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India: Land of wonders

The maiden India Tourism Mart (ITM), poised to boost tourist arrivals to India, was inaugurated by **Piyush Goyal**, Union Minister, Railways, Coal and Corporate Affairs, at The Ashok New Delhi.

 Nisha Verma & Manas Dwivedi

Piyush Goyal inaugurated the first-ever India Tourism Mart at The Ashok New Delhi in the presence of **KJ Alphons**, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism; **Mohammed Sajid**, Minister of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco; **Navjot Singh Sidhu**, Minister of Local Government, Tourism, Cultural Affairs and Museums, Government of Punjab; **Kadakampally Surendran**, Minister for Tourism, Government of Kerala; **Rashmi Verma**, Secretary, Tourism; **Satyajeet Rajan**, Director General, Tourism; **Meenakshi Sharma**, Additional Director General, Tourism; **Suman Billa**, Joint Secretary, Tourism; **Nakul Anand**, Chairman, FAITH and **Subhash Goyal**, Chairman, Organising Committee, ITM and Hony Secretary, FAITH.



Addressing the gathering, Goyal said, “The tourism ministry has set high ambitions for tourism in the country, and we at Ministry of Railways are in support and cooperation for ITM. Unless the fundamentals are in place, we cannot attract the number of tourists that other countries are attracting at the back of their infrastructure


thrust. I applaud the creation of a huge number of jobs by tourism and the collective effort of the government towards creating employment opportunities.” Alphons welcomed everyone at ITM and announced that the mart will be organised every year in the third week of September. “We recorded 7 per


cent increase in tourist arrivals in 2016, which increased to 14 per cent in 2017. The tourism receipts went up by 19.2 per cent, contributing 7 per cent to the GDP of the country and 12.76 per cent to employment. One of the biggest achievements for our ministry is the creation of 14.62 per cent jobs in the last four years.”


He claimed that with 36 UNESCO World Heritage sites, 7500 km of coastline, 43 fortresses and some of the biggest luxury hotels—India offers something to everyone. “We are going to focus on many countries by conducting roadshows, especially China as it is a huge outbound market. Currently, we are aiming at only

1 per cent of the Chinese outbound market, which we want to increase to 10 per cent in the next five years. In the next three years, we want to double the tourist arrivals and reach 20 million arrivals,” he said.

Referring to stakeholders as ambassadors, Alphons said that the MOT would make this growth possible for them. “We are looking to aggressively market India internationally as the land of wonders, where something is on offer for everyone,” he informed.

Looking Up 

 14 per cent increase in tourist arrivals in 2017. The tourism receipts went up by 19.2 per cent, contributing 7 per cent to the GDP of the country and 12.76 per cent to employment

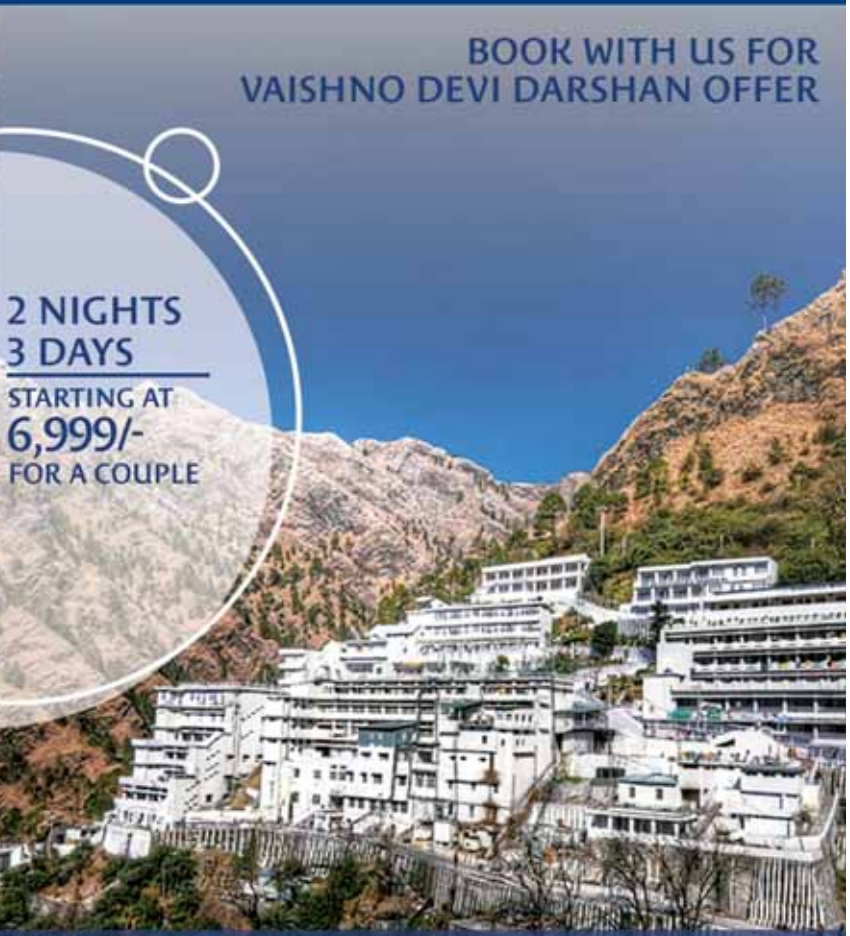




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With around 250 foreign buyers and 150 exhibitors, the maiden India Tourism Mart (ITM) 2018 was inaugurated by **Piyush Goyal**, Minister of Railways, Coal and Corporate Affairs. The event was also attended by the Union Tourism Minister, as well as the tourism ministers of Kerala and Punjab.





ITM is a dream come true...

For the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality, organising the India Tourism Mart (ITM) in the country is a big achievement, especially with support from the Ministry of Tourism.



Nisha Verma

For FAITH, organising India Tourism Mart in the country is a dream come true, claims **Nakul Anand**, Chairman, FAITH. Welcoming the delegates at the inauguration of the ITM, he said, "The industry is grateful to the Ministry of Tourism for being a part of this travel mart. We have been planning this mart since many years, but couldn't make it happen due to some reason or the other. Thankfully, with the support the industry received from MOT, we were able to put this together within a little over two months."

Subhash Goyal, Chairman, India Tourism Mart and Hony Secretary, FAITH, said, "FAITH as an organisation got together with an idea to organise a mart which was focused on



Nakul Anand
Chairman
FAITH

“We've been planning ITM since many years and now with the support received from MOT, we were able to put this together within 2.5 months”



Subhash Goyal
Chairman, India Tourism Mart and
Hony Secretary, FAITH

“About 21 states, more than 100 tour operators and over 254 buyers are attending India Tourism Mart, many of them are new buyers”

promoting India exclusively. The tourism minister agreed to the idea and we all got together to give away 300 room nights, transport for all buyers from ITTA and IATO, free post tours and everything else for free. The ministry offered 300 air tickets to bring hosted buyers who were selected through a transparent process. We screened about 846 applications and each application was scanned by a committee of 10-12 people of all the 10 associations and major hotels like Taj, ITC, Oberoi, Leela, who have given away rooms, so that only genuine buyers are a part of the event. We have selected only 250 buyers who are here, including the presidents of many international travel trade associations. We didn't want big companies to corner all the big buyers, and hence released the appointment

schedule only a day prior as it was done by a computer software which has done the match making of buyers and sellers. We have given booths only to Indian companies."

Goyal added that the tentative dates of the event would be announced soon. "Our target is to double the figures. About 21 states, more than 100 tour operators and over 254 buyers are attending the event. Many of them are new buyers as one of our criteria on the website mentioned that those who have already utilised the hospitality of MOT or any state government in the last two years will not be invited for the mart. We didn't want the same people coming again for ITM. Buyers will be taken on Fam tours to different regions. Around 91 buyers have opted for Delhi-Jaipur-Agra tour, 10-15

have selected the tour for Golden Temple, Amritsar and beyond to Himachal. In fact, 15-20 buyers who were earlier hesitant in visiting Kerala are now going there. We have people going to Aurangabad, Maharashtra and some going to Gujarat and UP too. We also have a Fam tour desk from where people can still register for Fam tours," revealed Goyal.

