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United colours of Paryatan

The Ministry of Tourism launches the second edition of *Paryatan Parv* (Tourism Festival) to be held from September 16-27, 2018, alongside the India Tourism Mart from September 16-18 in New Delhi.



Nisha Verma

Union Home Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the 12-day long Paryatan Parv at Rajpath Lawns on September 16, 2018 in the presence of **K J Alphons**, Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Tourism; **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Tourism and **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Tourism. The event comes in line with the success of last year's three-day Paryatan Parv. This year, the event will be held from September 16- 27, 2018.

Welcoming the delegates at the event, Alphons said, "With Paryatan Parv, our idea is to tell everyone what an incredible country India is with its diverse offerings,

including a vast coastline, fantastic monuments, temples as well as variety of food, craft, music and dance offerings. India is also the land of Yoga and Ayurveda. With this event, we want Indians to see India. Today, India is the fastest growing tourism economy."

Paryatan Parv will be coinciding with the India Tourism Mart (ITM) being held from September 16-18 at The Ashok, New Delhi. The event is being organised by MOT and Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH). Alphons added, "Since Paryatan Parv is being held alongside the first India Tourism Mart, it gives an opportunity to the foreign buyers to get a taste of India. Our aim



is to double the arrival figures, revenue and the generation of foreign exchange by tourism by 2020. One of the biggest achievements for us has been that in the last four years, tourism has created 14.67 million jobs."

During the inaugural function, Singh also released the Paryatan Parv event calendar. The Ministry of Tourism also signed the MoU with Apeejay Group of Hotels and V Resorts for adoption of Jantar Mantar, New Delhi and Surajkund,

Haryana, respectively, under its Adopt-a-Heritage scheme.

Further, Singh congratulated the Ministry of Tourism for its achievements and initiatives. "Events like Paryatan Parv and India Tourism Mart

showcase the cultural diversity of India. There is no other country in the world with as many religions existing in harmony with each other; with so many languages as well as costumes specific to every region and area. These events give the much-needed momentum to the growth of tourism in the country. With increased tourism, there will be an increased socio-economic development and job creation too. Even inbound tourism will be on a growth path with the simplification of e-tourist visa and improved ease of travel over the years. Tourism contributes seven per cent to our country's GDP and the government is trying to increase this contribution to over 10 per cent in the coming years," he said. 🇮🇳

Tourism is for all: Verma

Paryatan Parv aims to educate people about the contribution of tourism to the economy and its significance in the creation of jobs, says **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.



TT Bureau

Rashmi Verma claims that the idea behind Paryatan Parv is to educate the people of India about the importance of tourism. Sharing information about the event, she revealed, "The second edition of Paryatan Parv is being held on the lawns of Rajpath and various other touristic sites and monuments

around the country. Themed on 'Dekho Apna Desh', the aim of the programme is to educate people about the importance of tourism, its contribution to the economy and its significance for the creation and generation of jobs. As tourism is essentially perceived as an elitist activity, we want to convey the message through Paryatan Parv that tourism is for all. Over 3150

activities and events are being organised during the 12-day event. Another aspect of this event is 'Tourism and governance', under which a number of conferences and seminars are being organised to make people aware about tourism in India.

Verma also said that it's not just the MOT, but all the states and UTs which are support-

ing Paryatan Parv, along with many ministries as partners in the event. "Activities like photography competitions, quiz competition, debate, painting competitions, etc. will be held. At Rajpath, around 18 themed pavilions have been put up by the states; 54 food stalls will showcase a variety of cuisines around the country and 76 handicraft stalls will

display the culture of India," she revealed.

On the sidelines of this event, the first ITM is also being held. Verma claimed that ITM will be an annual event henceforth in line with other international tourism marts. "The Ministry also released a calendar of ITM schedule for the next five years," she added. 🇮🇳



Rashmi Verma
Secretary, Ministry of Tourism



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Glimpses of ITM 2018

In a first, FAITH and MOT set the stage of India Tourism Mart for business-to-business interactions among industry leaders, brainstorming of ideas for promoting Indian tourism, making international buyers aware of major attractions in the country, and much more.



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Vision 2035 for Indian skies

Suresh Prabhu, Minister, Civil Aviation, shares the success story of Indian aviation in the last 50 months and claims that Vision 2035 would make India an aviation superpower.



Nisha Verma

The recently-held International Aviation Summit in Delhi, co-hosted by the Indian Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA), Airports Authority of India (AAI) and International Air Transport Association (IATA), commemorated the approaching milestone of 50-straight months of double-digit domestic growth for Indian aviation. Speaking at the occasion, **Suresh Prabhu** said, "India's phenomenal growth in

the aviation sector in the last 50 months wouldn't have been possible without teamwork. I want to thank the stakeholders in the Indian aviation industry for being our partners in becoming the fastest growing aviation market in the world."

Citing statistics

Sharing the growth projection of the Indian aviation industry, Prabhu said, "The last quarter growth of Indian aviation was about 8.3 per cent and we are sure that in the next seven to

eight years, India would be a 5 trillion-dollar economy. Before 2035, even if we maintain the present rate of growth, we should be working on 10 trillion-dollar economy. We are preparing Vision 2035 where all infrastructure and technology concerns will be addressed. We will also make sure that this vision creates environment-friendly air transportation. We have just made a small beginning by starting our first flight in India which uses blended biofuel."



Suresh Prabhu
Minister
Civil Aviation

Infrastructure needs

Prabhu said that there is a need to increase infrastructure at airports. "Therefore, 100 new airports have to be built in India over the next 10-15 years with an investment of almost 60 billion dollars in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode." Besides, India is growing in terms of passenger traffic, both domestically and globally. Prabhu insisted that many markets in the world are trying to cater to

Indian travellers in a very customised way.

He claimed that there is a need to think about technology when one thinks of infrastructure. "We need New Gen airports, and therefore MOCA's New Gen Airports for Bharat scheme—NABH has already been launched. We would like the private sector to participate in it. We hope to move from ground-based navigation to satellite-based navigation in a few years' time."

ITM to usher in big business



Subhash Goyal
Hony Secretary, FAITH & Chairman
Organising Committee, ITM

Subhash Goyal, Hony Secretary, FAITH and Chairman, Organising Committee, ITM, shares details about how India Tourism Mart is going to change the face of the industry.



TT Bureau

All the industry associations will come together the first time for India Tourism Mart being organised by the Ministry of Tourism

(MOT) and Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), says **Subhash Goyal**. "The 10 different member associations of FAITH, which include hotel associations like FHRAI,

HAI, IHHA; travel agent associations like TAAI, TAFI, ATOAI, ADTOI, IATO and tourist transport association ITAA, have all come together to organise the flagship event of the industry. Each

association has a role to play in the organisation of this mart. While IATO and ATOAI are giving tours for the buyers, ETAA is giving transport. ADTOI is taking care of exhibitions while

hoteliers are giving away free rooms for the hosted buyers. The ministry has chipped in by giving free tickets to the buyers," he shared.

Contd. on page 6 ▶

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Industry to take ITM forward

Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, MOT, believes that India Tourism Mart would certainly see a good response from international buyers and hopes that the industry would be able to make it bigger.



Nisha Verma

Everyone right from the industry to the Ministry of Tourism are all geared for the upcoming India Tourism Mart. Speaking on the potential and expectations from the event, **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Tourism, said, "India Tourism Mart is shaping up very well. By all accounts, we are getting a good response from not only the established markets but also the emerging markets. We hope that in the next couple of years, the event will emerge as the key mart for India."

Stressing on Public Private Partnership (PPP), Billa says that it should play a major



Suman Billa
Joint Secretary
Tourism

role going ahead with events like ITM. "The industry should take ownership of this and should drive this forward. As the event gains pace, it should require lesser support from the

government. We want this to be a purely industry-supported event," he claims.

Claiming that India tourism is on a growth path, Billa insists, "Tourism will grow robustly in the years to come. The number of long haul tourists coming to India is significantly high. However, the number 10 million is quite a shame, considering the size of the country and potential we have. But the concerted work of making tourism happen and making it an engine for economic growth has started only in the past three to four years. Our e-visa is a great game changer. There is no other country in the world which has opened up to as

many countries as we have. We are spending around ` 6000 crores on infrastructure. That's a silent revolution waiting to happen and will trigger a lot of tourism activity across the country," he shared.

