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From the Editor's Desk



Dear friends,

Maybe it's the changing season, or the festivities that have just concluded or simply the expectations for the World Travel Mart (WTM) this year, who knows, but whatever it is, it has surely inspired the industry (including ourselves) to put its best foot forward and make the most of the upcoming peak season. Yes it's time for inbound tourism to grow, and TTJ wishes all its domestic tour and inbound tour operators a wonderful revenue generating time ahead!

Talking about inbound, our inbound special issue focuses on the various facets of Incredible India and we have tried our best to bring to you a plethora of products from its vibrant basket. TTJ appreciates the incredible step taken by the Ministry of Tourism in order to preserve the heritage monuments for the future by launching their 'Adopt a Heritage' project. TTJ looks forward to it and believes that this will give a boost to inbound tourism.

Come and enlighten yourself with some tourism knowledge as we at TTJ bring to you a plethora of first hand tourism news. Happy Reading!

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma
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ABOUT TRAVEL BUSINESS MART

With a variety of tourism products to offer, India is certainly one of the rapidly growing tourism markets across the globe. Attracting travellers across segments like business, leisure, MICE etc, India has marked its footprints in the global travel market. For instance, it is predicted that the total addressable travel market in India will be US\$ 40 billion by 2020.

India is gradually becoming a preferred destination for various tourism products.

Thus, understanding the potential of Eastern India, TBM will be conducting its first ever business travel mart in the business hub of East India 'Kolkata'.

Different from other traditional marts in the country, TBM will have pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings under the seller's sole discretion. The mart can accommodate approximately 25-30 meetings a day per seller. TBM is a catalyst that will enhance the buyer seller relationship providing world-class networking and business opportunities.

The buyers category will be an amalgamation of Corporates, Travel Companies, Professional Conference Organisers, Travel Management Companies, Event Planners, Wedding Planners, and Film Companies.

TBM will provide destination sellers and travel service providers, a crucial business platform to meet hundreds of buyers along with many qualified hosted buyers from other major Indian cities.

WHY TBM

TBM is a trade show with a difference, and the difference is the commitment of 100 per cent quality business meetings. The Business Travel industry in India is growing and is gradually seen as a specially dedicated market with a demand of different niche products, specific needs, in keeping with global trends. The tourism segments such as MICE, Wedding, Travel Technology and Luxury on the other hand are rapidly increasing as it enters a new phase where noticeable utilisation by the well heeled Indian traveller is creating huge markets universally.

WHY ATTEND

- **Business Travel, MICE and Luxury Buyers:** Pre-scheduled meetings up to 25 one-on-one meetings every day with the highest quality buyers.
- **Networking:** Networking during lunch and evening events with more than 500 buyers.
- **Media:** Access editors and journalists exclusively from leading media platforms.
- **Advantage:** Excellent value and return on investment. The participation packages include quota for hosting buyers of your choice.

EXHIBITOR PROFILE

National Tourist Organizations and Convention and Visitors Bureau | State Government Tourism Departments and Convention and Visitors Bureau | Business/MICE/Luxury Tour Operators and Travel Agents | Hotel Chains, Hotels and Resorts and SPA | Destination Management Companies | Airlines | Car Rentals | Cruise Lines | Travel Technology | MICE Venues | Filming Locations.

VISITOR PROFILE

Corporate Travel Planners | PCOs | Travel Agents catering to Business, MICE and Luxury Segments | MICE Travel Managers and Buyers | Technology Buyers | MICE Organizers and Managers | Business Travel Managers and Buyers | Wedding Planners | Film Destination Buyers | Travel Associations/ Film Associations

WHY EXHIBIT

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CKGS expands its footprint as it opens up new Thai Visa Application Centres across India

Having successfully managed the Thai Visa Application Centres in Western India, Cox & Kings Global Services (CKGS), has now been empanelled by the Royal Thai Embassy in Delhi and the consulates in Chennai and Kolkata to expand its services across the country. The new centres located in New Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata are now operational. In the next phase of operations, offices will be open in tier II and III cities that have huge traffic from India to Thailand.

All those intending to avail of a Thai tourist, transit or non-immigrant visa can walk into any of the centres. The service is open to customers and travel agents/tour operators as well. CKGS values its customers and travel agents who avail services from their respective offices.

Emirates and flydubai partnership announces first codeshare routes

Following the commencement of their partnership, Emirates and flydubai announced that Emirates will expand its network to 29 flydubai destinations across three continents. The new partner network, through its codeshare, will offer greater frequency and easier access to more global destinations with the advantage of connecting baggage to the final destination. Passengers can book on Emirates.com, through the Emirates contact Centres or travel agents network for travel. Throughout the customer journey, Emirates and flydubai will deliver a product experience reflective of their unique brand characteristics. When booked together, Emirates passengers will receive complimentary meals and enjoy Emirates' checked baggage allowance on flights operated by flydubai in both Business Class and Economy Class.

Marriott International expands footprints in India with the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Indore

Marriott International, announced the opening of its brand new hotel in the city – Fairfield by Marriott, Indore. The hotel major currently has nine Fairfield by Marriott properties, joining a portfolio of 90 hotels across 15 brands in India. Fairfield by Marriott is fast gaining popularity in Asia and India since its launch in the region in 2013. The brand is an established leader in the moderate-tier segment catering to the needs of India's next generation traveller, who is looking to be productive on the road. It is known for its well-designed rooms, reliable service and offers customers exceptional value. Located in the business hub of Indore, The Fairfield by Marriott, Indore offers 106 guest rooms, banqueting and meeting room facilities with modern technology, a well-equipped business center and a state-of-the-art fitness center.

Lemon Tree Hotels expands presence in Patna and Alwar

Lemon Tree Hotels, India's largest hotel chain in the mid-priced hotel sector as of June 30, 2017 (according to Horwath HTL India), recently announced the formal opening of its two refreshing hotels, Lemon Tree Premier, Patna and Lemon Tree Hotel, Alwar, marking their entry into these historic cities. Lemon Tree Hotels (LTH) is India's third largest hotel chain overall, in terms of controlling interest in owned and leased rooms, as on June 30, 2017, according to Horwath HTL India. Lemon Tree Premier, Patna boasts of plush and stylish interiors and charms its visitors with large glass doors and a beautiful fountain in the driveway, a contemporary lobby accentuated by a serene Buddha sculpture and remarkable modern art.

Pride Group of Hotels launches its new Resort in Puri

Pride Group of Hotels, one of the most successful hotel chains in India has launched its latest resort at Puri, Odisha. The hotel is known as Pride Ananya Resort Puri. With this addition Pride Hotels has increased its presence in Eastern part of India. Pride Ananya Resort Puri offers resort-style accommodation for all those looking for a revitalising escape from maddening city crowd and smog. It offers a mesmerising view of the city and the local attractions that surround this charming hotel in Puri, along with giving you a clear sense of business being one of the best business hotels in Puri. A beautiful oceanfront get away, makes Ananya resort a prettily serene hotel in Puri. Pride Ananya Resort dishes out modern luxury, grand architecture and excellent interior with 80 well-appointed rooms that will make your stay worth a memory.

