per cent. 📈

“The hotel has recently been re-classified to a five-star deluxe property and we are looking forward to doing good business in the upcoming season”

affected by various factors such as a prolonged period of General Elections, closure of Jet Airways, as well as the terror attack in Sri Lanka due to which the Buddhist sector was particularly affected.

"I also think that there has been a sudden drop in the tourist traffic from Europe and Latin America. So, in the first six months of this year, there was a dip in inbound business in the Agra region and around the

# Swosti adds two resorts

Swosti Group will soon launch two resort-style properties in Odisha, one at Gopalpur on Sea and another in Puri. It also plans to expand its footprint to four other locations in the state.



TT Bureau

Post the successful launch of its resort at Chilika, Odisha, Swosti Group is now coming up with two beach resort projects, one at Gopalpur on Sea and another in Puri. "We already have land in Puri and have acquired a patch of land at Gopalpur on Sea. Soon, Swosti Group will put up world-class luxury beach resorts at these places. We are also working on two resorts at Satapada



**JK Mohanty**  
Chairman & Managing Director  
Swosti Group

“We are also working on two resorts at Satapada and Bhitarkanika, and looking to expand our hospitality business to Daringbadi and Belaghar”

and Bhitarkanika (popularly known as the Mini Amazon of India). The group is also looking to expand its hospitality business to Daringbadi and Belaghar," says **JK Mohanty**, Chairman

and Managing Director of Swosti Group.

Claiming that the group has been at the forefront of quality hospitality services in Odisha for more than three

decades now, he adds, "From a stand-alone property to four full-fledged hotels, it has been a long and exciting journey for us. What has made this possible is the unrelenting passion to extend excellent customer experiences. Hence, every aspect of service is designed with detailed insights, which in turn resonate in the happy faces of customers. We strive to understand our client and guest needs by listening to their requirements and responding in a timely fashion."

Mohanty feels that today, tourism in the eastern region needs good publicity of its rich potential through both electronic and print media, and urges the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) to support the state by providing more literature to foreigners at India Tourism offices abroad and giving more exposure to the state in the Incredible India campaign. 📈

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# welcomes one and all

The second edition of India Tourism Mart was inaugurated on September 23 at The Ashok Hotel, New Delhi, by **Prahlad Singh Patel**, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism & Culture, Government of India, in the presence of several other dignitaries. The inauguration of the three-day mart was also graced by **Nitin Gadkari**, Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways & Shipping.







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