Addressing a few bottlenecks, Billa said, "We need to fix our taxation because with the 28 per cent of taxation, the country is perceived to be an expensive destination, despite the recent amendment for billing on actual invoice. Firstly, we need to get away with 28 per cent taxation and then bring our taxation regime in line with competing destinations. Another bottleneck is the availability of trained manpower." 📈

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Dreaming big for ITM

The upcoming India Tourism Mart (ITM) has the entire tourism and hospitality industry upbeat about growing numbers to India. All the 10 associations under Federation of Associations in Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), have come together and are being supported by the Ministry of Tourism for the first edition of the mart. Touted to be the flagship travel event for India, this mart is already expected to have around 270 buyers, 100 tour operators and 20 states as participants. With every association pitching in for offering their services for the buyers, it looks like a united effort from the industry to chase the government's vision to have 20 million tourists by 2020. After having 10 million tourists last year, MOT has been really active towards reaching this goal and is spearheading the India Tourism Mart with zeal to attract foreign tourists to the country. We hope that the prestigious event bears fruit in its first year and creates a positive portrayal about India around the world.

KTM back on track

The devastating floods in Kerala had put a question mark on whether the Kerala Travel Mart would be taking place this year. However, the Kerala tourism and hospitality industry rose like a phoenix from the ashes and is not only ready to be back in business but has also decided that KTM would be held on schedule and that there'd be no change. While the industry has suffered severe losses, for people associated with tourism as well as cancellations, the tour operators are claiming that most of the tourist destinations have not been affected by the flood. What has suffered the most damage are the connecting roads, for which repairs are already underway. In fact, the stakeholders say that only a few resorts have been affected by the calamity, but these are also expected to be renovated soon. Hence, tourists can look at travelling to God's own country as early as September. In fact, with the tourism season for Kerala just around the corner, having an event like KTM successfully would certainly help to spread the right word around. We wish the KTM society and the industry in Kerala our very best in their endeavours!

TRAVTALK brings to you news and events that made headlines 25 years ago with relevance even today. From the archives, we present the September 1993 issue:

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Then



Subhash Goyal
President, STIC Travels

Now



Subhash Goyal
Chairman, STIC Travel Group and
Hony. Secretary, FAITH

A well-known name in the tourism industry, **Subhash Goyal**, as President of STIC Travels, spoke about the ailing travel industry and some innovative measures to retrieve its position, in the September 1993 issue of TravTalk. Today, as Chairman, STIC Travel Group, and Hony. Secretary of Federation of Associations in Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), he is heading the Organising Committee of the upcoming India Tourism Mart. Goyal has also been the President of IATO for multiple terms in the past.

Then



Chitra Bhatia
District Sales Manager,
Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS)

Now



Chitra Bhatia
MD, Aashman Air Travels and
General Secretary, OTOAI

In September 1993, **Chitra Bhatia** was working as the District Sales Manager of Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS). In the last 25 years, a lot has changed, as she opened her own travel company. Today, as the Managing Director of Aashman Air Travels, she is the General Secretary of Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), and has been actively working towards the association. She even headed the women's wing for OTOAI before.

Ready to stage diversity

► Contd. from page 3

Goyal revealed that the ITM committee sat together for two months with 800 applications and shortlisted only 274 people as buyers. "All the buyers have been thoroughly checked. We have around 100 tour operators and 21 states as exhibitors. The entire country is fairly represented with a special emphasis on the Northeast. The booths have been sold for as less as ₹60,000, which can be divided into two operators for ₹30,000 each. IATO has further subsidised this to ₹15,000 for its members. Hence, small tour operators whose turnover is less than a crore, can meet the biggest of international buyers for as cheap as ₹15,000. We want

the smallest of the operator to become the biggest," claimed Goyal.

Speaking on how ITM would change the face of Indian tourism, he said, "It's the first

time when the industry and the government are working together as one team. We have a very proactive minister and team at MOT. We are all working towards achieving the target of 20 million tourists by

“We are all working towards achieving the target of 20 million tourists by 2020. We need to showcase India to the world as all our states have their own unique selling points”

time when the industry and the government are working together as one team. We have a very proactive minister and team at MOT. We are all working towards achieving the target of 20 million tourists by

2020. It could be one or two million less or more, but we need to showcase India to the world. All the states in India have their own unique selling points, which makes India the greatest show on earth today.”

first time when many operators from countries like Iran are coming. Hence, we are confident that the mart alone will be responsible for at least 10-15 per cent increase in inbound tourism in the country,” said Goyal.

Goyal also informed that the change in venue for ITM from Vigyan Bhawan to The Ashok, New Delhi was a last-minute decision. “The three-day event would have meant blocking Vigyan Bhawan for three days with every exhibitor and buyer to go for security clearances. Even people who had to erect the exhibition had to go through a lot of hassles. The Ashok is centrally located without any security hassle,” claimed Goyal. 📍

Karnataka to develop 20 spots

In an effort to develop its Coastal Circuit, Karnataka Tourism has identified 20 key destinations to boost tourism. The state is going to revamp its marketing strategies to increase visibility and awareness about its tourism products.



TT Bureau

In 2017, Karnataka recorded an increase of 38 per cent in domestic tourism while inbound tourism maintained its pace as compared to previous years, informed **Kumar Pushkar**, Managing Director, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC). Pushkar believes

the state has every tourism product for all type of travellers. Wildlife is our biggest strength; we have unexplored beaches, nature, rich heritage, culture and pilgrimage. The modern Bengaluru city also offers many opportunities for tourism."

In terms of international source markets, Europe tops

like better infrastructure, tourism-friendly policies and proper amenities. He identifies the lack of information among travellers as one of the key challenges. "Since last year, the priority of the government has been to develop 20 key destinations in Karnataka. Usually, the allotted budget from the government is distributed throughout the state



Kumar Pushkar
Managing Director, Karnataka State
Tourism Development Corporation
(KSTDC)

and the rest shall follow in various stages."

New projects

The southern region of Karnataka like Mysore and Coorg has been the most popular among tourists, especially for its pleasant weather throughout the year, points out Pushkar. The state

is developing the Coastal Circuit which will include the stretch from Mangalore to Karwar. "The destinations under this circuit include Gokarna, Murudeshwar, Karwar, Tagore Beach, Devbagh Beach, Malpe, etc. The central government has allotted a budget of ` 92 crores for this circuit while the state government has allotted funds to the tune of nearly ` 100 crores for the same," he informed.

Promotional plans

Karnataka Tourism plans to work harder on its marketing and promotional strategies in 2018. Pushkar said, "We plan to increase visibility of the state tourism products at various platforms. This year, we have a dedicated campaign targeted towards various markets for different

seasons. We are also looking for opportunities to host an international travel mart in the state to attract more tourists."

Hospitality spectrum

Pushkar feels that the hospitality sector grows automatically with increase in demand. He points out, "In Hampi, earlier, there were just one or two-star hotels but now, over 1000 rooms are available in the five-star category. With increased air connectivity to Hampi, tourism will grow further." KSTDC has around 45 hotels in the state out of which 19 are run by the government and the rest have been outsourced for operation. In the state-run properties, KSTDC has managed to record profit over the last two years, informed Pushkar. 🇮🇳

“Our tagline is ‘One state, Many worlds’. Except the high mountains like the Himalayas, the state has every tourism product for all type of travellers. Wildlife is our biggest strength; we have unexplored beaches, nature, rich heritage, culture and pilgrimage”

that the state has been doing well as far as domestic tourism is concerned. He says, "Our tagline is ‘One state, Many worlds’. Except the high mountains like the Himalayas,

the chart with the UK and France being the biggest contributors to numbers. Pushkar believes that the private sector has a major role to play with support from the government

but now, it will concentrate on developing some key destinations with the funds. The plan of action is to develop five of these 20 destinations in Phase-I in the next one year

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Travel on UPward swing

Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Additional Chief Secretary & DG—Department of Tourism, UP, talks about the myriad products on offer by UP Tourism.



Kanchan Nath

QWhat does the new tourism policy of Uttar Pradesh entail?

The UP Tourism Policy 2018 has granted the status of 'industry' to all activities of the tourism sector. The policy focuses on employment generation with a target to generate 500,000 jobs annually by investing `5000 crore per year for the next five years. The policy aims to achieve an annual increase of 15 per cent domestic tourist and 10 per cent foreign tourist arrivals in the state. It will also target 100,000 additional tourists to national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the state, and convert 10 heritage buildings to heritage hotels per year. The policy will lay special emphasis on promoting ecotourism and

and Jal Sansthan as levied on the industries, to be applicable on the tourism units

- ❖ Hotel construction to be permitted in industrial areas as per the policy decided by relevant industrial authority
- ❖ Rebate on purchase of plants and machinery or equipment under the tourism units/tourism industry

QWhat kind of arrangements are being done to promote the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad next year?