Sarovar Hotels adds muscle in Bengaluru; takes over a new hotel

Expanding its strong portfolio Southern India, Sarovar Hotels announces the signing of its latest hotel in Bengaluru, La Marvella Sarovar Premiere. This development marks Sarovar's strengthening presence in the garden city of the country. La Marvella Sarovar Premiere, Bengaluru – Jayanagar, is Sarovar's fifth hotel in the city after Davanam Sarovar Portico Suites, RBD Sarovar Portico, Park Plaza and Radha Hometel. La Marvella Sarovar Premiere is promoted by SVG Exports offering all facilities and services of an upscale 5 star business hotel located in Jayanagar. With 102 rooms, a multi cuisine restaurant and a lounge bar, the hotel ensures guests a great stay. An Italian specialty restaurant will soon be introduced to bring a unique culinary experience to guests.

TripShelf partners with Abu Dhabi to promote tourism

TripShelf, India's first holidays market place that connects travel-seekers with tour operators from around the country, recently announced a strategic partnership with Abu Dhabi to encourage outbound tourism in the city. Abu Dhabi is the capital of United Arab Emirates and a popular travel destination in the middle-east region with over 4.5 Mn tourists visiting it in 2016. As a part of this partnership TripShelf will encourage online discovery of Abu Dhabi's exotic locations and provide the online traveller a variety of packages to choose from a large number of verified sellers. TripShelf is a tech-enabled online marketplace that empowers more than 350 tour operators through technology and helps them offer their budget and luxury services to travellers across India.

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Maharashtra is ready for more tourists from the globe

Tourism in Maharashtra has grown rapidly with an increase in arrival of visitors from across the globe that has shown interest in the rich culture and heritage of the state. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) is persistently adding value by launching various activities and initiatives in order to boost tourism in the state. TTI speaks to Shri Aashutosh Rathod, Joint MD, MTDC to know his view on Maharashtra's growing tourism initiatives.

Prashant Nayak



Shri Aashutosh Rathod

“

The Government of Maharashtra is planning to initiate a beach shack policy to encourage beach shacks along the coastal areas and coastline where basic facilities such as medical aids, toilets, furniture, fire cover will be offered by shack owners. I am certain these initiatives will increase the tourist footfalls in the State.

”

Q Do you believe Maharashtra Tourism is ready to receive more tourist footfalls from the globe?

A Yes, I believe Maharashtra Tourism is ready to receive more tourist influx from the world. It is important for MTDC to leverage new prospects in the tourism sector. The state has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with various private players such as Etihad Airways, Jet Airways, Ola cabs, Airbnb to name a few to set up a mutual system of cooperation based on the respective expertise, to create positive travel experiences for both domestic as well as international visitors in Maharashtra.

Till now, there has been no opportunity for Indians to board international luxury cruise liners. Flying to other countries to take international cruises was the only option. However, the scenario is changing with the shipping ministry, state government and Mumbai Port Trust launching several initiatives to make Mumbai the Gateway to International Cruise in India. Immigration and the docking process for cruise vessels will be made easier with the goal of making (Mumbai) Maharashtra as the hub. The Government has also initiated a year long carnival with other tourism sectors such as medical, adventure and cruise tourism.

Q Tell us about the measures MTDC is taking to promote heritage/wildlife/beach tourism, the main interest of the global audience when in India?

A Maharashtra is the only state to have five World Heritage sites, which are largely visited by tourists and are promoted by MTDC. The Tourism Department and MTDC will soon prepare a QR code for all heritage structures in South Mumbai that will deliver detailed information and images of the structure on their phone. The visitors will now get an opportunity to use their smartphone's camera to get appropriate information of the heritage building in town.

Maharashtra offers many lures for wildlife and nature tourism. This fast-growing sector also offers employment and income prospects to local communities. While encouraging nature and wildlife tourism, we must keep in mind the requirements of their sustainability. The state government is also taking steps to protect these national parks. MTDC with its stakeholders are offering amenities like stay, safaris, jeep rides for travellers to promote wildlife tourism.

The Government of Maharashtra is planning to initiate a beach shack policy to encourage beach shacks along the coastal areas and coastline where basic facilities such as medical aids, toilets, furniture, fire cover will

be offered by shack owners. I am certain these initiatives will increase the tourist footfalls in the State.

Q How are you planning to sustain the tourism interest in the state?

A We are initiating new avenues of tourism to retain the interest of tourist in the State. As our ongoing vision of sustainable tourism, it is our responsibility to respect our natural heritage and conserve and safeguard it. Eco-sensitive zones will be identified by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation in areas including the hill stations, coastlines and spiritual sites, where diesel and petrol vehicles will not be permitted and only battery-operated or e-vehicles will be allowed for zero pollution.

Q What are the tourism segments/new circuits that you will be promoting in your state?

A Maharashtra is the only state which offers experiential tourism to the travellers of all age groups. Experiential travel refers to tourism in which people emphasise on experiencing a destination by relating to its history, local and culture offerings. Maharashtra offers high-class lodging facilities, natural trails, adventurous activities, which suit the requirement of the travellers. We do understand the need of the modern travellers and offer a memorable travel experience to all. The concept of social tourism was re-introduced on Paryatan Parv. Social tourism is about visiting places where social welfare activities take place. Recently in the historic city of Aurangabad the second 'International Buddhist Festival for social and culture relationship' was organised to encourage and develop Buddhist Circuit in the State.

Q What are the plans for Maharashtra Tourism for 2018?

A The hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators and tourism professionals are identifying new prospects in the state, which aims to provide an inimitable experience to the travellers. We are ready to meet the growing demands and expectations of future tourist influx in the state in coming years. The Maharashtra Government has proposed to transform units of selected forts into heritage hotels. This proposal was part of the state government's consultation paper on Tourism Policy 2016, which plans to tap the tourism potential of over 350 forts. This strategy will assist to create one million employments and attract investments worth of ₹30,000 crore in five years.

H E Paul Kagame to be honoured with the World Tourism Award 2017 for visionary leadership at WTM

H E Paul Kagame, President, The United Republic of Rwanda, will be honoured with The World Tourism Award 2017 for Visionary Leadership on November 6, 2017, on the opening day of World Travel Market London, at the Excel Center. H E Kagame will be honoured at the annual World Tourism Awards Ceremony, celebrating its 20th Anniversary, co-sponsored by Corinthia Hotels, The New York Times, and Reed Travel Exhibitions. Peter Greenberg, CBS News Travel Editor and world-renowned travel expert, will host the award presentation.



H E Paul Kagame

this has encouraged even more foreign investment in the tourism sector.

The World Tourism Award for Visionary Leadership is being presented to H E President Paul Kagame in recognition of H E Paul Kagame's visionary leadership through a policy of reconciliation, sustainable tourism, wildlife conservation, and economic development attracting major hotel investment, resulting in the remarkable turnaround that has led to Rwanda's rise as one of the leading tourism destinations in Africa today.

Under the visionary leadership of H E President Paul Kagame, Rwanda has achieved remarkable tourism success and has been established on the global stage as a leading sustainable tourism destination in Africa today.