Facts & figures

➔ About 21 states, more than 100 tour operators and over 254 buyers are attending the event

➔ 91 buyers opted for Delhi-Jaipur-Agra tour, 10-15 have selected the tour for Golden Temple, Amritsar and beyond to Himachal. 15-20 are going to Kerala

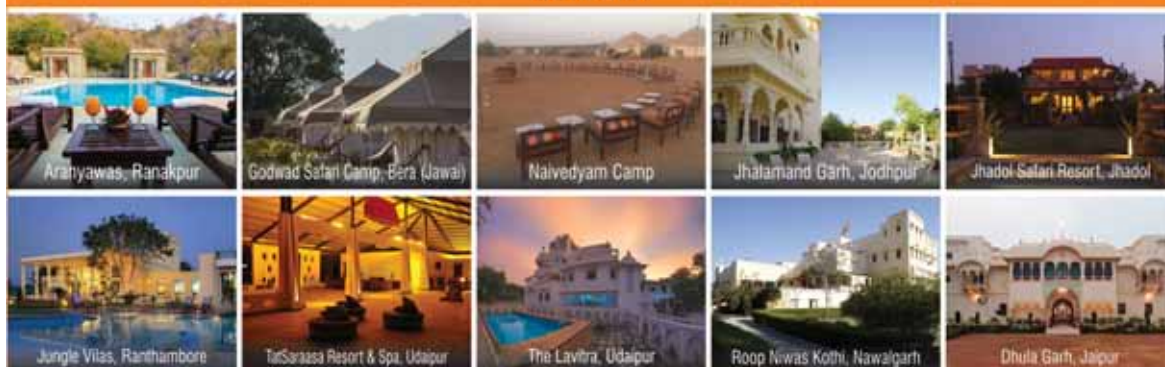
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ITM heralds a new identity

Looking forward to the first-ever India Tourism Mart (ITM), the heads of various trade associations envisage growth and success in terms of international tourist arrivals to the country.



TT Bureau

“ITM is going to be a big boost for the Indian tourism industry as well as our membership. We are glad that MOT has brought in all the buyers from abroad to participate in this mart. It will be an economical affair for all small tour operators who are going to participate in this mart as they are going to meet foreign buyers at their doorstep. We hope that this kind of mart takes place every year for us to do good business.”

Pronab Sarkar, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

“We feel delighted to be associated with FAITH as its founding member and be actively involved with India Tourism Mart (ITM). We believe that India as an entity must grow beyond all levels. Our members at TAAI come from backgrounds of aviation, outbound tourism, inbound tourism, MICE tourism, speciality events and other key spheres of tourism and allied services. We believe that the first ITM will herald a new visibility across the world.”

Sunil Kumar, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)



Contd. on page 8 ►



PP Khanna
President, ADTOI

“I am happy that FAITH has given us the chance to manage the exhibition. It's a pleasure for us to announce that we have already achieved a count of 200 stalls. A majority of states have also provided sponsorships for the event. Apart from that, around 50 hoteliers have supported ITM. We are thankful to those who have given away free hotel room nights to foreign buyers.”



Krishan Dutt Yadav,
President, Indian Tourist
Transporters Association (ITTA)

“All the associations have agreed upon organising the first-ever India Tourism Mart under the FAITH umbrella with immense support from the Ministry of Tourism (MOT). India Tourist Transporters Association (ITTA) is organising all the transfers, Fam tours and sightseeing by providing vehicles for the buyers. The vehicles for tourists have improved in India, and we hope that the government would hopefully allow us to pay zero duty on importing better cars, to be provided to our international tourists.”

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End Point: Utkala Mandap , Sachivalaya Marg , Bhubaneswar

S(mart) makes India Incredible

► Contd. from page 7



Garish Oberoi
President, Federation of
Hotel & Restaurant Asso-
ciations of India (FHRAI)

“FHRAI is one of the founder members of FAITH and my role for India Tourism Mart (ITM) is one of treasurer. I am responsible for looking after the finances and make sure that we make ITM a model that is sustainable over the years rather than going back to the government for funds. Besides being the hospital-ity partners, FHRAI is on the board for selecting international buyers and looking after their stay in the country. Through our other associations, we have managed 900 room nights for the buyers who are coming and staying in Delhi. I consider myself fortunate to be a part of the board of the first-ever ITM. I hope that in the coming years, ITM becomes a major event for international buyers.”



His Highness Maharaja Gaj Singh II of Marwar-Jodhpur
President, Indian Heritage
Hotels Association (IHHA)

“We are a proud participant of India Tourism Mart (ITM), a maiden event organised by the Ministry of Tourism in partnership with FAITH. The event is indeed a pioneering step which will definitely bear desired fruit in times to come and take India's tourism industry to the next level. IHHA has been actively working towards conservation and promotion of India's rich heritage for three decades now and is proud to have made available to both the Indian as well as the overseas traveller the very best in authentic heritage hospitality and traditional living. We look forward to meet the buyer delegates for ITM 2018 as they are being invited from important and potential source markets.”



Chander Mansharamani
Vice Chairman, India
Convention Promotion
Bureau (ICPB)

“It is heartening to see the entire tourism industry come together for making this maiden initiative a giant step in making India a top tourism destination, globally. With participation of over 250 potential buyers from important source markets, ITM will provide excellent business opportunities through B2B meetings. The event will also provide a platform to all states to showcase their products and tourist attractions for the buyers to get a glimpse of India's varied offerings. Over three days, eminent industry players from India and the world will converge in Delhi to exhibit new destinations, exchange ideas, network with travel professionals and key industry buyers.”

“India has an enormous tourism potential and it is only fitting to showcase India's multifarious tourist attractions and diversity to overseas visitors and investors. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation has estimated that international tourist arrivals in India grew from 14.57 million in 2016 to 15.54 million in 2017. The government is now aiming to attract over 20 million tourists annually over the next two-three years. I am confident that ITM will serve as a catalyst to promote greater awareness, internationally.”



Vikram Oberoi
President, Hotel Association
of India (HAI)

“With structural reforms like demonetisation and implementation of GST, our country had to go through two challenging quarters. However, the economy has shown signs of recovery in the fourth quarter of 2017-18 by recording an increase of 7.70 per cent. Domestic aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the country during the last three years. We are delighted to note that the number of foreign tour operators taking part at ITM has gone up by huge numbers.”



Praveen Chugh
President, Travel Agents
Federation of India (TAFI)

“I am honoured to be a part of India Tourism Mart. The event will not only provide Incredible India a platform to showcase its beauty and diversity, but also give the travel trade fraternity a chance to display what India has in terms of adventure and ecotourism. MOT has announced 2018 as the Year of Adventure and with international buyers visiting India, I see a huge opportunity for the adventure travel industry to show the world the growth potential to make India the adventure capital.”



Capt Swadesh Kumar
President, Adventure Tour
Operators Association of
India (ATOAI)



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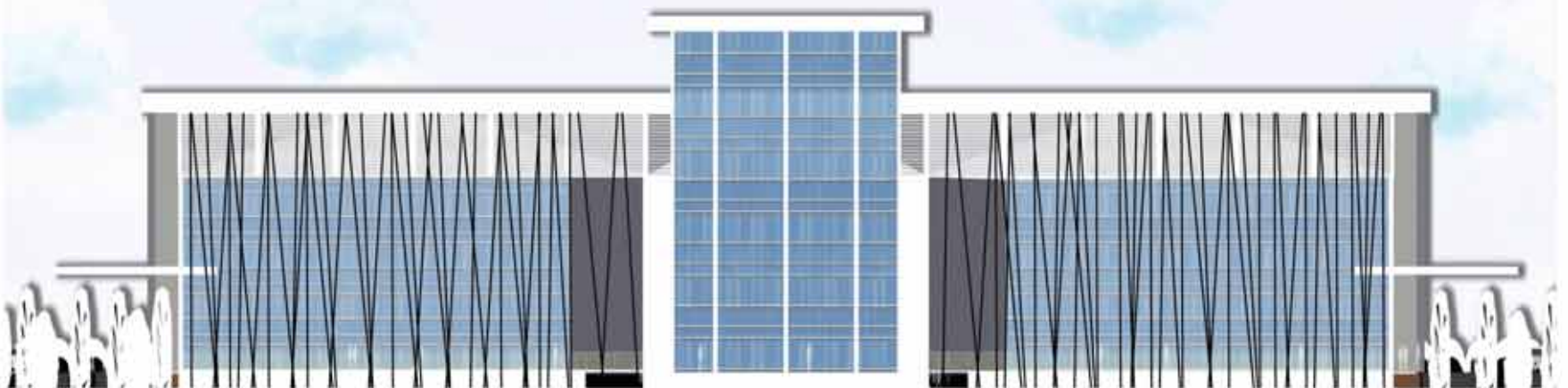
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Gearing up for the big show

Rajiv Anand, General Manager, Corporate Marketing & Sales—Advertising, Public Relations & Culture, ITDC, shares how ITM could be a game changer for the Indian tourism industry and why The Ashok New Delhi is the perfect venue for this prestigious event.