Kumbh 2019 is the most important traditional festival for almost every national and international pilgrim. The tourism department has released

consulted while expanding this task force.

QWhat are the marketing initiatives you've taken to increase foot-falls this year?

Our campaign 'UP nahi dekha, toh India nahi dekha' highlights Uttar Pradesh as a place that encapsulates in itself a unique essence of India. The same has been broadcast through an expansive outdoor campaign, along with integrating it with



Awanish Kumar Awasthi
Additional Chief Secretary & Director General—Department of Tourism, Government of Uttar Pradesh

“Laying special emphasis on promoting ecotourism, the policy focuses on employment generation with a target to generate 500,000 jobs annually by investing `5000 crore per year for the next five years**”**

driving local entrepreneurship avenues through execution of fairs and festivals.

QWhat are the incentives available to people willing to invest in tourism in Uttar Pradesh?

The key benefits and incentives under the policy are:

- ❖ Capital and interest subsidy to new tourism units
- ❖ Complete exemption of sale/lease/transfer of land for the first transaction during the operative period of the policy
- ❖ A 100 per cent waiver on land use conversion and development charges for all new tourism units

With exception to the benefits of providing land, following facilities applicable to the industries will also be available to the tourism sector:

- ❖ Sanction of electricity load, on priority
- ❖ Taxes of local bodies, including Nagar Nigam

the B&B scheme conceptualised under Incredible India's 'Atithi Devo Bhava' with the aim of providing comfortable homestay facilities with standardised world-class services to tourists. The Department has planned to set up a 'Tent City' through which close to 4000-5000 Swiss cottages will be established on approximately a 100-hectare area. The department is also planning to establish dormitories to cater to all kinds of visitor needs.

QWhat steps have you taken for ensuring safety and security of tourists?

Tourism police have been deployed at all significant tourism spots, including Allahabad, Varanasi, Mathura and Ayodhya. Specialised police stations will be established here on the lines of the tourism police station in Agra. They shall provide specialised services for international and out-of-state tourists in conjunction with the Department. To ensure the security of women, female staff will be added to the task force. The local bodies will also be

social media handles and webpage, and increasing the digital footprint. All our marketing initiatives are in consonance with Kumbh, hence our latest tourism campaign of 'Chalo Kumbh Chalen' is an invitation to come along and join the largest congregation of pilgrims.

Amongst the new circuits, our focus is on ecotourism circuit and on promotion of wildlife reserves and sanctuaries. The Department is also planning to identify and develop textile tourism circuits to promote the indigenous arts by linking them to major tourist destinations.

QWhat have been your primary source markets?

Uttar Pradesh has seen a significant number of tourists India and abroad. Events such as Rangotsav in Braj and Deepotsav in Ayodhya are expected to attract tourists not only from Indian states, ++ but also from countries such as Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Japan, China, etc. A large gathering of NRIs is expected to visit the Kumbh for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Varanasi. ↴

Mauritius eyes 1.2 lakh Indians

Mauritius has seen double-digit growth in tourist arrivals in the last four years with significant contributions from Indians. The country is now aiming higher and is looking to attract 1.2 lakh Indian tourists in 2020, thereby positioning itself as an ‘affordable luxury destination’.

TT Bureau

Mauritius is aiming to attract 1.2 lakh Indian tourists in 2020, up from 88,000 people expected to visit the island nation this year, a senior official from that country said. Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority, Director, **Arvind Bundhun** said that 80,000 tourists from India had visited his country last year. He was in India leading the Mauritian delegation which was part of a four-city roadshow organised by MTPA India. They



Arvind Bundhun
Authority, Director
Mauritius Tourism Promotion

travelled to key markets of New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Mumbai from August 30 to September 4, 2018 to meet the travel agents and tour operators. The suppliers included hoteliers, DMCs, activities and attractions.

He adds, “In the last four years, Mauritius tourism has witnessed double digit growth, with Indian tourists contributing significantly to the numbers. We are looking to attract 1.2 lakh Indian tourists to our country in 2020,” Bundhun said. He said that Mauritius has positioned itself as an ‘affordable luxury destination’. The objective of the roadshow was to promote the destination beyond its beaches.”

“In order to create more visibility, we are inviting celebrities and top CEOs from India to

Mauritius. Special packages are being offered to promote incentive trips,” Bundhun informs. He adds that the wedding segment remains an attractive niche, with a lot of newly-wed Indians choosing Mauritius as a honeymoon destination.

Bundhun said that Bollywood was also finding Mauritius attractive with its film promotion policy, adding that some Indian movies had been shot there recently. “Between October 17-19, the Mauritius Film Development Corporation is organising

cinema week where a number of Bollywood stars are expected to be present. The government has put in place special incentives to shoot movies in our country,” he says.

MPTA India has seen a year-

on-year growth of 11 per cent in Indian tourist arrivals over the last four years. Mauritius offers tourists activities like golf, spa, sky-diving, zip-lining, quadbiking, seakarting, submarine rides,

helicopter tours, walking with the lions and Fly like Iron Man and Dive like a Dolphin in the newly-launched Flyboard. Rum and tea tasting tours are also gaining popularity among the tourists. ➔

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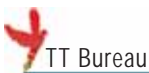
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Cinema Week

➔ Between October 17-19, the Mauritius Film Development Corporation is organising cinema week where a number of Bollywood stars are expected to be present

Starry skies in Maldives

The 120-key all-villa luxury resort, Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi offers guests a chance to indulge in an inspirational Maldivian experience.



Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi offers exactly what its name translates to – secret water island. The island covers approximately 160,000 sqm (16 hectares) of land and features one of the largest lagoons in the Maldives. It also offers a 200-metre long swimming pool which traverses the length of the island, reinvigorating a destination spa and an intricate open air bamboo bar created by Balinese artisans who did not use any man-made materials while building the structure.

The property recently welcomed two celebrity guests - actor **Neha Dhupia** and her husband **Angad Bedi** who were there for their honeymoon. Honeymoons at the Fairmount Maldives go hand-in-hand. It is far away from the maddening crowd, where the



couple can escape the rush of the wedding and take time to rest, de-stress and spend time with each other.

There are also endless breathtaking natural coral reefs. Guests can sail away in a sunset dolphin cruise aboard the resort's own private yacht, or even have a dedicated chef

prepare a private BBQ under a canopy of stars. There are local cultural visits to appreciate how life for centuries has been led in close-knit Maldivian communities or simply get closer to the marine wildlife in their own environment and go diving or snorkelling in the pristine 9km long house reef that surrounds the resort.✈

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Shailendra Madan made a wise decision by securing his vacation to Dubai with a travel assistance and insurance. Madan began his vacation with an exciting desert safari and returned to his room looking forward to the activities planned for the next day. Later in the night, he woke up to sharp pain in his left shoulder and began to sweat profusely. He was rushed to the hospital where the doctors declared that he suffered a massive



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– Shailendra Madan

As soon as the Trawell-Tag Cover-More team was intimated about the situation, all arrangements to fulfil the formalities for hospitalisation were undertaken the same night and Madan was operated on an emergency basis. The family was constantly comforted and counselled by the assistance team on all the proceedings. Most importantly, they were relieved to receive cashless treatments owing to high medical costs in the country of visit. For recuperation, his stay had to be extended, which was also facilitated by TrawellTag Cover-More, thereby ensuring he returned back home safely.

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'Together Skålleagues can'

The third Skål International India's National Congress concluded in Kolkata on a note of promoting tourism and friendship among trade. Skål also plans to have a total of 20 clubs by 2020 in India.



Manas Dwivedi from Kolkata

After two successful editions in Goa and Kochi, Skål International India's third National Congress in Kolkata concluded with an aim to promote better networking, friendship and fellowship among Skålleagues. Around 250 members and partners from 10 Skål clubs around the country and travel fraternity attended the event. During the occasion, **Ranjini Nambiar**, President, Skål International India announced the commencement of three new Skål



Ranjini Nambiar
President
Skål International India

clubs by April 2019. "We are planning to come up with a new Skål club in Jammu & Kashmir, Coimbatore and Bhubaneswar. There is also a possibility of a club in Vizag as well. We are aiming a total of 20 Skål clubs by 2020."