Tourism, Rwanda's number one foreign exchange earner, has played a crucial role in the country's development. Revenue from tourism has doubled from \$200 million USD in 2010 to \$404 million USD in 2016 indicating an annual average increase of 10 per cent, surpassing the National Export Strategy II target in 2016 by 13 per cent. Over 1.3 million tourists visited Rwanda in 2016. Visitor arrivals for the same period (2010-2016) have increased by 12 per cent annually against a backdrop of UNWTO arrivals in global emerging markets benchmarked at 3.3 per cent for the same period. The tourism sector in Rwanda is expected to grow at 15 per cent per annum.

As a preferred investment destination, Rwanda has instituted several initiatives to ensure a conducive environment for business. To date, Rwanda is considered as the second competitive destination for business in Africa according to the 2017 WEF Global Competitiveness Report, and

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Kerala is indeed a trendsetter in the Indian tourism industry

Kerala Tourism is committed to the concept of Responsible Tourism wherein the local community is benefitted by tourism with the sustained effort on environment conservation. Shri P Bala Kiran (IAS), Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala and Managing Director of Kannur International Airport shares the state's tourism plans for 2018.

Prashant Nayak



Shri P Bala Kiran

“

The tourism department has planned to develop adventure and water parks in order to attract adventure enthusiasts by offering action and water-based activities. The state government has planned to develop 10 eco-tourism circuits to connect various forests in order to promote green tourism.

”

Kerala Tourism has been witnessing perennial growth trajectory over the last five years. Kerala has hosted 10,38,419 foreign tourist arrivals during 2016, with an increase of 6.23 per cent. In 2016, the total number of tourist arrivals in Kerala stood at 1,42,10,954 with an increase of 5.8 per cent from the last year. The UK, the USA, Saudi Arabia, France and Germany were the top five International markets for foreign tourist arrivals in 2016.

The Tourism Department of Kerala aims to increase domestic tourists' arrival by over 8 per cent and international tourists' arrival by 13 per cent, every year. Furthermore, the sole objective is to double the foreign tourist arrivals and increase domestic tourist arrivals by 50 percent, by 2021.

Shri Bala Kiran says, “Kerala tourism has been mostly centred on leisure and ayurveda. Culture and ayurveda have been amongst the major tourism products that the state offers. Considering the fact that India is a young country with 65 per cent population under 35 years, we have started focusing on the activity and adventure front. By this way, we aim to position Kerala as a preferred family destination. Primarily, the tourism department of Kerala has been focused on promoting adventure tourism and responsible tourism. Kerala will be re-branded as ‘The Land of Adventure’ to woo the younger generation of tourists by offering them activity and water-based tourism. Moreover, the department has planned to develop water based activities such as kayaking, cruise tourism. With the prime focus on developing new possibilities to accelerate the growth of adventure tourism, Kerala tourism has been working with the Forest Department. The joint endeavour will result in the growth of adventure tourism without affecting the environment.”

Shri Bala Kiran also highlights the development of heritage projects, wherein Kerala tourism has given priority to three heritage projects, which includes Kodungallur Muziris project, Thalassery heritage project and Alappuzha heritage conservation project. Moreover, Kerala Tourism has launched first-of-its-kind initiative-‘PEPPER’ (People’s Participation for Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism) project across the state in order to promote unexplored destinations. Under Responsible Tourism Mission, PEPPER tourism project envisages people’s participation in the process of tourism planning. PEPPER project

will plan, evaluate, monitor and audit the new spots, their scope and maintenance. Under the project, unexplored and pristine spots will be identified and committees will decide about their maintenance without spoiling their tranquility. Furthermore, Kerala Tourism is implementing ‘Barrier Free Kerala Tourism’ this year, which shall result in creating accessible spaces to the differently abled and elderly tourists.

Kerala Tourism has been keen on promoting the Northern Kerala as a favourable tourist destination. To increase the geographical spread of tourist arrivals to the state, Kerala Tourism has planned to promote its Malabar region aggressively through a 325-crore project. This includes unexplored and pristine destinations such as Kozhikode, Wayanad, Vekkal, and Kannur. Kerala Tourism has planned to link up the circuit through an exciting river cruise project – called Malanadu cruise to link eight rivers and backwaters of Kannur and Kasargod districts. The nerve centre of the new Malabar circuit will be Kannur, where an international airport is coming up. With the aim to promote river-cruise tourism, the Government of Kerala has envisioned ₹300-crore project for nine rivers in Kannur and Kasargod.

“The tourism department has planned to develop adventure and water parks in order to attract adventure enthusiasts by offering action and water-based activities. Several adventure parks had been proposed in Upper Sanatorium in Ponmudi, Wayanad and Kottakal in Malappuram on the lines of the Jadayupara adventure park. Furthermore, the state government had allocated ₹45 crore for the Prasadam project, Central scheme, and ₹120 crore for the Green Carpet scheme with the aim of beautifying tourism destinations such as Alappuzha, Enranjil, Neyyar and Thenmala while improving basic amenities. Additionally, the state government has planned to develop 10 eco-tourism circuits to connect various forests in order to promote green tourism.” elaborates Shri Bala Kiran.

Kerala Tourism spends around 30 per cent of its budget on branding and marketing. The share of digital media has gone up in the state’s advertising and marketing budget. It accounts for 20 per cent of the total in its latest campaign. The state tourism also contemplated on the need of improving its social media presence as it becomes easier for the tourism board to create buzz for promoting new destinations.

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With global competition, the Indian inbound travel story still needs a monumental change

Tourism in India has a significant potential considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country. Though, inbound tourism in India is still at a nascent stage, it has shown great potential and is picking up well. TJJ speaks to varied people in the travel and hospitality industry for their insights and opinion on the growing inbound travel.

Prashant Nayak

The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the service sector in India. Tourism is also a potentially large employment generator besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the

on hotel rates which are high is not feasible. After all, India is competing as a destination against a lot of more nimble destinations nearby who have a lot to offer.

According to a report from Ministry of Tourism, India witnessed foreign tourists arrivals go up by

international airports and more developed highways. Infrastructures should be geared up. Good air-connectivity not only from major traffic generating markets but within the country to visit various tourist sites coupled with good fleets of surface transport services, trained manpower, evening entertainments, shopping malls would be needed to sustain the inbound growth."

Infrastructure development cannot be the responsibility of Government alone. This will need a liberal thinking in tourism development approach. A tourism approach supporting the private sector and foreign investments in infrastructure projects with tax incentives have to be adopted.

Sabina Chopra, Managing Director, RCI India says, "Indian tourism has gone through a complete evolution

Also, according to Sabina, technology has played an important role in boosting inbound tourism. Today, a potential tourist can process a visa by the click of a button. A dedicated Incredible India 2.0 app offers extensive information such as tourist zones, dedicated help lines, seamless interface, inclusion of various languages and more has been put in place to aid tourists find a simpler way of discovering the country.

"One of the challenges faced today is that a lot of unique and less explored destinations are overlooked by tourists owing to lack of awareness. India has so much to offer in terms of refreshing locales. There is huge potential which is untapped and with the right utilisation of promotions and marketing strategy can be made successful.



Prashant Narayan



Sabina Chopra

country.

Speaking to most of the people, it was found that cleanliness, safety, infrastructures and hygiene were the main topic of attention in inbound travel. However, it has to be understood that they are the basics of tourism and if these details are taken for granted and not delivered, the destination soon loses its charm.