TT Bureau

ITDC recently became the official surface cargo partner for the Indian Air force, revealed **Rajiv Anand**. "This shall not only enhance our capabilities, but also help the Indian Air Force to expand its operations. On the promotional front, we are offering many food and beverage-related offers at The Ashok. We have also re-launched our quarterly e-newsletter 'Ashoknaama' which covers all the latest developments at ITDC," he informed.



Rajiv Anand
General Manager, Corporate Marketing & Sales—Advertising, Public Relations & Culture, ITDC

He shared that for The Ashok, the focus is currently on

capturing the MICE segment. "The Ashok New Delhi has been privileged to host numerous influential international conferences and delegations in the past years. To enhance the experience, The Ashok and Hotel Samrat will undergo revamping to cope with technological advancements and changing interior trends, but not the ambience of a heritage property," said Anand.

The Ashok New Delhi is the host hotel for ITM, and Anand claimed that it offers convention tourism for national and international conferences, luxury rooms and suites, an array of international cuisine experiences, supplemented with a health club and destination health spa and a business centre. "ITM is a prime event with relation to tourism and



allied services. The Ashok is proud to be the preferred venue for the event and shall be providing convention facilities to hold ITM. Also, all support from the food and beverage aspect shall be provided to make ITM successful," shared Anand.

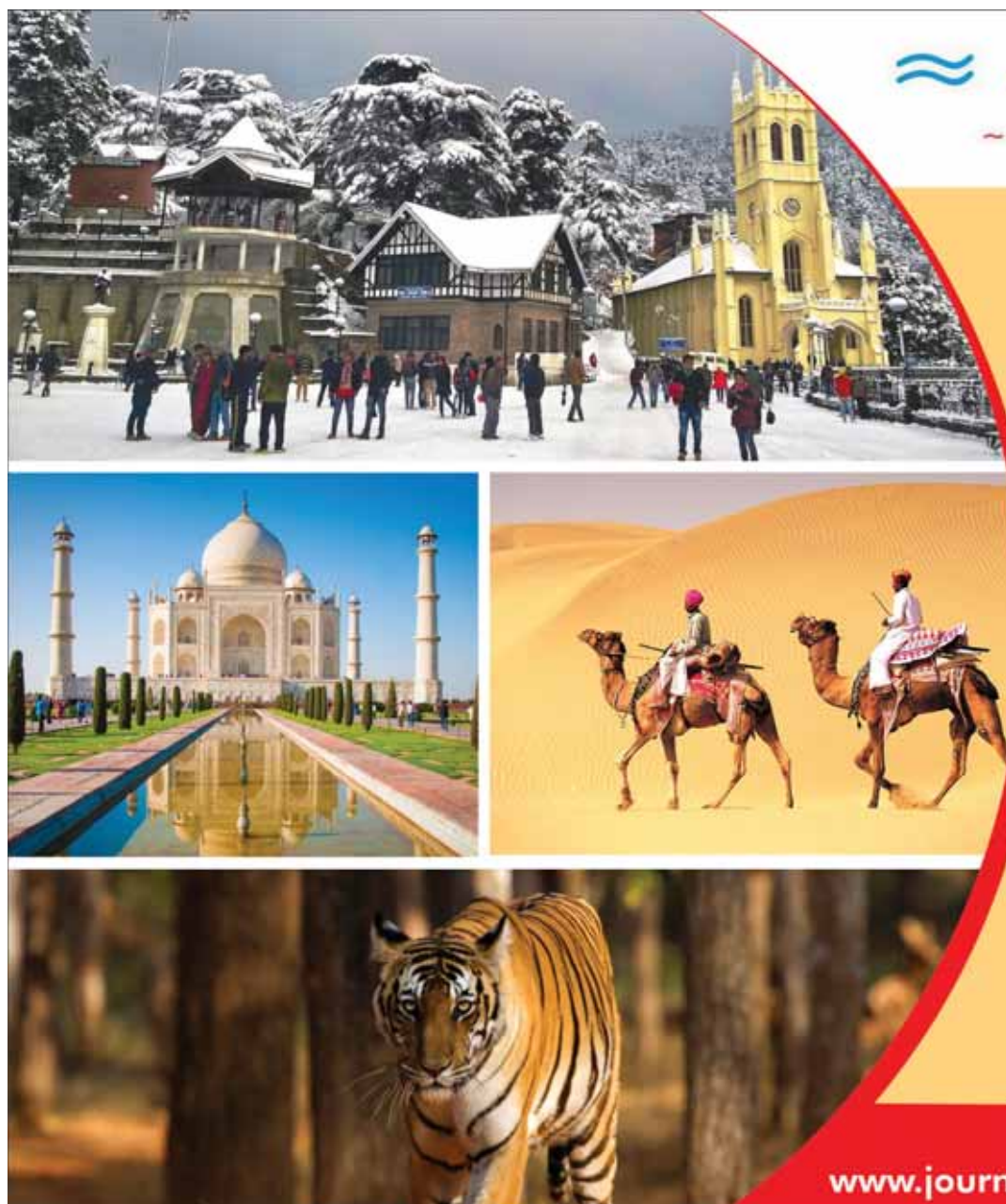
Talking further about ITM, he said, "ITM shall be a success

story since it helps position The Ashok as a one-stop destination for accommodation and allied activities. Also, ITM gives us the chance to connect with various stakeholders at the event."

Sharing details of their growth in the last one year, he said, "ITDC posted a significant performance for the financial

year 2017-18. The total income stood at ₹ 370.64 cr as compared to ₹ 356.11 cr (as per Ind AS) in the last financial year. Corporation posted profit before tax (PBT) of ₹ 27.16 cr and profit after tax (PAT) of ₹ 23.62 cr in 2017-18 against ₹ 17.00 cr (as per Ind AS) and ₹ 11.43 cr (as per Ind AS), respectively in the previous year." 📈

“ITM helps position The Ashok as a one-stop destination for accommodation and allied activities, giving us a chance to connect with various stakeholders at the event”



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# Kanj delights foreigners

A hotel management company with ingeniously-designed resorts and heritage hotels, Kanj Hotels & Resorts currently manages six properties across Rajasthan with one coming up in Gujarat.



TT Bureau

Established in 2017, Kanj Hotels & Resorts manages hotels and resorts in India. The company also operates stand-alone properties and maintains a strong presence in leisure and business segments. Further, it is proud to have a distinctive portfolio that includes ingeniously-designed resorts and heritage hotels that merge old-world charm with contemporary design and smart, engaging service.

Dinesh Singh Shekhawat, Director of Sales & Marketing, Kanj Hotels & Resorts, talks about the reason behind participating in India Tourism Mart



Dinesh Singh Shekhawat  
Director of Sales & Marketing  
Kanj Hotels & Resorts

(ITM) and says, "ITM is a very large platform where an individual or a young and fast-growing hospitality company like us gets an opportunity to showcase its products and reach a large audience associated with travel and trade industry."

Kanj Hotels & Resorts is one of the young and fastest-growing mid-market leisure and business segment chains in India. It has heritage properties under three- and four-star categories and it currently operates and manages six properties across Rajasthan – Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, Jodhpur, Pushkar, Jaisalmer and Rajpura (near Sundhamata Temple in Jalore District). It also has another coming up in Sasan Gir in Gujarat. "All our properties are away from city crowd giving guests perfect holiday experience with peace and tranquility," Shekhawat adds.