She also shared the club's roadmap and plans ahead for 2018-20. "We are planning to have team India as the largest Skål club in the world. We are constantly trying to increase our reach. Currently, we have 10-member clubs and we are planning to increase this strength to 15 by quarter of next year. By 2020, we want to have a total of 20 Skål clubs in India. We want to make Skål India the voice of tourism and hospitality among the government officials as well," adds Nambiar.

In another crucial announcement, Nambiar informed that the Skål International Asia Area Congress 2019 will be held in Bengaluru from June 27-30, 2019. Successfully hosting Skål International India's 3rd Congress in Kolkata, **Manav Soni**, President, Skål Interna-

tional Kolkata 127 says, "I am honoured to host this National Congress in Kolkata. We have hosted around 250 delegates from the travel fraternity and received major support from the West Bengal Tourism Board and other co-sponsors. We are really looking forward to take

ahead the slogan we promoted- Together We Can."

Talking about new avenues, **Sanjeev Mehra**, Secretary, Skål International Kolkata 127 says, "Our next target is the Skål International Asia Area Congress scheduled to take place in

Bengaluru next year. We want to invite all the professionals from the tourism industry to come and join us on a common platform to promote friendship and business among trade. Our motto is to be together. All the Skål clubs should come together for mutual benefits."

Gracing the occasion with his esteemed presence, **Uzi Yalon**, President, Skål International expressed joy on visiting Kolkata after 45 years. "Kolkata is a very good destination. We just have to develop better infrastructure here, especially

in terms of transportation and mid-range hotels. Skål clubs can actually help promote tourism around the world. With around 15,000 members around the globe, our aim is to promote tourism among friends," he says.

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's key tourism offerings

NBTC Holland Marketing, in collaboration with Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Jet Airways, recently organised the Holland Sales Mission 2018. Held in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai, the three-day event aimed to educate the travel trade about tourism offerings in the Netherlands, also allowing stakeholders to explore the many opportunities that lie within.

DELHI



For more pictures, turn to page 24 ►

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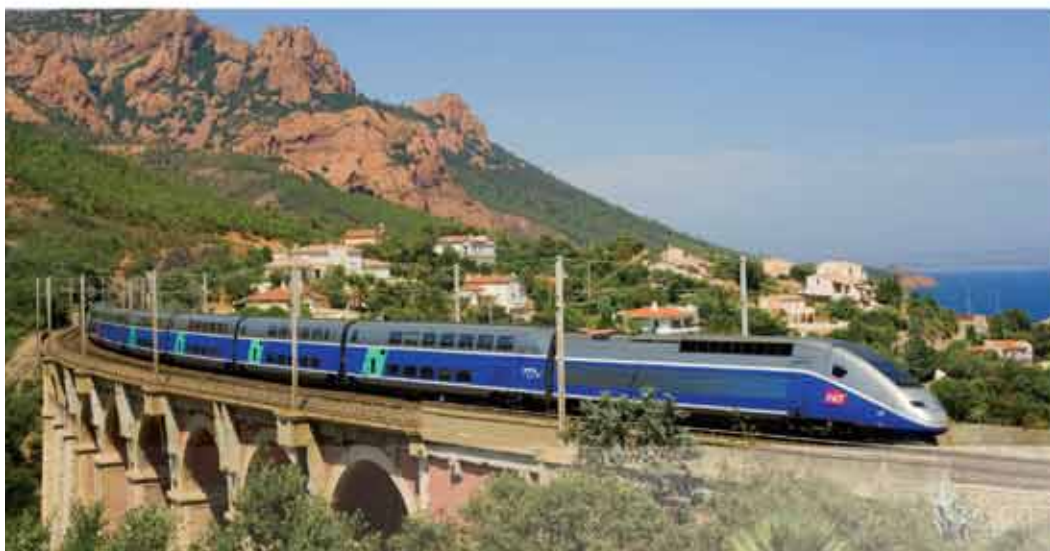


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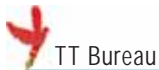
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Tackling challenges in business

With rising growth in tourism, addressing challenges has become integral. India Travel Award winners voice the share of hurdles industry leaders face in their respective business domains.



★ Face of the Future —

Nirupa Shankar (South 2018)



“Talking about the challenge of policy making, **Nirupa Shankar**, Director, Brigade Hospitality, says, “Some policies are made with a noble intention but it impacts the tourism sector negatively and poses a challenge. Obtaining 80-100 approvals for setting up a hotel takes time and sometimes the process varies from state to state.” Regarding approvals for construction in new states, she points out, “We tie up with local partners, especially for architecture and project management when constructing in new states.””

★ Most Promising Airline —

Trujet (South 2018)



“Talking about the challenges in the aviation industry, **Sudheer Raghavan**, CCO, Trujet explains, “Firstly, there is a dearth of pilots rated to fly our aircrafts; secondly, with rising growth, the number of aircrafts are also increasing with issues arising in finding a place to park aircraft at night. Besides, aircraft fuel prices are also rising, whereas fares are dipping to a new low. It indeed gets difficult to bridge the working capital funding. We are looking to focus more on UDAN scheme.””

★ Best Service Apartments —

Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad (South 2018)



“Distinguishing between hotels and service apartments, **Hoshang Garivala**, Director of Operations—India, Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad, explains, “As a relatively embryonic sector, there is a need for greater understanding by guests about the benefits of staying in serviced apartments and how they serve as a better option in comparison to hotels. Despite an increased demand for such accommodation, the industry is beset by a lack of proper grading and classification.””

★ Best Luxury Farm Stay —

Maa Ashapura Farm Stay – Ranthambore (North 2017)



“Elaborating on the challenges in the hotel industry, **Vikram Singh Chauhan**, Director, Maa Ashapura Farm Stay shares, “The main challenge for the hotel industry in the Ranthambore region right now is to get the Safari in the national park. Corruption is prevalent in the forest department since only a certain number of vehicles are allowed to go inside the park and the number of hotels is large. Visitors’ frustration of not being able to get Safari is borne by the hoteliers.””



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VTG elects new team



Varanasi Tourism Guild (VTG) Elections were held for the post of Office Bearers and Executive Committee Members at Hotel Comfort Inn, Varanasi. **Rashid Khan**, Director, Buddha Holidays was appointed as the President while **Sandeep Patial**, General Manager, Hotel Madin, Varanasi has been elected as the Vice President.

ETAA trains its members



ETAA recently organised an event in Ahmedabad and Surat in Gujarat which included a knowledge training session on customer service excellence for the members. Around 132 travel agents from Ahmedabad and 62 travel agents from Surat attended the event. Presentations were delivered by sponsors and co-sponsors including Travecare, a South Africa DMC; Hotel Yoys by SAAGASA Udaipur; Kanj Hotels & Resorts and Lemon Tree Premier.

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IATO brainstorms on key issues

The 34th annual convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) started with a grand opening in Visakhapatnam. The Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism KJ Alphons graced the event that saw an overwhelming attendance from IATO members pan India. The three-day event whose theme aimed at achieving 20 million foreign tourists by 2020, debated on pertinent issues that India currently faces in reaching this milestone.



Experts in specialist travel

Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, Mercury - An EbixCash Luxury initiative, talks about the recent acquisition of Leisure Corp and Mercury Travels by Ebix Inc acquired for an amount of \$14.2 million.



Manas Dwivedi

Q Can you give us some more details about this acquisition?

One of the Indian subsidiaries of Ebix Inc has signed agreements to acquire Leisure Corp and Mercury Travels with an aim to create a new travel division to focus on a niche segment of the travel market especially the luxury, event or related traveller. The new travel exchange is named Mercury - An EbixCash Luxury initiative. While leading this new initiative, I will hold 15 per cent stake in the company

Over the past few years, Mercury was more concentrated on foreign exchange and corporate travel. What we are going to do is focus more on high-end luxury travel experience. The idea is to concentrate the niche segment of MiCE and high-end luxury travel.

Q How much will this acquisition affect the trade?

This acquisition will increase the employee strength of Ebix in India by around 400 employees to approximately 7,600 employees. Ebix will now have two brands in travel

focused on different niche audience – Via and Mercury.

Ebix believes that the Mercury business initiative can continue to grow at the rate of 20 per cent or more annually with operating margins of 30 per cent or more, once fully integrated. The acquisition

will get fully integrated over the next six months.

Q What kind of challenges is the MiCE industry facing currently?

MiCE is essentially facing the challenge of fragmentation. In the travel business, MiCE is

the fastest growing sector in India but the industry is very fragmented. People need to understand the quality of the entire MiCE project. The challenge today is companies are looking at comparative rates for every individual who comes to them and offers MiCE services. 