Prashant Narayan, Country Head, FCM-Incoming, India, tells, "From the perspective of inbound tourism, India has just opened up to the world by granting ease of visa processes, getting the act of cleaning of the areas around the monuments, investing in the infrastructure, etc. However, we still have a long way to go. The perception is still of a long haul destination, unique experiences, but not an easy destination to travel. Also, the negative reports of incidents with travellers do not help."

Prashant also points out factors like better surface transport and more hotel rooms under various categories need immediate attention. Ease of time taken at immigrations, visas on arrival at more seaports, etc, will help further uplift inbound travel. Presently, getting our costs right, especially the GST

9.7 per cent with 8.80 million visitors in 2016. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, foreign tourist arrivals are expected to grow to up to 12 million by FY2019.

Shreedhar. V, Director of Sales & Marketing, Radison Blu Alibaug, states, "Online hotel bookings in India are expected to grow due to the increasing penetration of the internet and smart phones. The overall trends therefore, has been healthy with foreign tourist arrivals increasing year on year. However, the pie of inbound tourists needs to be evenly spread across all states in India."

Shreedhar feels India is enjoying a good visibility in the global markets thanks to the visits by our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. India is a relatively safe destination when compared to other destinations. We have a rich culture and heritage to garner interest to visit India. The Government has taken some steps in the right direction like visa on arrival for many countries which is certainly helping the flow of inbound tourism.

Further Shreedhar explains, "We need to provide more hotels, more airlines to service India, more



Om Prakash



Anish Kumar

in the past decade. The focus of the original campaign- Incredible India is now shifting completely under the new vision of Incredible India 2.0. The focus is to now drive tourism through cultural aspects such as natural heritage, spiritualism and promoting India's traditional roots. An initiative under the revolution that I would like to particularly call out is the 'Adopt a Heritage' campaign. This has understandably become an active inventiveness of the Indian government, encouraging students in maintaining world heritage sites. This is an innovative approach in making sure our monuments and natural heritage is preserved."

Another focus area is that of safety and security. While there have been stringent measures being taken, there is still a lot to be addressed. With the awareness of responsible tourism and active promotions such as 'Atithi Devo Bhava' there is a sense of inclusiveness towards foreign tourists," elaborates Sabina.

India being a land of ancient culture and history, it offers rich reserves to meet the expectations of all categories of inbound travellers. India can satisfy the expectations of multi-focussed inbound tourists ranging from history, culture, adventure, wildlife, education, medical, business tourism and

Contd. on page 14

Mahan Air introduces new flight between Tehran and New Delhi

In order to serve the growing traffic demand between India and Iran, Mahan Air announces the launch of new flight between Tehran and New Delhi from November 22, 2017. With this addition of frequency direct flights between New Delhi to Tehran will be operated as many as four times per week with wide-bodied Airbus aircraft based on following schedule .

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W5-070 DELIKA 03:00 – 05:15

WEDNESDAYS

W5 071 IKA DEL 20:00 – 03:30
W5-070 DEL IKA 04:30 – 06:45

The schedule meets the needs of passengers looking for shortest travel time to west from India enjoying the renowned Iranian

hospitality onboard and seamless transit at Tehran. The flight offers convenient connections to Mahan Air network across Europe and Middle East.


“The increase in frequency and

expansion is part of our strategy of exploiting the strategic location of Tehran and establish Mahan Air as prominent network carrier, which is one of the key elements of Mahan Air growth strategy for the India


market,” says Shallin Magoo, VP-Aviation, Mahan Air GSA-India. Flights are open for sale and are available via all distribution channels of Mahan Air, including www.travboon.com and leading OTA’s.








Meliá Hotels International announces two new hotels in Italy

Meliá Hotels International has announced the addition of a new five-star hotel in the city of Venice, a destination that has always been an aspiration for the company, according to its Executive Vice President and CEO Gabriel Escarrer. The hotel will open at the end of 2018 after a thorough refurbishment to bring it up the standards expected of a luxury hotel. It will feature 79 rooms, meeting rooms, a signature restaurant and an all-day-dining restaurant. Its patios and unique views of the Grand Canal and the city of Venice will complement the experience of the most discerning guests. The hotel also boasts a privileged location, just a few minutes from the magnificent Doge’s Palace, the monumental National Library of St Mark’s, the famous Bridge of Sighs and the inimitable St Mark’s Square, all major attractions in this beautiful world heritage city.



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meeting friends and relatives Om Prakash, Director InORBIT Tours speaks, "Inbound Tourism is spread in the length and breadth of our country, which compels the inbound travellers to allocate more number of days, when they think about their visit to India. This helps India to be a destination of more nights compared to many other countries, thereby India earns more foreign exchange. The variety of inbound tourism makes the tourists feel as if they are visiting multiple countries in one country. The regional contrasts offer varied sight-seeing, culture contrasts in costume and colours, diversified food and cuisine preparations provide a spice of variety."

Almost like everyone else Om Prakash feels India has to improve the all-round infrastructure and provide trouble free facilities and considerably improve hygiene at the tourist attractions.

Om Prakash, a veteran in the travel industry also says, "My experience of over 40 years in travel industry is available for the betterment of India's inbound tourism as I have travelled the whole world and I am equipped with practical experience. We need the support of Government to rationalise the taxation and to make India a competitive destination. Examples can be drawn from India's neighbouring



Mahendra Vakharia

countries namely Thailand and Dubai, which attracts over one million Indian tourists each. My recommendation to the Tourism Ministry of India is to constitute a permanent Joint Council of experts from travel tourism and the Government and not invite adhoc suggestions from time to time. If Indian Government and travel fraternity does not work as a joint council in a pro-active manner, I am afraid that India's growth will hamper and our neighbouring countries will be benefited."

For more footfalls, India also needs to go beyond culture and heritage to attract younger crowd and the millennials who are looking for adventure and fun.



Sandy and Vijay

Anish Kumar, CEO, The Travel Planners feels, "India is becoming the capital of global wellness destinations. Many travellers choose India for mental peace and physical wellness through yoga and ayurveda practices. This segment was never hit by economic slowdown and many travellers are choosing India for wellness and this will help India to produce more foreign arrivals. However, a combination of heritage, culture, nature, wildlife with relaxation on the beach is the ideal itinerary International tourists are looking and India is a perfect destination for this combination. Ministry of Tourism needs to promote a circuit with all the essence of an Indian feel to attract all those tourist segments to India .For e.g. Kerala gets nine lakhs foreign tourists a year but still none of the International airports in Kerala have a direct connectivity to Europe or Lakshwadeep is great for Island tourism but still no consideration has been given."

Anish also is of the opinion that none of the Indian websites are attracting traffic to get in to the list of first 10 popular websites of the world even though we have 40 crore internet users. www.incredibleindia.org has to be a popular website globally.

India is indeed a veritable treasure trove as far as tourism is concerned. It has a plethora of experiences to offer tourists that are pure indulgence for the senses. Given this, we should have tourists making a beeline to the country, however, the share of India in terms of international tourist arrivals stands at about 1.18 per cent which is quite low and does not do justice to the endless treasures that Incredible India has to offer. All stakeholders need to come together and evolve a long-term strategy to increase the market share in a time-bound and focused manner.