Kanj Hotels & Resorts is targeting mid-market leisure

and business segment cities and clientele, as they are the ones who travel the most to the destinations where it has properties. Speaking about challenges they face in promoting their properties, he adds, "The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-

“ ITM is a large platform where a fast-growing hospitality company like us gets an opportunity to showcase its products and reach a large audience ”

growing industries in today's competitive world. So with an

increase in the room inventory, individual stand-alone

properties with world-class facilities and lucrative rates and promotions on online portals make it very tough for branded hotels to get a good rate and high occupancies for which they are operating/managing the hotels and resorts."

This is why, Shekhawat feels that the ministry needs to ensure that hotels and resort operators get more platforms such as India Tourism Marts to interact directly with foreign tour operators and investors to boost the travel and tourism industry.



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# Riding high on expansion

With two new properties showing an overwhelming response, WelcomHeritage is all set to open two more properties in Tadoba (Maharashtra) and Udaipur (Rajasthan) by this year.

TT Bureau

The latest properties by WelcomHeritage in Coorg and Nainital—WH Ayatana Nature Resort and WH Ashdala Nainital—have received an overwhelming response within a few months since their launch. “We are receiving good reviews and feedback. However, it will be inappropriate to view a newly-opened property on the parameters of ARR and RevPar. Many efforts are made in the first six months to ensure good exposure and awareness. We shall be happy to report the outcome a year later,” says **Sunil Gupta**, CEO, WelcomHeritage.

However, there is a great deal of competition from individual boutique properties. **Sanjeev Nayar**, General Manager, MIH, WelcomHeritage, claims, “We

believe in healthy competition and simultaneously, we are all geared up to face the same. We have aggressive marketing and digital media plans in place to keep the travellers updated about new developments at our end. Believing in keeping pace with the changing times, we at WelcomHeritage, have adopted new-age technologies and mediums to reach out to globetrotters. We have a loyal customer base who prefer WelcomHeritage as a brand and choose us over the competitors. Another factor which works in our favour is our presence in every region of the country with more than 36 properties on board, thus giving options to discerning travellers to choose our brand for a unique heritage experience. Further, our ‘Unique Experiences’ offer helps in retaining guests.”



**Sunil Gupta**  
CEO  
WelcomHeritage

“ITM will help India showcase its hidden destinations to potential markets in enabling more footfalls in the coming years”



**Sanjeev Nayar**  
General Manager, MIH  
WelcomHeritage

“We have more than 36 properties on board, thus giving options to travellers to choose us for a unique heritage experience”

Next in line is WelcomHeritage's new property in Tadoba. Gupta shares, “The next property to be flagged will be WelcomHeritage Tadoba Vanyavilas Resort & Spa, a nature resort amidst the Tadoba National Reserve known primarily for spotting tigers. Tadoba National Park is the largest and the oldest one in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra state. This incidentally also happens to be our first property in the state of Maharashtra. Thereafter, we propose to flag another property under the heritage hotels' category in Udaipurwati, Rajasthan with WelcomHeritage Inderpura Haveli. Both these properties are in their advanced stage of completion.”

Nayar says that the hotel focuses on creating distinctive experiences, maintaining relationships with its customers

and marketing that influences customer loyalty. “We also reach out to potential customer base as an important part ensuring growth in our portfolio. It's important to ensure regular brand awareness to inspire customers to use our services repeatedly. Repeat customers bring in a magnificent chunk of revenue to the business, thus marketing strategy must be a blend of maintaining relationships with existing customers to look out for new ones,” he claims.

Gupta believes that India Tourism Mart would provide a platform for all industry stakeholders to interact and create business opportunities. “ITM will surely help India to showcase its hidden destinations and treasures to the potential markets in enabling more footfalls,” he stresses.

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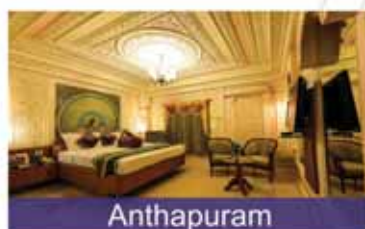
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# Off the beaten track

Travel at Blue handpicks varied luxury experiences from staying in castles to private lunch on top of mountains, from luxury yacht sailing to driving a Ferrari in Milan or landing in an exclusive jungle lodge on a private jet.



TT Bureau

Blue is the colour of the sky and sea. It is often associated with depth and stability. It symbolises trust, loyalty, wisdom, confidence, intelligence, faith, truth and heaven. That's exactly what Travel at Blue (TAB) is all about. TAB is an ambitious venture of a travel enthusiast who transformed his personal passion to professional perfection in organising exceptional travel programmes to discover the most wonderful people, places and cuisine of the world within India or abroad.

Chandi Patnaik, Leisure Travel Curator & Owner, TAB, says, "Diversified into inbound and domestic business recently, TAB pursuits a niche promoting



Chandi Patnaik  
Leisure Travel Curator & Owner  
Travel at Blue

off the beaten tracks of East India, including its home state Odisha. Travelling to the east is only worth the energy not only when you visit the popular tourist places, but also when you see the untouched corners of this region across Bay of Bengal and the eastern Himalayas. Whether it's walking on virgin forests or surfing a remote island; whether it's trekking around a red sandstone hill top or swimming in the waters of an isolated lake; TAB excels in creating seamless itineraries

## TAB Hallmark

TAB specialises in curating bespoke holidays for travellers' penchant for luxury escape and excels in creating seamless itineraries to discover and experience East India with a unique perspective

to discover and experience East India with a unique perspective."

He adds that luxury is something to be experienced with no apologies. That is the hallmark of Travel at Blue in its outbound segment. It specialises in curating bespoke holidays

"Diversified into inbound and domestic business recently, TAB pursuits a niche promoting off the beaten tracks of East India including its home state Odisha"

for travellers' penchant for luxury escape. Qualified in some of the prestigious

hosted buyer programme of top international travel trade fairs like ILTM Cannes,

Luxin Turkey, ATM Dubai and WTM Latin America in recent years, TAB handpicks varied luxury experience across the globe from staying in castles to private lunch on top of mountains, from luxury yacht sailing to driving a Ferrari in Milan or landing in exclusive jungle

lodge on a private jet.

TAB is the leading founding member of EKTAA (Enterprising Knot of Travel & Tourism Associates), a young and dynamic society in Odisha that provides a common platform to share the changing trends in the industry.

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# Keen on segmentation

Gokulam Group of Hotels operates several properties in the south and has just made its foray into the five-star segment with Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore.

TT Bureau

The Gokulam Group of Hotels operates a number of properties in South India. It has just made its foray into the five-star segment with its new Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore. The group is now keen to have solid brand segmentation for its properties in the future. This would be for Gokulam Grand (five-star category), Gokulam Park (four-star category) and Gokulam Residency (three-star and smaller boutique properties).

Speaking about the idea behind this plan is **Akash Gupta**, General Manager, Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore.



**Akash Gupta**  
General Manager  
Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa Bangalore

He says, "Doing this will bring a major focus to the growth and expansion plans of the hospitality business for the group. We have tied up with Preferred Hotels & Resorts for

our global distribution, marketing and sales."

The hospitality group is also participating at India Tourism Mart (ITM) with the aim of communicating to the industry and potential business partners of its focus on sustainable growth and expansion plans for India and international markets. Gupta adds, "ITM will be a fantastic platform for us to showcase our product and brand to a pan-India audience of fellow hoteliers, competitors and support partners. The travel, tourism and hospitality industries have evolved over the last decade and forums like the ITM are perfect to learn about the recent developments while sharing ideas and insights with industry peers and professionals. We hope to see more discussions and opportunities to showcase India as a travel hub at ITM."

“ITM will be a fantastic platform for us to showcase our product and brand to a pan-India audience of fellow hoteliers, competitors and support partners”

# In the wild with Synergi

Synergi Hospitality is aggressively promoting its wilderness properties at remote locations for foreign tourists and expats in India.