Naveen Kundu
Managing Director
Mercury - An EbixCash Luxury initiative

while Ebix will hold 85 per cent share in this venture. Mercury's forex business will be integrated into EbixCash's existing CDL forex exchange business. The new Mercury Exchange will integrate the Mercury Travel's entire corporate, leisure and adventure-related travel business with an exception of its forex business, Leisure Corp's entire sports and events-related travel business and Via.com's event-based travel business (MiCE).

Q What is the objective of this new venture?

The objective of this acquisition is to make Mercury a global luxury brand which can grow and excel globally. We want Mercury to be the most prestigious service-based luxury brand not only in India, but all over the world. Hence, we are redesigning and redefining Mercury. Everything related to high quality and professional service will be driven by this new venture. We will be driving service-based travel management system, whether it is corporate travel, MiCE, event-based travel, sports travel or film tourism.




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175 delegates at Convention

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) recently held its four-day annual convention in the idyllic port town of Cape Town in South Africa on the theme 'Digitalisation – The Way Forward'.





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IATO raises key issues

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) managed to raise pertinent issues at its recently-concluded 34th annual convention in Visakhapatnam.

 Hazel Jain from Visakhapatnam

The 34th Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) annual convention in Vishakhapatnam saw a huge presence from the ministry including the Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism KJ Alphons.

Rashmi Verma, Secretary, Tourism, Government of India. She said, "In 2017, we had a growth of 15 per cent in foreign tourist arrivals. We also saw a 20 per cent rise in foreign exchange earnings. We have

will also be achieved if we all join hands. We also need to take a cue from Kerala Tourism model which has worked along with the private sector to double their numbers."

Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO, said, "This year's sessions were more or less technical and our members attended them in good numbers. There was also a lot of interaction between the panellists and the audience. Since we do a lot of business with them, the hoteliers obliged us by being present. It is a partnership between tour operators and hoteliers; so every year we have such sessions with them. Moreover, we work very closely with the government which involves us in many decision-making events. We are happy that this year, a large delegation of government officials came from different ministries. They also gave state presentations and the trade in turn should include them in their itineraries." 



The three-day event that aimed discussions around the challenges and possibilities of achieving 20 million foreign tourists by 2020, managed to reach its intended objective.

At present, India welcomes a little over 10 million FTAs per year. This was revealed by

set ourselves a very tough target by our tourism minister – that of achieving 20 million tourists by 2020. Last year, for the first time we crossed the 10 million mark which was a doubling of the numbers in just three years. This was no easy task. I'm sure that the new target we have set for ourselves

Optimism engulfs Odisha

At the 3rd Odisha Tourism Conclave, government officials and stakeholders shared their insights about promoting Odisha with a focus on tourism.

 Ketika Kaul from Bhubaneswar

The third edition of Odisha Tourism Conclave was formally inaugurated by **Ganeshi Lal**, Governor of Odisha, with lighting of the ceremonial lamp. Considering Odisha Tourism as the backbone of the state's economy in the upcoming years, **J K Mohanty**, Chairman, HRAO laid emphasis on research to appropriately promote the tourist destinations, prepare a tourism master plan for the next 20 years and produce a MiCE tourism booklet, among others. He also laid stress on reviving air connectivity to Bangkok. He further outlined the varied tourism offerings of Odisha like ecotourism, MiCE, ethnic tourism, wildlife, religious destinations, handicraft and culture.




Addressing key concerns of the state, **Dr N B Jawale**, IAS—Director Tourism, Odisha, said, "We need to take a 360-degree approach of ongoing developments and work on multiple ends like infrastructure, a specific tourism product and delivering quality tourist experience." He informed that the final environment clearance for Shamuka Beach Project has been given and 1000 acres of special tourism area

will be shortly coming up for investment. On infrastructure and connectivity, **Suresh Nair**, General Manager—India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Air Asia, said, "In the last one year, the number of flights to Bhubaneswar linking major cities has increased substantially. Internationally, there is only one player and it is Air Asia's self-interest to have as many people going out and as many coming into the state." 



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Fulfilling the Holland Mission

During a recent three-city roadshow in India, **Carola Muller-van Rijn**, Global Travel Trade Manager, NBTC Holland Marketing, explained Netherlands' myriad offerings to entice trade to the country.



Manas Dwivedi

With an aim to educate and inform travel trade about the tourism offerings in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) Holland Marketing organised the 'Holland Sales Mission 2018' in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai. The B2B sessions at the event allowed delegates to learn more about Holland's key offerings, while exploring the opportunities that lie within. Talking about the growth and importance



Carola Muller-van Rijn
Global Travel Trade Manager
NBTC Holland Marketing

of the Indian market, **Carola Muller-van Rijn**, Global Travel Trade Manager, NBTC Holland Marketing said, "India is a very crucial market for us and these roadshows are our key activity in the market. Last year was prosperous as we attained a growth of 31 per cent from the Indian market with the number of visitors from the country rising up to 165,000."

She further added, "This year, we are expecting a growth of over 25 per cent and are looking forward to cross the 200,000 mark. Besides, we are focusing more on leisure tourists and MiCE on a reactive basis. Amsterdam is a huge MiCE destination for a number of countries. We have a lot of meeting space and event centres there that might cater to groups of up to 300-400 people."

Talking about the strategy to attract Indians, she said that Dutch cities have a lot to offer that is still unexplored. "A lot of Indians travel to the Netherlands for a city tour. There are castles and

country houses in the Netherlands, along with royal themes that the Indians can explore. As a tourism board, we mainly focus on popular attractions, but we are also now adding new places where visitors can explore much. Apart from Amster-

dam, cities like The Hague, Rotterdam and Madurodam are immensely popular. The eastern part of the country also has some beautiful cities to take a tour. As far as marketing is concerned, we have a 360-degree approach. Thus, we focus on travel

trade, consumers as well as press and public relations (PR) - the three essential elements for promotion."

Expressing joy over a successful show in India, Rijn said that the Board received a warm reception from

trade in all the three cities. She exclaimed, "We had a great time in India as a lot of people from the travel trade reached out to us in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Along with our strategic partners Air-France KLM and Jet Airways, we also had a

delegation of Dutch industry partners with us, who briefly touched upon their products to promote Holland with a lot of composition. So, with these roadshows, we are aiming at good business and growth from India." 🇳🇱



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BENGALURU



MUMBAI

Diwali with JA Manafaru Maldives

Guests travelling to the Maldives can add some island flavour to Diwali this year by staying at the JA Manafaru Maldives and celebrating its festivities.



TT Bureau

Set in the northern Haa Alif Atoll in the Maldives, JA Resorts & Hotels will be celebrating Diwali this November. This gives guests from India a great chance to experience this auspicious time in a five-star Maldives property. Starting from November 7-14, 2018, a diya lighting ceremony will open the celebrations which will boast a sumptuous dinner of North Indian cuisine served on the beach and a Bollywood Karaoke Night with a DJ.

All attendees will receive a personal greeting card from the GM as a keep-sake of the event. Indian sweets will be gifted to guests in their rooms and for the more active, cricket matches will be played between the guests and the team on the island.

Guests staying here in paradise can also enjoy a special competition for the best dressed guests in traditional Indian attire with the chance of winning a complimentary spa treatment for the couple and a special photo session as part of the package, at a discounted prize of USD 150.

Speaking about engaging the trade, **Pooja Wadhwa**, Partner, Avant Garde Consulting, on behalf of JA Resorts & Hotels, says, "We have ensured to monitor our pricing policy very closely, to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between consolidators and agents, when trying to sell JA Manafaru to their respective clients. We have also ensured, together with the support of the resort, that our B2B pricing, which has been made available to the travel trade community, is lower than the rate at which the resort sells online, on any B2C platform."

Kunal Munshaw, Partner, Avant Garde Consulting, on behalf of JA Resorts & Hotels, adds, "Apart from the pricing, which plays an important role even within the luxury segment, in a competitive market place like the Maldives, we are trying to familiarise our key partners and potential

agencies with JA's properties, on individual and small targeted group visits, as we believe that this will empower them further, in promoting JA Resorts & Hotels more confidently." Situated on a 35-acre private island, the resort

offers 84 luxurious villas and suites - all with their own private pools. For optimum luxury, guests can stay in the Grand Water two-bedroom suite, which provides exclusive privacy at the tip of the water villas. 