Bloggers, Sandy and Vijay from Voyager said, "The annual growth rate of foreign tourist arrivals in India is around 9.7 per cent currently and there is a positive uptrend. The

impact of social media, platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, as well as social media influencers are driving a silent revolution that should reap rewards for the inbound tourism industry in India. Secondly, the growth of the hospitality industry with new niches such as hostels and homestays is also a silent catalyst to the inbound tourism industry. We think that there is still scope for better marketing of India. The tourism boards need to become more proactive and customer-driven as well as think ahead. There is a lot of scope to harness the power of travel bloggers and social media by the tourism boards which will surely contribute towards increased tourist's inflow into the country."

Mahendra Vakharia, M D, Pathfinders Holiday has an interesting view which he feels attracts inbound tourists. He mentions, "It is also the prolific growth of outbound tourism from India, who act as the ambassadors of India while on a tour abroad and display Indianness with the culture, music, food, etc and remain the silent influencers. The increase in number of flights and airlines operating out of India due to the increase in outbound tourism is a direct result in increase of seat capacity to bring more number of tourists to India and giving easy access to them. Thus, the visa-on-arrival facility is a great initiative and step take by the Government of India, and needs to be effectively and vigorously capitalised upon."

Mahendra points out that more aggressive and strong efforts should be put in by the Ministry of Tourism in different countries of the world to promote and market India. Availability of hotels in the different categories and budget is also a big help for the tourists as every tourist is not willing to spend big bucks to stay in five star hotels. Trained and approved personnel including guides in the tourism industry is the biggest need of the hour and Government of India should take this very seriously and ensure that the stakeholders employ only trained and certified personnel.

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3 UNIQUE KANGAROO ISLAND

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4 FESTIVE ADELAIDE

South Australia was named Best Event State for the second year at the 2016 Australian Event Awards. In January, February & March, when nights are at their longest and balmiest, Adelaide enters party overdrive. In the space of a few months, Adelaide hosts the massive Adelaide Fringe Festival, Adelaide Festival of Arts, WOMAdelaide, Tour Down Under and Clipsal 500 Adelaide. It doesn't stop there. The Cabaret Festival and Guitar Festival warm up the very mild winter months, while OzAsia, the Adelaide Film Festival and Feast Festival kick-off in spring.



2 DELICIOUS LOCAL FOOD

Bite into a smorgasbord of fine food and wine. In South Australia, exceptional food and world-famous wine are a way of life. Adelaide is a culinary playground with a delicious mix of fine dining restaurants, award-winning cafes, bustling food markets and booming boutique bars. Indian, vegetarian and global cuisines are happily available everywhere you go.

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Day 03: Adelaide - Barossa - Adelaide: After breakfast, enjoy Grand Barossa with Hahndorf tour. Just over an hour's drive from Adelaide brings you to a choice of over 80 cellar doors in the Barossa. Enjoy a two course lunch at Barossa Chateau, followed by a tour of the Hermann Thumm Collection in the Chateau's private museum. Travel

through the Adelaide Hills dotted with quaint villages to Hahndorf, Australia's oldest German settlement. Return to Adelaide via the delightful village of Bridgewater. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 04: Adelaide - Murray River - Adelaide: After breakfast enjoy the River Murray Highlights tour. On your arrival, board the Proud Mary and relax as you cruise the historic river enjoying the wildlife and surrounding scenery with lunch on board. Upon disembarking, enjoy a tour along the river bank of the River Murray. Travel back to Adelaide via the delightful Adelaide Hills, stopping at Melba's Chocolate Factory and Woodside Cheese Wrights at Woodside. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 05: Adelaide - Kangaroo Island: After breakfast, depart Adelaide and enjoy a scenic trip through Fleurieu Peninsula to Cape Jervis where you will board the Sea link ferry for the 45 minute journey across Backstairs Passage to Kangaroo Island. On arrival in Penneshaw, join Scenic Kangaroo Island Trail tour including Remarkable Rocks, Seal Bay Conservation Park, Hanson Bay & Admiral Arch. Overnight stay at the hotel (B, L)

Day 06: Kangaroo Island - Adelaide: Breakfast at the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. You enjoy this unique island on your own till return journey to Adelaide. Overnight stay at the hotel (B)

Day 07: Adelaide: Breakfast at the hotel. Free time till transfer to airport for your flight to next destination (B)

*T&C apply.



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Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan

'Initiative' is synonymous to responsibilities which leads you to a newer tomorrow. India is not only a land of culture and traditions, but is also a land of political parties, several ideas, issues, campaigns and of course 'Initiatives'. Recently, the Ministry of Tourism launched an initiative, 'Adopt a Heritage'. Let's look at what the industry feels about it.

Sudipta Saha



Ravi Gosain



Jaspreet Singh Bhatia



Debjit Dutta

We have seen several initiatives being launched, few have been implemented, a few still pending. Travel and tourism is one such industry which is full of ideas and if executed in a proper direction, this industry will rapidly boom. Over the years, we have seen many initiatives but 'Adopt a Heritage' seems to be an interesting campaign launched by the Ministry of Tourism. There are many hurdles bringing a halt to inbound tourism, the reasons are known to us. This initiative is a step taken for the amelioration of the heritage which we feel proud of.

Speaking to Ravi Gosain, Managing Director, Erco Travels on his view on the same, he mentions, "Adopt a Heritage is a wonderful initiative by MoT, Govt of India because when private players will be involved in day to day maintenance then the monuments will appeal better in terms of facilities, cleanliness and safety. Sometimes it is impossible for a state to maintain all the monuments because of huge numbers but when the responsibility is given to an individual player, they will focus on the adopted monument and manage it efficiently."

With a very attractive tagline 'Preserving the Past for the Future', the project Adopt a Heritage plans to entrust heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites to private sector companies, public sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities. The private player or any company who adopts a heritage would become 'Monument Mitras' and adopt the sites.

Jaspreet Singh Bhatia, Director, IceCubes Holidays, opines that Adopt a Heritage is a great move by the ministry and it seems that the government is thinking for the sector. It will

Adopt a Heritage plans to entrust heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites to private sector companies, public sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities. The private player or any company who adopts a heritage would become 'Monument Mitras' and adopt the sites.

surely generate some interest and awareness about the significance of these monuments. He further feels, "Like any other government scheme in India, its implementation is the key. How do they exactly implement the scheme on the ground will determine how successful this initiative is. One needs to lay down the guidelines very clearly and more importantly, practically and then stick to its strict implementation. The flip side is that I can see the challenge of adoption of lesser known sites at locations beyond the usual tourist circuits. Probably the government will have to think of something more innovative to attract people to adopt such lesser known sites. For example, Sirpur which is 175 kms from Raipur, I don't think anybody has shown interest in adopting it.

Every project has its own pros and cons and this might have some. Sharing on the same line, Ravi Gosain comments, "The only concern to me is that MoT should be very careful for selecting

the companies who adopt these monuments. Companies have to be sound and should have a good standing in the market otherwise it could bring embarrassment to the Govt. I hope the Govt will have regular checks and keep vigilance on all the adopted monuments to make sure there shouldn't be any misuse of any of the monuments."

Whereas Debjit Dutta, Director, Impression Tourism Services feels, "This project actually is a very good opportunity for private players for their CSR. CSR in travel trade is not that popular, and thus this can be an ideal CSR activity for any tourism stakeholder by adopting a heritage. It can be a win-win for both the parties and it will be easy for the government to maintain heritage without any cost. This will not only contribute to the development of the respective destinations but can also be used as a part of promotional activity and will help in the marketing of the company who has adopted it."