TT Bureau

Synergi Hospitality is all about offbeat and experiential stays. The properties that it promotes are off-road, in wilderness or remote areas that connect a guest to the natural surroundings of an area. Elaborating about the ethos of the company, **Shruti Pandey**, Founder, Synergi Hospitality, says, "Every wilderness enthusiast is our guest. Those who are willing to travel away from the normal trail of tourism route and discover the terrain and its habitats are the ones who we look forward to connect with."

Synergi Hospitality has been promoting offbeat and wilderness properties in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Some of them located in Rajasthan include the Godwad Safari Camp in Jawai, Jhadol Safari Resort near Udaipur, Jungle Vilas in Ranthambore



**Shruti Pandey**  
Founder  
Synergi Hospitality

and Roop Niwas Kothi in Nawalgarh.

## Godwad Leopard Safari Camp

The camp offers specially-designed luxury Swiss tents. There is a team of naturalists who take guests through the experience during their stay.

## Jhadol Safari Resort

The unique feature of this

property lies in its unique location in the Bhil tribal area and is great for trekking, biking and birding activities, apart from the tribal village visit.

## Jungle Vilas

The 53-key property is located at the edge of the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve and lies in 10 acres of natural forest in the buffer area of Ranthambhore National Park.

## Roop Niwas Kothi in Nawalgarh

A unique offering of this heritage property is that it is well known for its horses and horse safaris. Owned by the royal family of Nawalgarh, the Kothi has retained its charm and the art of hospitality. "Apart from all the exciting stuff that we are already doing, something new is the preparation for creating a camp at Ardh Kumbh, Allahabad in 2019," Pandey reveals.

# Presenting one India

Talking about sustainable tourism, **Debasish Bhowmik**, Senior Vice President, Hotel Clarks Shiraz, believes that India should be presented as one destination.

TT Bureau

Advocating the view of promoting sustainable tourism in the country, **Debasish Bhowmik**, Senior Vice President, Hotel Clarks Shiraz says that there is a need to make India more tourism-friendly. "With better connectivity and a conducive atmosphere, we can promote sustainable tourism in the country. All the stakeholders of the industry should come together and become decision makers."



**Debasish Bhowmik**  
Senior Vice President  
Hotel Clarks Shiraz


“India should be presented as one destination. All the states should be focused to present themselves as one rather than different pockets”

He further says that the tourism industry needs to have more synergy in marketing India. "It's good to say that the number of tourists in the country is rising, but it is also very important that

these numbers sustain over a period. India should be presented as one destination. All the states should be focused to present themselves as one rather than different pockets."







Informing about Hotel Clarks Shiraz's plans to stronghold its presence in the MiCE business, Bhowmik says that the hotel has very well ventured into the MiCE segment. "Clarks Shiraz is well positioned in Agra in terms of location and facilities. Apart from MiCE, we are also catering to domestic leisure market in increased capacity nowadays. We also have a fair share of business from online travel platforms, especially from Delhi-NCR circuit for a weekend trip. All of these have certainly contributed to our constant growth," says Bhowmik.

Counting on the growth of Hotel Clarks Shiraz in the last one year, Bhowmik reveals, "During 2017-18, we experienced a growth of around 12-14 per cent. We are targeting a growth of around 15 per cent in the coming year."



**Kanj Hotels & Resorts**

Kanj Hotels & Resorts (I) Pvt Ltd manages Hotels and Resorts in India. The company also operates stand-alone Hotels & Resorts and maintains a strong presence in leisure & business segment. Presently Kanj Hotels & Resorts (I) Pvt Ltd is proud to have a distinctive portfolio that includes ingeniously designed resorts and heritage hotels that merge old world charm with contemporary design and smart, engaging service.

|                                                                                    |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>Kanj Ayaan Resort - Udaipur</b>                                                 | <b>Kanj Haveli Resort - Kumbhalgarh</b>                                             |
|  |  |
| <b>Kanj Avatar Resort - Pushkar</b>                                                | <b>Kanj Lohana Village Resort - Rajpura</b>                                         |
|  |  |
| <b>Govind Vilas - A Heritage Resort - Jodhpur</b>                                  | <b>Dune Safari Camp - Sam Jaisalmer</b>                                             |

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# Explore Gujarat in all its charm

With 22 different destinations, Gujarat has something to offer for every kind of traveller to the state. In a conversation with TRAVTALK, **Jenu Devan**, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat, talks about potential of exploring the unexplored in Gujarat.



Manas Dwivedi

As a perfect destination for tourists and inbound travellers, Gujarat has a lot to offer to every kind of traveller irrespective of age, taste or preference. Be it wildlife, spiritual or adventure sports, from architectural marvels to pristine beaches or the unique white sand desert, there is no dearth of tourism offering for the discerning traveller. Apart from these, the state also of-



**Jenu Devan**  
Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat

in a bit of Gujarat' and the implantation of tourism policy in the state, **Jenu Devan**, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited says, "The promotional campaign has been very successful for us in showcasing 22 different locations and events in the state. The tourist inflow in the state has been 13.8 per cent more than the inflow in 2016-17. In 2017-18, we have been successful in hosting around 509.78 lakh visitors."

"The government has successfully launched the Tourism Policy 2015-20 after which we have seen around 250 applications from hoteliers and amusement parks for an investment of ₹ 10,000 crore in the state. Till date, more than

100 tourism projects have already started commercial operations. Gujarat has the largest number of airports covered under the UDAN scheme. Trade associations like IATO and FAITH have always supported tourism in the state," Devan further explains.

Talking about future plans, Devan says that a lot is in the pipeline for 2019. "Next year, the Statue of Unity will be an international-level tourism project in the state. Many roadshows and events are also planned around the project which will bring in many national and international tourists," comments Devan.

On ITM, Devan says that they are happy to partner with this flagship event and appealed

that it should become an annual event to represent the entire tourism community in India on an international level.

However, Devan mentions a few challenges Gujarat faces while promoting itself. He adds, "There is an ever increasing



He says that as Gujarat is pacing to emerge as a tourism powerhouse, ITM will provide them a right platform to showcase the world what the vibrant state of Gujarat has to offer to international visitors.

need of trained manpower in the industry. Challenges are in the form of availability of quality rooms across destinations. We have started a cleanliness drive across 54 destinations in 33 districts of the state," he adds.

“The tourist inflow in the state has been 13.8 per cent more than the inflow in 2016-17. In 2017-18, we have been successful in hosting around 509.78 lakh visitors”

fers tourism potential in niche areas such as bird watching

and golf tourism. Lauding the tourism campaign, "Breathe

# Manipur welcomes travel trade

Manipur plans to revive policies to adapt to new opportunities presented by the growth of tourism. As part of this, it will engage the travel trade associations from across the country to bring business to the state. **W Ibohal Singh**, Director (Tourism), Government of Manipur, shares more details.



Hazel Jain

**What places and activities in Manipur are you promoting in India and abroad?**

Apart from our various tourism attractions that form part of our promotional campaign, we are also focusing on promoting our culture and heritage while showcasing to the world the adventure avenues that the state offers to its visitors. Manipur is often referred to as the land of festivals because of the celebrations by over 34 recognised tribes of the state.

The promotion of polo is also one of our major marketing activities since Manipur is the birthplace of 'Modern Polo'. We organise international polo tournaments every year at Mapal Kangjeibung, the oldest living polo ground in the world.



**W Ibohal Singh**  
Director (Tourism)  
Government of Manipur

**What upcoming events in Manipur can travel agents sell right now?**

With the Manipur Sangai Festival set to be held from November 21-30, we plan to attract key figures from the travel industry, help them generate business opportunities and inspire people to travel to Manipur.

Another event – the Kangla Light and Sound Show at the Kangla Fort – that was inaugurated recently is the first-of-its-kind in India. It was developed under the 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme' of the Ministry of Tourism and is expected to increase tourist footfalls at the Kangla Fort in Imphal.

**Can you share some arrival figures from other countries?**

The domestic tourist inflow increased from 1,16,652 in 2010-11 to 1,64,483 in 2017-18 and the foreign tourist inflow increased manifold from 431 in 2010-11 to 3,787 in 2017-18. Manipur has received the highest number of visitors annually from the USA in the last few years.