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Destination Germany Roadshow	Mumbai	28
TTF	Pune	28-30
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OCTOBER 2018

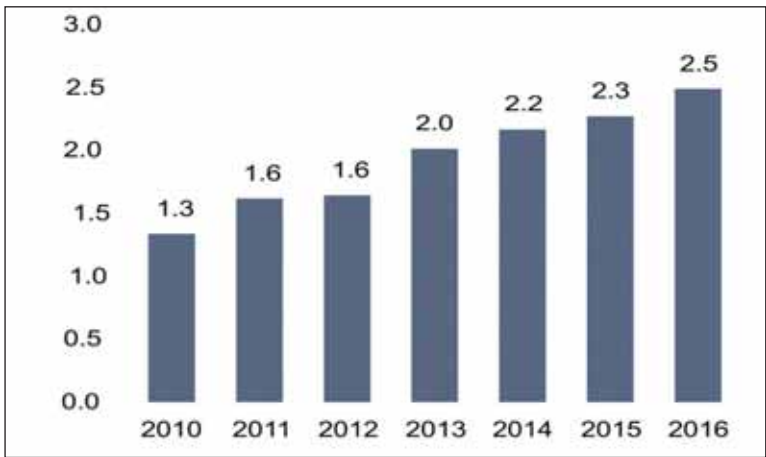
'Shakuntala' by ANTO	Delhi	2
The Pacific Tourism Insights Conference 2018	Apia	3
Jeju South Korea Roadshow	Delhi	5
IITM	Delhi	4-6
SIHRA Convention	Madurai	4-6
TTF	Mumbai	5-7
MPTM	Bhopal	5-7
Destination Uttarakhand: Investors Summit	Dehradun	7-8
Destination Turkey Workshop	Delhi	8
Jeju South Korea Roadshow	Mumbai	8
Atout France Buyers Offsite Showcase	Jaipur	8-11
Incredible India roadshow	Moscow	8
Ambassador's Travel Awards (France)	Jaipur	9
Destination Turkey Workshop	Ahmedabad	9
Incredible India roadshow	St. Petersburg	9
Destination Turkey Workshop	Kolkata	10

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

Attract more leisure crowd

According to a report by CAPA India, the number of inbound tourists for leisure is sub-optimal. CAPA India estimates that only 2.4-2.6 million people visit India each year for the purpose of a holiday.

Leisure FTAs- 2010-16



■ This is far less than even a city state such as Singapore, or a small island such as Bali, receives. Thailand welcomes more than 12x the number of leisure tourists at 31 million.

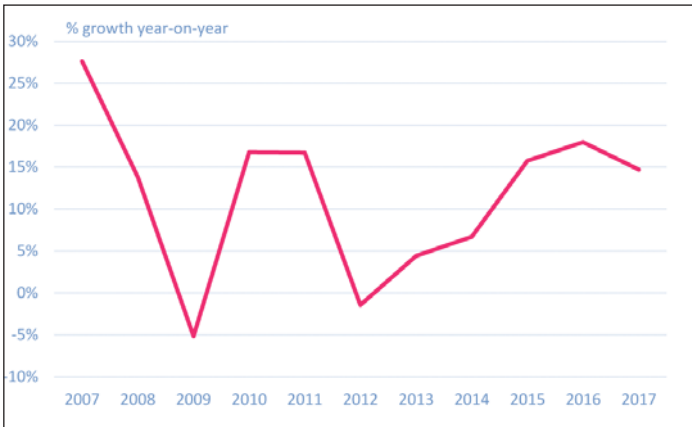
■ For a country the size of India, with the diversity of world-class attractions and experiences which it offers, this only serves to highlight the massive upside potential that exists. CAPA estimates that India should be able to at least triple its inbound leisure arrivals within 10 years.

15% increase in travellers

In 2017, more than 158 million passengers flew on routes to, from and within India, according to a latest report by International Air Transport Association (IATA), titled 'The Future is Bright... But Not Without Its Challenges'.

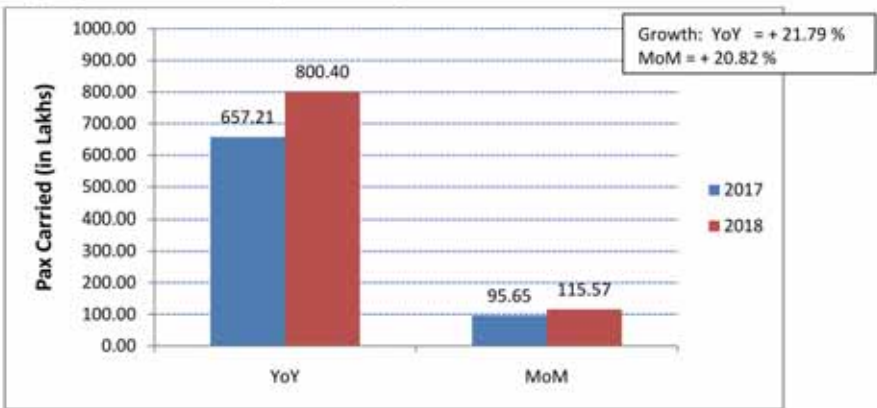
■ This represents an increase of almost 15 per cent over 2016 and is the third consecutive year of growth in the order of 15-20 per cent per year. The reports for 2018 year-to-date suggest that India is on track to record a fourth straight year of double-digit passenger growth.

■ The strong performance of air passenger demand growth in India has not been confined to just the past few years. Instead, the total number of air passengers has more than doubled over the past seven years, from a level of 79 million journeys undertaken in 2010, the report said.



Domestic traffic up by 21.79%

Domestic air traffic has grown by 21.79 per cent from January-July YOY, according to a latest report by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).



■ Passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-July 2018 were 800.40 lakhs as against 657.21 lakhs during the corresponding period of previous year. The passenger load factor in the month of July has shown a declining trend compared to previous month primarily due to the end of tourist season.

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HRAWI

Mumbai

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Director, Pritam Hotels has been elected as the President of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI). Prior to this, Kohli served as Senior Vice President of the association. He is responsible for complementing the efforts made so far by the association and maintain the momentum. Kohli will focus on resolving issues that are potential hindrances for the industry's growth and will align efforts to best address and meet the members' needs. Kohli holds a degree in B com, DBM and LLB.



Essel Group

Mumbai

Essel Group has announced the appointment of **Jurgen Bailom** as President and CEO of the group's upcoming cruise line business, Zen Cruises. With a career spanning over 30 years in the cruise and hospitality industry, Bailom was President & CEO of Grupo Vidanta Cruises prior to Essel Group. He has also held senior Corporate Director positions within several of Royal Caribbean's brands such as Sky Seas, TUI and Celebrity Cruises, Island Cruises and most recent as the Chief Operating Officer & Vice President of Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines Pullmantur.



WOW air

New Delhi

Kiran Jain, with over 25 years of experience in the commercial aviation business covering both airports and airlines, has been appointed as WOW air's Managing Director for India. Her experience ranges from airlines and airports in the United States and India where she has led the marketing, sales, communication and government relations functions, thereby bringing a diverse aviation management experience to the company. Most recently, Jain was the Director for Commercial and Government Relations with AirAsia India.



Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

Delhi

Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport has appointed **Ashwani Kumar Goela** as its General Manager. With 19 years of experience in hospitality, Goela will oversee the complete operations of the hotel and play a key role in meeting the hotel's aggressive growth goals as well as building a name in the global market. Prior to this, he was working with IHG where he was heading Crowne Plaza Jaipur as Cluster General Manager, handling three properties. He was instrumental in setting up the Crowne Plaza Jaipur from pre-opening and successfully stabilising the hotel.



Sarovar Hotels and Resorts

Rajkot

Deepak Kolhekar has joined Sarovar Hotels and Resorts as General Manager at Marasa Sarovar Portico, Rajkot. At his last assignment, he was working with The Park, Navi Mumbai as Associate Director Food & Beverage. His achievements include winning the 'Visionary Director Food & Beverage' as well as being nominated in 'Top 100 Future Leader in Hospitality Magazine'. He holds a degree in Hotel Management and has more than 15 years' experience in chain hotels like The Park Hotels, Radisson Hotels and Taj Hotels.



Le Meridien Goa, Calangute

Goa

Le Meridien Goa, Calangute has designated **Victor Chen** as its General Manager. In a career spanning over 18 years, Chen has held key positions in Sales, Events, Food & Beverage and Rooms Operations across the country as well as in overseas assignment. Prior to joining Le Meridien Goa, he was the Resident Manager at JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu. In his current assignment, he will be responsible for creating a thriving environment for associates, consolidate the positioning of the hotel, drive market growth and brand preference and elevate the hotel's food and beverage offerings.