TTJ FEELS

Initiatives are always good but how it is executed and how far it goes is the major concern. 'Adopt a Heritage' is an ideal project to conserve and preserve our monuments for the future but the question is how many of them are being offered for adoption and what about the lesser known sites and how are they going to secure their place in the heritage map of India. We have witnessed several campaigns being launched, and vanishing after sometime. But this project, if rightly executed will take India tourism to newer heights and achieve what we have been aiming for.



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NTO insights on Indian Inbound Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, through its 14 offices overseas endeavours to position India in the tourism generating markets as a preferred tourism destination, to promote various Indian tourism products. Similarly, in India we have many NTO (National Tourist Offices) or Representations of various International countries in India. Although, they basically focus on outbound tourism from India, TTJ attempts to know from a few, their understanding of inbound tourism in India

Prashant Nayak

The launch of Incredible India campaign in 2002 resulted in a visible spurt in the flow of foreign tourists into India and earnings there from which grew at double digit rates until the onset of the financial crisis in 2008. The growth trend resumed after a couple of years of slowdown after 2008 and is gradually growing and has great potential given the country's huge, barely tapped tourism potential.

Recently, a fresh Incredible India 2.0 campaign, backed by an interactive new website on India's tourism hotspots was launched in September 27 this year, on World Tourism Day. Incredible India 2.0 campaign focuses on specific promotional plans, with greater emphasise on social media, whereas, 'Adopt A Heritage' Project plans to entrust heritage sites to the public sector and private sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities.

The States are also active in tourism related activities and have made allocation of conveniently located lands in order to setup tourist facilities such as accommodation, convention centres, amusement parks, shopping malls, entertainment centres, travel shops, Human Resource Development Centres etc.

Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager India, South African Tourism speaks, "There are indeed huge strides in supportive government legislation but much more has to be done. It is also necessary to talk about the importance of tourism world-wide as a sector. Inbound tourism in India is now getting help due to the e-visa and the new aviation strategy and the support given to regional domestic connectivity which gives liberty to access remote destinations. It has to be understood the domestic tourism is the backbone



Hanneli Slabber

of the inbound sector and everything has to be in place. The challenges faced by the tourists are seamlessness. Once in the country, the tourist should not face awkward situations, interruptions, or connectivity problems. There is still low familiarity with India in certain countries and we need to make it easy to book, buy and visit India. Opening up of a more budget model hotels and accommodation i e other than five stars, to cater for the middle class traveller should encourage inbound tourism. Other than that India is still seen as an expensive destination."

Thus, improving infrastructure and information dissemination to make the country and its destinations attractive for foreigners will be most essential prior to doing aggressive promotions.

Ignacio Ducasse Gutierrez, Tourism Counsellor, Embassy of Spain in India and Director, Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai India says, "India is a fascinating country, it offers great cultural diversity, traditions and festivals. It has urban cities, great landscapes and heritage that entice every traveller. Being a developing yet a very emerging country in terms of tourism, it has a huge potential to grow. This is achievable when the tourist places become more tourist-friendly with better facilities,



Ignacio Ducasse Gutierrez

hygiene and security. Some areas still require advanced technology that should be implemented to cater to the needs of international tourists. India has to work a lot to fight against the most important obstacles for getting larger number of visitors. Some of the concerns that international tourists come across are security and hygiene issues which should be drastically improved. Then, people also have concerns regarding general health and sanitation conditions in India. Infrastructural facilities should be improved in India, especially in terms of train and road communication. India has rich heritage, however, its maintenance should be improved so that the beautiful heritage sites remain in good condition and become more accessible to the visitors."

Ignacio also points out that Indian heritage and culture are the main attractions for foreign travel in India. India has varied culture and festivals linked to the cultural aspects of the country which becomes a very unique selling point. India is blessed with some extraordinary heritage sites but they still need a lot of maintenance and upkeep with neighbouring countries which hasn't been the case so far which becomes one of the reasons that they don't get enough visitors. But, still places as magical as Hampi



Shelly Chandhok

have difficult access and do not get their share of visitors that they deserve.

The Indian tourism sector is slowly and gradually adapting to the needs of the international traveller by providing better infrastructural facilities and basic services. For example, in hotels they are trying to increase the level of cleanliness and hygiene. Security has been beefed up in important tourist areas and especially in five-star hotels to ensure the comfort and safety of guests.

Shelly Chandhok, Country Manager, VITO, Mumbai says, "The important aspect that is helping India's inbound tourism is the e visa strategy. Similarly, visa on arrival regulations for Indian travellers to Indonesia at no cost and with the deep cultural connect between India and Indonesia are mainly attracting Indian visitors to Indonesia. India continues to be the fifth top source market and growth wise second top market for inbound visitors into Indonesia. Indonesia offers a gamut of experiences which can be covered in a single trip. As rightly said that it's a destination where luxury is affordable. Likewise with air connectivity, the addition of flights by Garuda, AirAsia, Malindo and Batik Air will further help to increase inbound tourists from Indonesia to India and add Indian footfalls to Indonesia."

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The basic tenets of machine learning in the hotel revenue management discipline

One of the biggest buzzwords of the modern age is 'machine learning'. It certainly sounds cool and futuristic, but what is it, and how is it relevant to a hotelier's life?

Amit Bansal

LET US EXPLORE THAT IN THIS EDUCATIONAL BLOG.

Simply put, machine learning is the ability for a computer to examine giant swaths of data, examine it, and produce results that become more efficient or better over time. Machine Learning computers adapt and improve their algorithms without human interference, meaning they do not have to be explicitly programmed.

The ability to self-learn kick-started off a digital revolution in industries throughout the world such as self-driving cars, computers that respond to human speech (hello Siri!), and even your Netflix cue. The modern machine learning era started 20 years ago this month when in May 1997 the IBM Deep Blue computer beat a world chess champion (G Kasparov) in a six-game series. It was an achievement 50 years in the making, as computer

world is a much bigger place than previously realised.

It's a new world for hoteliers too. Machine learning uncovers opportunities in ways humans are not designed to do. Machine learning does the hard work for hoteliers, all at a speed the human brain could never achieve. What would literally take years for a person to understand, modern computers running the right software can figure out in moments. The machine sifts through the Big Data, automatically determining relevant and irrelevant data, weighs the importance of each piece of data in the pricing puzzle, and incorporates it all into a forecast revealing perfect pricing.

HOW MACHINE LEARNING CRUNCHES UNIMAGINABLE AMOUNTS OF DATA TO REVEAL WAYS TO GENERATE MORE HOTEL REVENUE

to make visible what was previously hidden. And it's doing this through machine learning techniques that crunch through the endless stream of data (what's commonly called Big Data) that's continuously generated to find those patterns.

Most raw data, especially Big Data, is not suitable for human consumption. There's too much of it, and our brains are not built to detect, much less analyse, the patterns that are waiting to be discovered within. Machine learning evaluates, weighs, and determines the validity and relevance of myriad data points, such as integrating up-to-date market data (including supply and demand), room pricing of direct (hotels) and indirect competition (including peer-to-peer lodging sites such as Airbnb, and other alternative accommodation options available within the destination),



AMIT BANSAL
VICE PRESIDENT
DPNY HOSPITALITY LLC; USA

Amit is an astute professional with over two decades of rich and diversified experience in various functions of Business Operations / Excellence with some of the leading global brands in hospitality industry, managed services and technology in Indian sub-Continent, APAC, EMEA and North America.