**What are the trade activities that Manipur Tourism has planned for 2018-19?**

As Manipur is today considered the gateway to the southeast Asian countries, we are also looking at events, exhibitions and roadshows in the neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. The increase in connectivity routes to Myanmar through the Trans Asian Highway opens opportunities for the growth of tourism industry in Manipur. Imphal, the capital of Manipur, is only 110 kms from the border and has an international airport that can extend service to hundreds of Buddhist pilgrims to Bodhi Gaya. As the land of Lord Buddha, India is a country of pilgrimage for the people of Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries and Manipur is the gateway to this sea of opportunity. Also, Manipur as a sacred centre for Vaishnavism with attractions like the Shree Shree Govindajee Temple has the potential to attract the

## Manipur's tourist attractions

- ❖ 'Loktak Lake', the largest fresh water lake in the North East India
- ❖ Keibul Lamjao National Park, the last natural habitat of the 'Sangai', the dancing deer of Manipur
- ❖ The Shirui Hills, the abode of 'Shirui Lily', the State Flower
- ❖ Other famous tourist spots like the Kangla Fort, Shree Shree Govindajee Temple, Lamdan adventure sports sites, the Manipur Adventure and Allied Sports Institute Complex (MAASIC) at Keirao, Khangkhui and Tharon Caves
- ❖ Last but not the least, the World War II Cemeteries that form part of its promotional campaign

Hindu populace of Myanmar. Tapping this segment of travellers through our travel partners will form a major part of our trade activities for the rest of 2018 and 2019.

**What markets are you looking to push the destination in?**

We are currently focusing on our activities in major

metro cities like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai, while looking to expand our campaign to the southern part of the country and smaller cities like Ahmedabad and Hyderabad as well. We are also working with Madhya Pradesh as it is one of our partner states for the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative of the Government of India.



# Travellers go digital

Having started operations in Delhi, **Mohd Uzair**, Initiator—North India, Book N Relax, talks about the booming online market and emerging travel trends in the industry.



TT Bureau

Briefing about the growth of online travel bookings in India, **Mohd Uzair**, Initiator—North India, Book N Relax feels that OTAs are booming in the country and the online market is set to grow by leaps and bounds soon. "Online bookings, including flights and hotels are estimated to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16 per cent during the six-year period between 2016 and 2021. In the coming years, online travel can make up to 43 per cent of the total market," he said.

"In 2017, the number of hotel rooms booked in In-

dia, both online and offline touched 11.7 million, while the number of flights stood at 99.9 million," adds Uzair. According to Uzair, a number of new and interesting



**Mohd Uzair**  
Initiator—North India  
Book N Relax

According to Uzair, a number of new and interesting

travel trends are blooming in the industry. He feels that Canada as a destination is set to reach record numbers soon. "The Canadian inbound tourism is on a 14-year high number with almost 20 million travellers. As Canadian tourism is projected to keep growing, there will be lot more about Canada to explore in 2019."

He further says, "Looking at the popularity of adventure and culinary tourism, we have successfully launched our new product, 'Real Food Adventure Tour', which offers cooking class, wine tasting and visit to local markets."

According to him, wellness trips will be the next big trend. "Health-conscious travel is on the rise. We have added six new cycling tours to Bali and Peru for our corporate segment," says Uzair.

# ATE big on medical

**EM Najeeb**, Chairman & MD, Airtravel Enterprises (ATE) Group of Companies, shares why it is important to offer experiential and medical tourism for Indian operators.



TT Bureau

Being at the helm of the highly successful ATE Group, **EM Najeeb**, Chairman & Managing Director, Airtravel Enterprises (ATE) Group of Companies, is currently looking to consolidate and adopt a sustainable approach to move forward. He says, "Apart from our major business of air ticketing and related services, we are focusing on leisure and destination management for inbound and domestic tourism, special interest outbound group tours, pilgrim tours, conferences, medical tourism, etc."

Najeeb agrees that tourists around the world are looking for new experiences and destinations. "Different parts of India, particularly Kerala is full of experiential offerings, including houseboats, boat races, Ayurveda rejuvenation therapies, farm stays,



**EM Najeeb**  
Chairman & Managing Director, Airtravel  
Enterprises (ATE) Group of Companies

the tourists from traditional markets, we also have tourists coming from nearer regions of Eastern Europe, Russia, GCC countries, etc," he shares.

ATE Group has been actively involved in the development and promotion of medical tourism in India. "From the 2000s, we have been promoting medical tourism successfully after we established our own multi-specialty tertiary care hospital in Thiruvanan-

thapuram, which is NABH-accredited

plantation life, hill cycling, adventure activities, etc. The Great India Tour Company, the leisure arm of ATE Group is offering all these experiences to our tourists. Apart from

thapuram, which is National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH)-accredited," he reveals.

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# Exploring countryside

Mostly catering to foreign tourists visiting India, Dependable Travel Solutions (India) is now looking to aggressively promote 'village tours' in the country.



TT Bureau

In a bid to attract more foreign tourists to the country, Dependable Travel Solutions (India) is planning to aggressively promote 'village tours' among foreign visitors. The company specialises in organising inbound tours and making arrangements for foreign trips in India. Talking about the growth of the company in comparison to last year, **Deepak Dhyani**, Managing Director, Dependable Travel Solutions (India) says that he wants to attract more foreign tourists to the country. "The year 2018 has been really good for us in terms of foreign tourist arrivals and overall growth. We have also made



**Deepak Dhyani**  
Managing Director  
Dependable Travel Solutions (India)

solid plans for the coming years," tells Dhyani.

To attract more tourists to the country, Dhyani suggests that no visa fee should be

charged from foreign tourists. He explains, "India is one of the most beautiful destinations in the world but we are lacking in terms of attracting more tourists to our country because of high taxes and visa fee."

Applauding the concept of India Tourism Mart (ITM), Dhyani says, "Travel shows like ITM are very useful for tour operators like us. We get to meet our competitors, travel partners and clients at the same platform. Such shows also give us an opportunity to meet a number of foreign tour operators and travel partners under one roof and that too in our own country."

Travel trade shows such as ITM give you an opportunity to meet a number of foreign tour operators and travel partners under one roof in your home country

In terms of his plans of expansion, Dhyani informs that his company is already promoting North and South India, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.



# Investing in Leisure

Focusing on leisure destinations across India, Leisure Hotels Group is planning to invest around ₹100 crore to add 10 properties in various cities by the end of 2020.



TT Bureau

Premier hospitality provider in Uttarakhand, Leisure Hotels Group offers a unique blend of history, culture and luxury. Focusing on leisure destinations in Uttarakhand, Goa and Himachal Pradesh across bespoke villas, boutique resorts, luxury camps and smart business hotels, the group is looking to expand its portfolio aggressively. Sharing details, **Vibhas Prasad**, Director, Leisure Hotels Group said that the group has several projects lined up to execute. "We are looking to invest around ₹100 crore to add 10 properties by the end of 2020. Apart from that, we are



**Vibhas Prasad**  
Director  
Leisure Hotels Group

targeting other projects, which include a hostel in Rishikesh by 2018, a business hotel in Greater Noida and a luxury resort in Haridwar by October 2019, a wildlife resort each in

Pench National Park and Kanha National Park by April 2020, along with a plan to open a resort in Tehri by 2021," said Prasad.

The mix of domestic and international guests at Leisure Hotels has been nearly 25 per cent international and 75 per cent domestic. The revenue growth of the group in the last decade has been more than 25 per cent year-on-year (YOY) largely due to growth of domestic travellers. This has led to robust occupancies and enhanced average daily rates (ADRs), further increasing the revenue potential for the properties and the overall group.

Talking about the company's largest source market, he said that apart from a pan-India reach, they get most of the business from Delhi-NCR and Western India. (Gujarat and Maharashtra). ↴

“The revenue growth of Leisure Hotels in the last decade has been more than 25 per cent year-on-year (YOY) largely due to the growth of domestic travellers”

# 100% full for MGM

Riding high on success, **A Lakshmana Perumal**, Director—Finance and Operations, MGM Hotels and Resorts, shared his formula of serving his clients better.