Marriott International

Chennai

Abhishek Rajagolkar is appointed as Market Director of Sales & Marketing for Marriott properties in Tamil Nadu. He is a seasoned hotelier with over 13 years of experience in the hospitality industry making him a collaborative leader with an analytical perspective. Rajagolkar's key focus areas include developing and implementing sales and marketing strategies for all Marriott managed properties in Tamil Nadu. Prior to this position, he was the Multi Property Director of Sales & Marketing at Kochi Marriott Hotel and Courtyard by Marriott Kochi Airport Hotel.



The Travel Corporation

Mumbai

The Travel Corporation has announced the appointment of **Priyanka Pawar** as Sales Manager for its Youth Brand 'Contiki'. Contiki focuses on trips exclusively for individuals aged 18-35 years old across the world. Pawar has worked with various brands like Thomas Cook, Kesari Tours and SOTC Travels over the past five years bringing along a wealth of knowledge. She will be in charge to drive Contiki sales pan-India and also devise innovative marketing strategies.



Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla

Delhi

Somali Bajpai has joined Crowne Plaza Today New Delhi Okhla as Assistant Manager—Marketing & PR. She is responsible for marketing, which includes brand collaborations, Public Relations, digital media and branding activations. Owing to her strong networking and social skills, Bajpai is actively pursuing the task of creating a network of influencers for the organisation to reach out to the right kind of target audience. An alumni from Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), Bajpai has always been passionate about branding and marketing and how simple ideas could connect with millions of people across the globe.



The following regular column provides you a brief update on world events and how they impact the tourism sector.

 Nikhil Jeet

WorldTalk

USA

An evacuation of the US East Coast has been ordered as the country braces for Hurricane Florence, which may be the strongest storm to hit the region in decades. States impacted include South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia.

Ghana

The Ghanaian government has officially received the remains of former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan. A number of events across three days have been planned to celebrate his life.

Italy

After nearly two years of construction, the first-ever Starbucks will open in Italy. The café will have a 'coffee theatre' and serve pizzas and cocktails.

Japan

Japan will once again try to get the international ban on whale hunting overturned at the global conference of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) this week. Japan is facing stiff opposition from most countries and numerous environmental groups.

Australia

Trivago is being sued by Australia's top consumer watchdog in the Federal Court over claims it would help consumers identify the cheapest prices for hotel rooms. It is alleged that Trivago prioritises advertisers who are willing to pay the highest cost per click.

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Tour operators ✗, ambassadors ✓

KJ Alphons, Minister of State (IC) for Tourism, managed to rouse everyone's enthusiasm at the recently-concluded 34th annual convention of IATO in Visakhapatnam. He also recommended that the tour operators should be rightly called tour ambassadors.



Hazel Jain

He made his first official speech as the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism, Government of India, at the inaugural session of IATO's 33rd annual convention last year in Bhubaneswar, having taken up the position only a few days ago on September 3, 2017. Completing that circle this year, **KJ Alphons** made another speech at this year's inaugural session of the annual convention held in Visakhapatnam.

Not missing a chance to bring up home state, he began by paying a tribute to Kerala and to the state's tourism minister, Kadakampally Surendran. He asked the audience to give a standing ovation to the people of Kerala all over the world who came forward to help the state in its time of trouble. He said, "I was there for 10 days during the floods and I was overwhelmed to see the kind of support that came from people of Kerala. The way they came together is a great example to the world. I have never seen such a spirit of camaraderie

ever before. Everyone was out in the streets, in the collection and rehabilitation centres day and night. Even IAS officers from other states came and worked in the camps. On my part, I even slept in two of those relief camps. This is how we show our solidarity for each other. The state was completely destroyed. But I am very happy to say that today, Kerala is ready for business. The state has definitely bounced back!"

yourselves ambassadors?" he asked the audience.

The minister also admitted that this was his first trip to Visakhapatnam and that he was completely shocked at the beauty of this city. "I am told that four years ago, this city was completely destroyed by a cyclone, but the way this city has been rebuilt is a great credit to the people of Andhra Pradesh and its government.

there. That's why we have set a target of 20 million by 2020 and it is completely doable given that we have so many tourism products in each state. So, use some imagination. We need to get out of our bureaucratic mindsets. Tour operators should stop being happy. That's the way the world works."

“I think IATO should be renamed from today as IATA - Indian Association of Tour Ambassadors. You guys are not just an association of tour operators. You are the real ambassadors of India”

Not IATO but IATA

The minister also shared his joy at the financial contribution made by IATO to the CM's Distress Relief Fund which cumulatively added up to about ₹ 10 lakh. "I am extremely happy about the association's contribution. But the amount is not acceptable from an association like IATO. I want an eight-digit cheque to go to the tourism minister. These are moments when we say we are one," he appealed.

This shows that destruction is necessary to recreate something new," Alphons added.

Numbers are not enough

Keeping the context of his speech in black and white, Alphons highlighted that the numbers are showing an increase with the FTAs going up by 19.2 per cent, while global tourism is growing by approximately 5 per cent. "So everyone is saying India tourism is doing great. But are we happy? No, I'm not happy at all. India deserves to be right up



Kerala is Ready

✗ K J Alphons made a call to action for tour operators to reach out to their FTOs and friends outside India and tell them that Kerala is ready

✗ Kerala celebrates the blooming of Neelakurinji in Munnar that takes place once in 12 years

He also made another suggestion - of renaming IATO to IATA. "I think IATO should be renamed from today as IATA - Indian Association of Tour Ambassadors. You are not just an association of tour operators but the real ambassadors of India. Instead of being just tour operators, can you call



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India in all its diversity



Union Home Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the 12-day long Paryatan Parv at Rajpath Lawns being held from September 16-27, 2018. The event comes in line with the success of last year's three-day Paryatan Parv.



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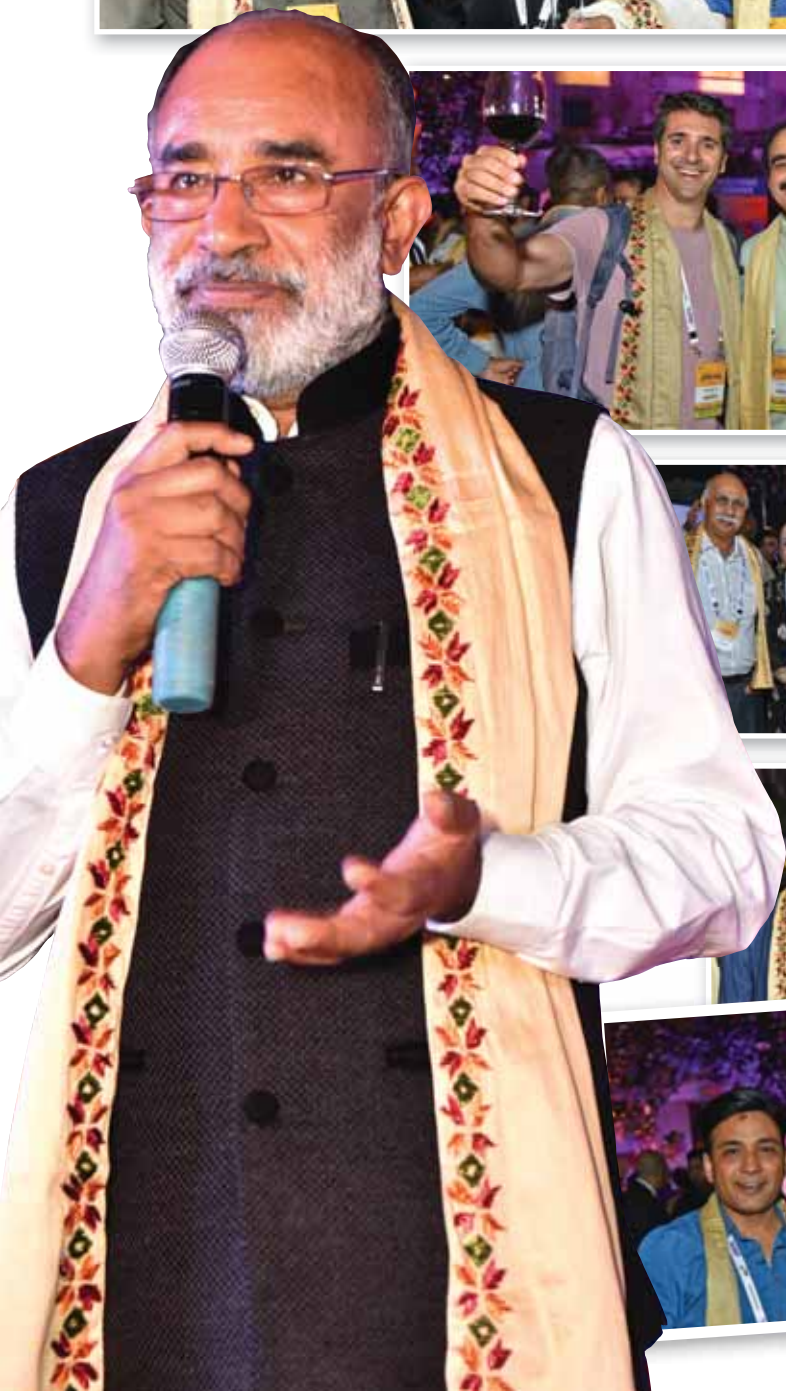
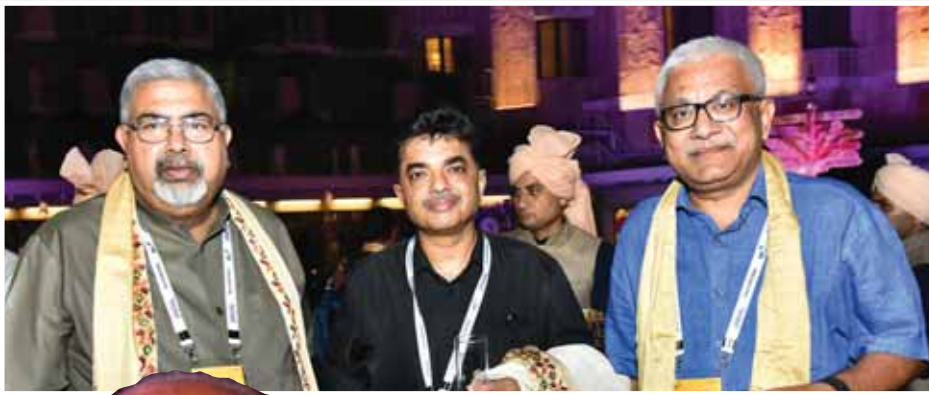
MICE