Amit is an 'IHG certified revenue management professional' having successfully completed certification to 'IHG Executive Revenue Academy'. He has deep hospitality domain knowledge coupled with expertise on SaaS products – price intelligence, brand intelligence, price optimisation, electronic distribution and revenue management. He has been working in a consultative sales role with top hotel brands, REITs and Hotel Management Cos in North America for the past 3.5 years.

His career graph has seen him steadily excel in various diversified assignments; with an amalgamation of sales, marketing, revenue management, global business development, pre-openings, operations, saas, training and development and mentoring skills; combined with deep industry understanding to solve business challenges from conceptualisation to implementation.



of researchers had gravitated toward this concept since the first computers debuted in the 1940s.

In the lodging business, machine learning is helping increase hotel profitability by creating modern revenue management trends by finding insights that generate more hotel revenue. It's essentially reinventing how hoteliers decide to price their rooms on any given night.

Rather than set prices for a room night based on traditional methods such as individual hotel historical data and seeing what competitors are charging, machine learning enables hoteliers, ways to generate more hotel revenue by better understanding true market demand, not perceived demand. It's as dramatic a shift like Europe discovering the 'New World'. Suddenly, Europeans were able to tap into new resources and opportunities afforded by the revelation that the

Patterns rule the world, but understanding them and using them to our advantage was previously complicated, if not outright impossible. But modern revenue management trends are proving all that is revealed in patterns, which is helping hoteliers find new ways to generate more hotel revenue.

At its core, patterns are universal, as odd as that may seem. Take the Fibonacci sequence, for example. It's a core equation revealing a similar pattern in hurricanes, the way plants grow, to the way people and animals reproduce in numbers, and much more. And if you look at the mathematical constant Pi, even its seemingly random string of endless numbers is chockablock full of patterns.

Essentially, patterns are everywhere, but many times hidden from observable life. Emerging revenue management trends seek

review scores on hotel review sites, among many other variables. Then it can all be put together in a format creating actionable insight by turning noise into knowledge.

For example, machine learning can determine there are 40 small events in a city on a specific day, something no revenue manager has time to uncover on his or her own. Individually, each event has no real effect on hotel demand. But, together, those events in aggregate move the demand needle. This is a strategic insight for revenue managers because it reveals all those people that are more likely to pay a higher price for a room because they must be in that city on those specific days.

So, when you think of strategies to improve hotel sales, consider those patterns and the influence they have over your pricing strategy. In today's market, overlooked data insights are

missed revenue opportunities.

MACHINE LEARNING PROVIDED ANALYTICS AND HOW TO LEVERAGE FOR YOUR HOTEL'S ADVANTAGE

Analytics are a valuable tool to finding new ways to generate more hotel revenue. But to fully impact hotel profit with technology, different types of analytics must be leveraged.

Not all analytics are created equal, especially when it comes to ways to generate more hotel revenue. Each type of analytics serves a different purpose, all offering different and more detailed ways to interpret data to achieve results. Some forms of analytics include descriptive, diagnostic, prescriptive and predictive; each telling us something different, each providing a different form of insight.

ANALYTICS, WHEN COMBINED WITH MACHINE LEARNING, ALLOWS HOTELIERS TO MAKE MORE ACCURATE HOTEL MARKET FORECASTS. BUT WE MUST USE THE RIGHT TYPE OF ANALYTICS FOR THE RIGHT END GOAL

Descriptive analytics, for example, doesn't require complicated algorithms, and is the most basic form. Most of us are very familiar with descriptive analytics because it bore the data mining trend. This

kind of analytic allows hoteliers to put customers into specific buckets based on simple past preferences. While revenue generating personnel can see that X people come from a certain region, or enjoy golf, for example, descriptive analytics is limiting because it offers no insights into future behaviors.

Diagnostic analytics reveal a bit more of the data, allowing hoteliers to understand why something happened. We see this expressed as 'likes' and 'follows' on social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram. And we can aggregate all the comments people make online to draw several conclusions. A couple of examples include a better understanding of what people thought about the hotel bed, or the breakfast buffet, among others. This type of analytics is limited because it doesn't help improve hotel sales without making proactive change. Information gleaned from descriptive analytics is limited because it doesn't provide strong enough insight to forecast future events. Just because a hotel has 100,000 'likes' on Facebook, doesn't specifically mean the hotel will see more future business than it has in the past.

Hoteliers running Excel spreadsheets have great historical information, for example, but the information fails to provide insight about what will happen

on a go-forward basis. For example, a hotelier can see that X number of customers like a specific activity, for example, therefore giving hoteliers a base of people to market specific activities. However, it cannot predict how people will react to that offer, or what price point is best for conversion, it simply reveals to us that people have a certain preference.

TO CAPITALISE ON REVENUE MANAGEMENT TRENDS, HOTELIERS MUST LEVERAGE PRESCRIPTIVE AND PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS

Finally, we are ready to talk about predictive and prescriptive analytics, two areas of focus in which modern revenue management trends are being redefined.

If you're looking for ways to generate more hotel revenue, predictive analytics are an extremely valuable tool. It's right there in the name: predictive. Cracking data this way helps hoteliers understand a likely future-facing scenario.

Essentially, if we can analyse the data to reveal a specific and dependable pattern of past behaviour, we can predict with a level of certainty, similar future behaviour. If we can understand, for example, that a hotel sold out on a weekend during a certain annual event for the past five years, we can predict it will sell out again this year. That knowledge tells us we could

probably charge more for the same hotel rooms simply because of built-in demand that has repeatedly created the sold-out scenario. If you plan to increase hotel profits with technology, prescriptive analytics is redefining revenue management trends because it accounts for market changes in real-time. Prescriptive analytics, when utilised in tandem with machine learning, integrate massive and diverse amounts of up-to-date market data (including supply and demand), room pricing of direct (hotels) and indirect competition (including peer to peer lodging sites such as Airbnb, and other alternative accommodation options available within the destination), review scores on hotel review sites, among many other variables, to arrive at actionable insights that impact your pricing potential. The machine learning system prescribes a solution on your very specific queries. In this case, the exact price customers are willing to pay for a hotel room on any given night. When it comes to hotel sales strategies that generate more revenue, this is the final frontier. Prescriptive analytics re-invents everything, including re-orienting the category of revenue management into what's now being called revenue optimisation. In tandem, prescriptive analytics and machine learning create perfect insight by explicitly telling a hotelier what the value of a room is to the consumer at any moment in time.

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IATO takes its first outbound convention to the ‘Wonder of Asia - Sri Lanka’

The first IATO Outbound Convention was organised in Sri Lanka from October 2-4, 2017 with a theme ‘Regional Tourism-Beyond Boundaries’. Here’s a glimpse of the convention which talked on various tourism prospects of Sri Lanka and how they can boost the tourism through this platform.