TT Bureau

With around 275 keys at six properties spread across Southern India, MGM Hotels and Resorts is working efficiently to serve its guests beyond their expectations. With increased occupancy in the last one year, the company is setting new milestone, informed **A Lakshmana Perumal**, Director—Finance and Operations, MGM Hotels and Resorts. His hotels are doing well with around 20 per cent growth in the previous year. He said, "One of our greatest achievements is 100 per cent occupancy for the whole month in one of the properties in Bengaluru recently. Comparatively, our occupancy has gone up by approximately 70-75 per cent in the last one year."

Sharing his goal of serving the clients beyond their expecta-



**A Lakshmana Perumal**  
Director—Finance and Operations  
MGM Hotels and Resorts

customers and not just satisfy them," he added.

In addition to it, Perumal said, "For any business structure, positioning is really important. And, in terms of position, you set terms and standards for quality services and facilities. Therefore, if you position your hotel smartly, you are a perfect destination for travellers."

Talking about expansion plans, he informed, "By the end of

“We have achieved 100 per cent occupancy for a month in one of our properties in Bengaluru. Our occupancy has gone up by about 70-75% in last one year”

tions, Perumal said that they do not overpromise in delivery. "We are perfect in delivering what we promise and we promise what we deliver. We always look to please our

this year, we are expecting to come up with a new property in Chennai. We are also looking forward to organic growth." ↴

# Revamped & redone

Providing a variety of hotels at major tourist locations in Odisha, Swosti Group caters to each and every travel need of its guests.



TT Bureau

The largest lagoon in the northern hemisphere, Swosti Chilika Resort is the latest venture by Swosti Group at Chilika Lake. **JK Mohanty**, CMD, Swosti Group said, "It is the first and only resort, which has come up and has obtained the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) Platinum Award as an Eco Resort. Within a year, the property has been established as a major tourist attraction in the state."

The resort aims to cater to the high-end domestic and international tourists. "Chilika Lake attracts a large number of migratory birds from Siberian countries during the winter

“In line with constant upgrading of our property and services, we have given a new look to Swosti Premium by renovating its rooms, interiors, floors, etc”



**JK Mohanty**  
CMD  
Swosti Group

season and throughout the year, the Irrawaddy dolphins are an attraction for tourists," Mohanty added.

Amongst the various brands, Swosti Premium, he said,

is the pioneer in the hotel industry in Odisha. "At Swosti Premium, we are committed to making a difference every day, continually getting better to keep ourselves on the top. In line with constant upgrading of our property and services, we have given a new look to Swosti Premium by renovating its rooms, interiors, floors, etc for better satisfaction of our guests," Mohanty added.

Apart from it, there is Swosti Grand located in Bhubaneswar, about which Mohanty elaborated, "Swosti Grand has been transformed into a boutique hotel with its new multi-cuisine restaurant, coffee shop and restobar. Moreover, we have renovated all the elegant 56 centrally air-conditioned rooms, mini bar and CCTV satellite TV and executive suites. Also, we have continuously tried to surpass our own standards and commitment to excellence." ↴

# Unique experiences

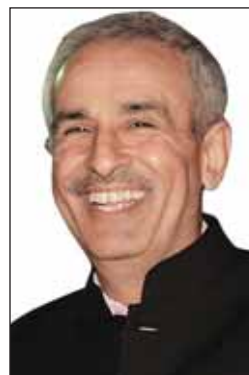
**Kapil Goswamy**, Founder & MD, Trans India Holidays, shares the growth story of his company and the varied experiences it is providing to its customers.



TT Bureau

Claiming that Trans India Holidays witnessed a good season 2017-18, **Kapil Goswamy**, Founder & MD, Trans India Holidays, said that they hope to continue this growth trajectory during 2018-19 as well. "In addition to the UK and Australia, we've made efforts to enter several new markets, including Spain, Latin America, France and Russia. In terms of products, the Golden Triangle, Rajasthan, Kerala, etc continue to remain popular, but we've tried to break away from just doing the traditional hotspots and introduce itineraries that include unexplored destinations like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Hampi and other parts of Karnataka and northern Kerala, all of which are actually a treasure trove for inbound tourists." he added.

He also said that introducing new experiences and activities



**Kapil Goswamy**  
Founder and Managing Director  
Trans India Holidays

Sanjay Gandhi Slum in Delhi and the Dharavi Slum in Mumbai, street food tours in several cities, etc. Adding on these activities not only makes the tourists' experience more enriching, but also makes them stay longer in the destination," revealed Goswamy.

Nevertheless, he pointed out many challenges plaguing India. "With high taxes, we hope that the government rationalises the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

“We've tried adding new activities like cycling tours in Old Delhi and in the Fort Cochin area, walks through Sanjay Gandhi Slum in Delhi & Dharavi Slum in Mumbai”

in usual destinations also worked. "Even within the popular destinations, we've tried to add new activities for tourists like cycling tours in Old Delhi and in the Fort Cochin area, walks through the

rates once again. A lot has been spoken and announced by the government in terms of infrastructure upgradation, but we still need to see it translate into reality by way of better roads and trains," he added. ↴



# Industry buoyant on ITM

The trade and hospitality players in India are pinning hopes on India Tourism Mart and believe that the event would result in fruitful meetings and engagement with international buyers.



TT Bureau



**Abraham George**  
Chairman & MD, Intersight  
Tours & Travels & President,  
Kerala Travel Mart Society

“India Tourism Mart (ITM) will be a good opportunity for meetings between buyers and sellers. It is set to be a game changer for the travel fraternity. It has been marketed as the first travel mart of the country with huge expectations. I hope that the DMCs are resourceful and good. The meetings will be prefixed. However, I believe that this event should have been organised much in advance as it was planned in a very short time. Events like that should be announced at least one year prior to the date of event so that the industry can plan beforehand.”



**Nitin Sambhi**  
Managing Director  
Terra Ignota Tours

“This is the first time that such an event is happening. ITM is the maiden event helmed by the industry and supported by the Ministry of Tourism. Hence, we don't know what really to expect from ITM right now. However, as it comes from some experienced and reliable support and collaborations, we expect it to be a good show. I think it's a positive initiative to be done in the capital that would be a great showcase for tour operators like us who are participants. Let's see how it unfolds! It would be great to meet some quality operators and find a common ground to do business.”



**Karan Anand**  
Head—Relationships  
Cox & Kings

“We expect the 2018 edition to be larger and attended by all the significant travel stakeholders. Besides the business opportunities, we are also looking at strategic partnerships to take our specialist brands to more travellers. We are happy to participate at ITM 2018. While it offers a great platform to network with our partners from the travel industry, it also is a great place to showcase our latest travel innovations and developments. We are here with some never-seen-before products that our agent networks will be excited to work on. In addition, we have curated some journeys that represent Cox & Kings' expertise in experiential travel.”

“As a new initiative by MOT and FAITH, ITM is providing us with the opportunity to interact with new operators, vendors and DMCs interested in exploring India as a tourist destination with first-hand experience. It is a good opportunity for small operators and DMCs who are unable to participate in international exhibitions and travel marts. Since it is the first edition, we need to see the responses, although about 300 buyers have confirmed participation. The visit of sustained buyers might manifest into an extraordinary event. We anticipate a healthy platform for smaller merchants and young professionals showcasing their products.”



**Bharat Bhushan Atree**  
Managing Director  
Caper Travel Company

“I am glad that FAITH has succeeded to convince the Ministry of Tourism to organise the first-ever India Tourism Mart in Delhi. As a pure B2B travel mart, we all hope that ITM will be a big step forward to achieve our goal of 20 million foreign tourists by year 2020. The event is a big opportunity to do business for small tour operators who cannot afford to participate in international travel fairs abroad. I am looking forward to do business with first-time international buyers from all over the world. I have also learnt that international buyers, who are not selling India as a tourist destination, have also been invited to ITM. This will give an opportunity to all the Indian tour operators who are looking beyond existing saturated markets.”