Weddings



ITM welcomes buyers

Around 250 buyers from over 60 countries attended the 'meet and greet' dinner along with exhibitors from India at ITC Maurya on September 16. The event saw the presence of **KJ Alphons**, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism, as well as former Indian cricketer **Navjot Singh Sidhu**, who is now the Minister of Tourism, Punjab.



Instilling FAITH in the industry

Nakul Anand, Chairman, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), believes that it took them a lot of effort to create a uniform voice for the tourism and hospitality industry in India. Today, FAITH is the biggest representative of this industry in the government’s decisions and policies.

 TT Bureau

For **Nakul Anand**, Chairman, FAITH, the creation of this parent body for all associations was a major feat in itself. “It was five years back in May 2013 when the industry got together and created this federation to have one common voice. Travel agents had their interests, hotels had their issues, tour operators



Nakul Anand
Chairman
FAITH

had their grievances, and we felt that our voice was getting lost in different directions. Hence, a couple of like-minded stakeholders worked hard and took over a year to put together the constitution, agendas and a team to create what is called FAITH. It was for the first time in the Indian industry that such a federation was formed. As a voice of the industry, we are often called by the government to answer questions on the industry,” he revealed.

He also explained that Presidents of all the above associations are part of the FAITH team. “If there is a subject which is pan-tourism and runs across all industries, it would be handled by FAITH. Over the years, we have been involved in a number of industry concerns. We also discussed with the government about the problem of the

e-Visa always getting stuck due to security reasons. On the GST front, our voice was partially listened to in the last GST Council Meet, where it was reduced from 28 per cent on hotels for actual tariff. We

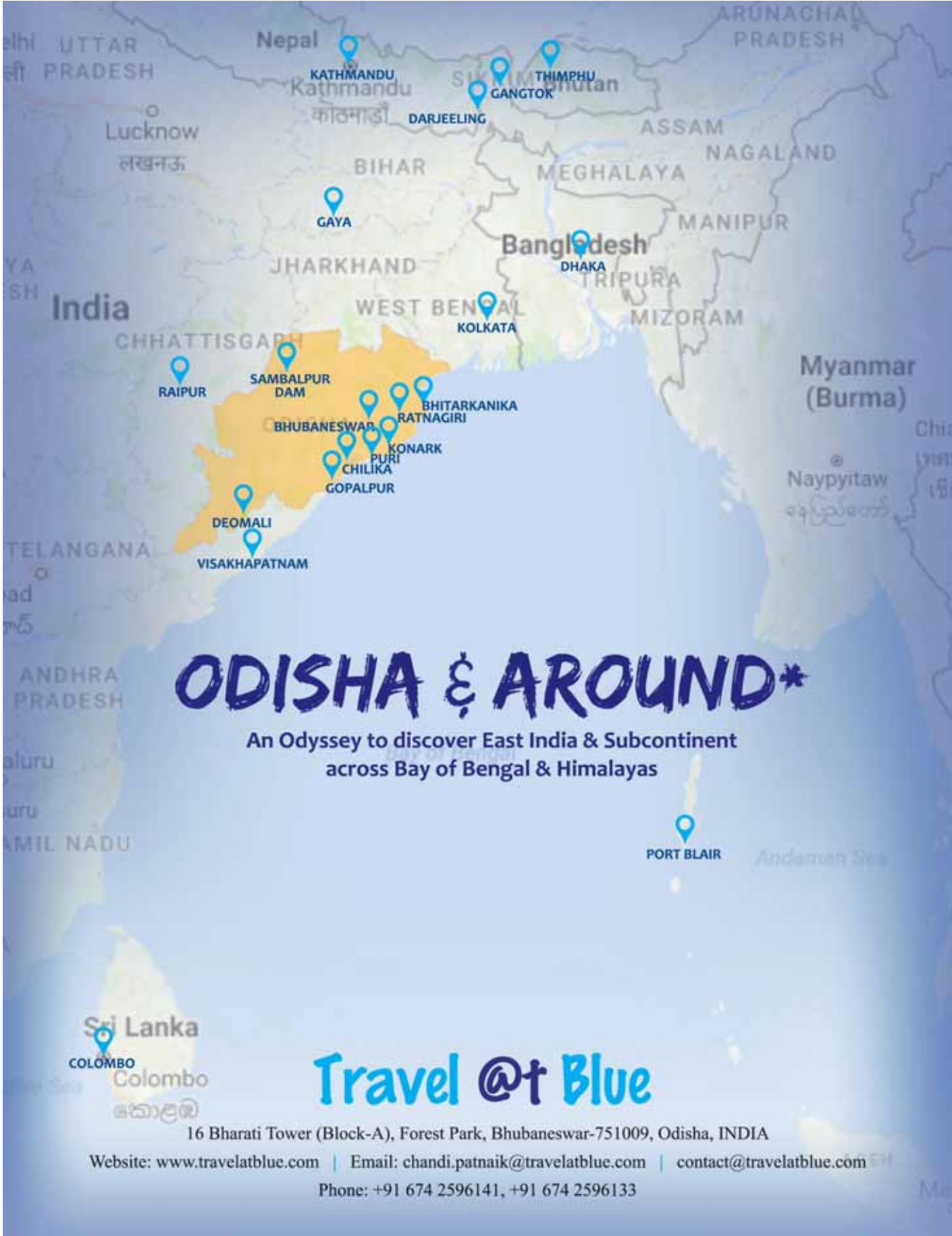
have been involved in the tourist component of the Foreign Trade Policy from 2015-20 and we have also been involved in four economic surveys, along with participating in the creation and recommendation of

the mega tourism zones, PPP and heritage monuments,” informed Anand.

Anand further added, “We have been involved in creating a tourism vision for SAARC,

recommendations to National Cruise Taskforce as well as in bilateral tourism discussions with the US and Morocco as well as multilateral tourism recommendations for ASEAN nations. We have also been

helping state governments put together their tourism policies.” He claimed that one of the biggest achievements has been to convince people that tourism is not only an activity but also an economic activity. 



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Fact File

-  FAITH had introduced the idea of 'I respect women' badges two years ago
-  The association has also been involved in putting together tourism round-tables

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