**Viney Tyagi**  
Director  
Uni Crystal Holidays

“As India's maiden event in association with the Ministry of Tourism, we are assured that it will be a grand show. Our expectations are very high from ITM. A large number of potential buyers from different countries have been invited for us to do business. Another crucial factor is that these buyers are carefully selected; the screening committee of the organisers has been meticulous in getting genuine buyers. We are expecting to interact and do meetings with a large number of buyers. Every delegate coming to attend ITM from abroad is our guest and we are looking forward to host them warmly. We wish this travel mart to be a great success and expect this to be much bigger next year.”



**P Balasubrahmanyam**  
Director—Sales and Marketing,  
Namaste Tours



**Sarabjit Singh**  
Managing Director  
Travelite (India)

“As a participant and exhibitor, we are looking forward to meet some new tour operators and travel agents from overseas. We are looking to interact with them and showcase our offerings while enhancing our business from the international market. We are very hopeful that ITM will be a good platform for us to create more revenue for our company. So far, we have not received any meeting schedule but we will be meeting approximately 40 prospective buyers.

As far as special plans are concerned, it is something we keep on doing on daily basis; we keep innovating for our consumers. After ITM, we are hoping for good surge in the business in travel.”



**Tejbir Singh Anand**  
Founder & MD  
Holiday Moods Adventures

“This is the first time-ever that India Tourism Mart is being organised in association with FAITH and Ministry of Tourism. With this mega-event, we want that foreign buyers should recognise India as a destination which is capable, economical and a memorable experience for the customers. We want to put India on the global tourism map. From ITM, I am expecting that all the buyers coming to attend this event should be quality buyers; we want this visit to be a learning experience for them so that when they go back to their respective country, they can empower others to visit India. For ITM, our company is offering a Fam-trip to buyers across various parts of India so that they learn more the destination its products.”



**Jatinder S Taneja**  
Managing Director  
Travel Spirit International

“The expectations from ITM are definitely high as approximately 270 buyers from different countries have been selected to attend the mart. I am looking forward to meeting some good high-quality buyers during the event. The lead time to organise this mart at this scale was extremely short. However, I am very happy that this much-required initiative has been taken to organise a tourism mart at a national-level in Delhi. This must become a yearly event in the future but with more lead time for all the participants. ITM will surely help the inbound tourism to grow in India.”

“We are a relatively new company, just in our fourth year. So a platform like this will give us the exposure that we need. It is a golden opportunity for a tour operator like us where we can meet buyers from all over the world. We expect to meet at least 500 international buyers at this show, which in turn allow us to connect with FTOs from different countries. Our main markets so far are Europe, the Middle East and Russia. We hope the response to be excellent.”



**Vinod Kumar Yadav**  
Director  
Adieu Holidays

“I am hoping that through the India Tourism Mart, we will be able to open up new ways of doing business in Ladakh with new destinations, trek routes and even MICE. We are participating in this show to promote the Ladakh region to foreign tour operators, along with the Northeast part of India which is a niche product when compared with other sellers.”



**Kamlesh Lalan**  
Owner  
Ravine Trek

“I believe ITM will be helpful for tour operators to increase their network globally. Most companies deal with their set of networks so this show will offer a great opportunity to expand it. It will also be a great place to learn about new trends in the industry – not just domestically but also internationally. We have four verticals which we will be promoting here - tours, corporate service, weddings and events. While we operate a lot out of the Middle East and the UK, our footprint in the European market has scope for improvement and that will be our main focus at ITM.”



**Chetan Juneja**  
Senior Vice President,  
Tamarind Global





# Business as usual at mart

With around 250 buyers from 60 countries and approximately 150 exhibitors, the first-ever India Tourism Mart kick-started with hundreds of meeting on the first day of the B2B networking session.





# Envisioning the best for ITM

Billed as the largest platform for industry stakeholders, hospitality trade reckon that India Tourism Mart (ITM) will be an excellent platform to connect with the best international buyers to seek business.

TT Bureau



**Nitesh Gandhi**  
General Manager  
JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi  
Aerocity

“India Tourism Mart is set to be an effective platform as it is being hosted for the first time in India. The event is expected to provide substantial opportunities to all exhibitors and buyers in building relationship and prospects, thus promoting the international leisure and MICE business. JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi Aerocity is glad to be a part of a reputable forum. It is an essential event for the entire travel and tourism fraternity to showcase their products.”



**Rohit Arora**  
Area General Manager  
The Park Hotels

“It can't get bigger than this! ITM will throw open our Incredible India to the world, presenting its world-class airports, travel routes and connectivity, MICE facilities and much more. Inclusive travel opportunities and adventure tourism will be a point of discussion this year. I have been in this trade for over 20 years and it makes me proud to be a part of an initiative that is set to witness Indian tourism jump tremendously. This unique networking experience will create valued business and personal opportunities, providing our customers with quality contacts, content and communities.”



**Akhil Anand**  
Group Head  
Tree of Life Resorts & Hotels

“Quality business to business interactions with excellent foreign operators were earlier only possible in fairs abroad such as World Travel Market London, ITB Berlin and the likes. I think it is imperative to have a similar at home in giving a wider number of stakeholders the opportunity to interact directly with their respective source markets. This is a great initiative by the organising committee and I hope that it proves to be a fruitful one for all concerned.”

“With this fantastic initiative by the two strong bodies that are working towards promoting Indian tourism, I am certain that India as a destination will get further boost in international markets. India's tourism potential is beyond what the country is witnessing at present and this initiative will help in placing India in focus as an attractive tourist destination. We are extremely delighted to participate at this event and promote the world-class Shangri-La experience.”



**Parmeet Singh Nayar**  
General Manager, Shangri-La's - Eros Hotel, New Delhi

“The first India Tourism Mart is a great initiative by the Ministry of Tourism and the team members of FAITH who have had a vision to do something in India in line with the World Travel Market in London. As the Government of India is focusing on the tourism sector, ITM's initiative in marketing a destination could be a great help to all the stakeholders and industry players in the industry. It is time the government focuses on improving infrastructure in all major destinations.”



**J K Mohanty**  
Chairman & Managing  
Director, Swosti Group

“The Imperial is an iconic hotel which has played host to many dignitaries and royalties in the past. Renowned for its rare art, heritage and global services, we are a favourite among corporate and leisure travellers. We look forward to showcasing the hotel to agents who are staying with us and those who are attending India Tourism Mart. We are confident that this mart will go a long way in increasing the usage of our hotel in this segment.”



**Indira Banerjee**  
Director - Sales & Strategic  
Planning, The Imperial  
New Delhi

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## Brand-new Empire

With a clear approach to growth, Hotel Ambica Empire is planning to gradually refurbish itself by 2019, reveals the hotel's General Manager **Sreeram Krishnan**.

TT Bureau

Centrally located in the heart of Chennai, Hotel Ambica Empire provides an atmosphere which exudes all things heritage. The hotel is set for a revamp by 2019 to provide more facilities and amenities to its customers. Providing more details, **Sreeram Krishnan**, General Manager, Hotel Ambica Empire explains, “We are looking to gradually refurbish the hotel by 2019. This will help us increase our revenues by 20 to 25 per cent. We are also targeting an increase of 10 to 12 per cent in our occupancy by 2019.”

Talking about the hotel's performance in the past two years, Krishnan says that the period has been lull for hospitality industry in Chennai. “The business was severely affected by various calamities like the 2015 floods,



**Sreeram Krishnan**  
General Manager  
Hotel Ambica Empire

experienced a slow boom over the last one year.”

Focusing mainly on corporate travellers and families looking to spend leisure time in Chennai, Krishnan says that consolidating over the next two years; they are looking to expand to other cities too. He says that the hotel is pushing its sales through online channel partners as well as through social media. “We are regularly in touch with our clients to keep them


“We are looking to refurbish the hotel by 2019. This will help us increase our revenues by 20-25%. We also target an increase of 10-12% in occupancy by 2019”

Cyclone Varda in 2016 and the death of former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa. The hotel industry, as a whole, is slowly recovering now. In line with this, we have also


informed of our current developments. Also, we continue to stick to our traditional way of approaching corporates directly and maintaining a personal touch,” adds Krishnan.



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# Tales of networking

At the dinner and cultural programme hosted by the Ministry of Tourism, all the hosted buyers, exhibitors and special invitees engaged themselves with healthy conversations and networking.



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