Ravi Sharma

Sri Lanka has fulfilled the rising aspirations of outbound market craving for Indians looking for experimental tours. As the world looks for new growth opportunities, this convention served, how Sri Lanka is designed to offer an unusual peep into the country’s unique culture, touristic heritage, cuisine, shopping and prosper from world’s largest consumer markets.

The Indian Association of Tour Operators recently organised their first outbound convention in Sri Lanka with a theme ‘Regional Tourism-Beyond Boundaries’. This was the third major convention hosted by Sri Lanka in less than a year. The convention was inaugurated by John Amaratunga, Minister of Tourism Development and

Corporation and Christian Religious Affairs and Sarath Amunugama, Minister of Special Assignments at the Taj Samudra Hotel in Colombo. The three day convention witnessed a participation of around 160 delegates representing India’s travel and tourism industry.

Minister Sarath Amunugama in his keynote address mentioned the strong and close relationship which the two countries (India and Sri Lanka) have been sharing over many centuries. He further mentioned, “Rekindled interest in the Ramayana Trail is a positive sign in attracting Indian tourists. With India’s outbound market growing at a pace only second to China, Sri Lanka is well placed to benefit from this boom. Sri Lanka is one of the safest destinations for tourists.”

Sri Lanka offers everything

which an Indian tourist is looking for or desires within a very short travel period. “Colombo will soon be an entertainment hub with all the top hotel brands coming in to the country. Be it gaming and entertainment, shopping, adventure, wellness, sports or cultural tourism Sri Lanka has it all,” said Minister Sarath Amunugama.

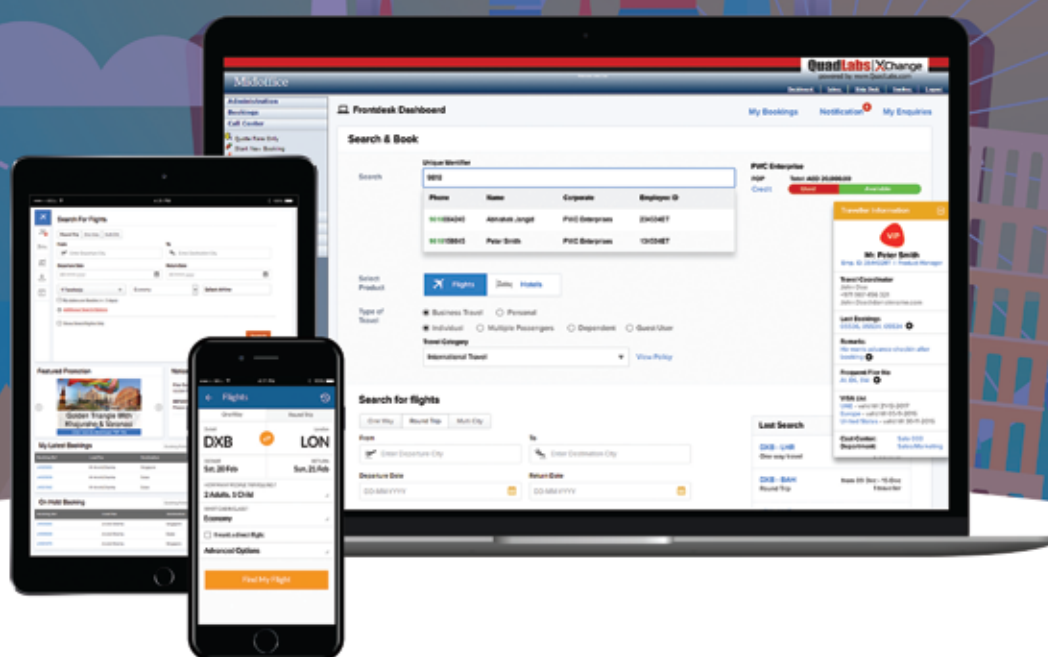
Leading travel and tourism industry personalities from India and Sri Lanka were part of the b2b sessions. Pranab Sarkar, IATO President expressed, “The cream of India’s travel trade is here in Colombo. Sri Lanka is now an exciting destination for the Indian travellers. Contrary to various perceptions, Indians are the biggest spenders on shopping in both Singapore and London. They are on the lookout for new destinations and considering the

excellent connectivity with over 150 flights a week and short distance. Sri Lanka is becoming the first choice.” He in his address also appreciated the lengths which the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau, the official host and the national carrier SriLankan Airlines had gone to in order to make the event a reality.

Further to it, Prema Cooray, Chairman, Sri Lanka Convention Bureau shared, “It was an honour for Sri Lanka to host the inaugural ceremony of IATO Outbound Convention. India’s outbound tourism sector is growing at a rapid 20 per cent and is expected to reach 50 million travellers by 2020. Sri Lanka will welcome 400,000 Indian tourists this year and our target is to aim for one million India tourists by 2020. The MICE sector will be very important in this regard.”



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The Residence Maldives: Gateway To Heaven

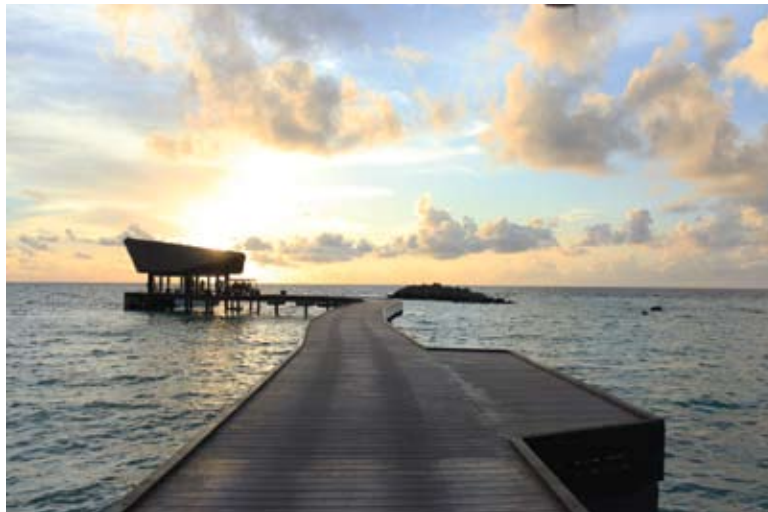
Designed in harmony with nature, The Residence Maldives is a world in itself where the unparalleled beauty creates a mesmerising backdrop and offers a space to rediscover the exact meaning of relaxation. Nestled on Falhumaafushi island, the resort is a blend of traditional Maldivian architecture with contemporary elegance and modern comforts offering guests an memorable stay.

Neha Sharma

‘Gateway to Heaven’ is simply perfect to sum up The Residence Maldives.

The world far away from reality and commotion where one can rediscover themselves. The resort is located in the middle of the sea almost 242 miles South of Male International Airport at Falhumaafushi. Another one hour flight from Male to Kooodoo followed by a short speed boat ride takes you to the world of paradise. What melted my heart at first was the warm welcome at the Residence which I felt throughout my stay. Even though we arrived at night the staff was there to welcome us with a smiling face which was contagious enough to relieve me of my stress all at once. You can feel the positivity the moment you step foot into the resort. People are what define a place and the staff at The Residence is true to that.

The Residence Maldives comprises huge water villas and beach villas. I got a chance to experience my stay at one of the Water villas, the moment I stepped into my Water villas all my tiredness faded away and I could feel a different energy in my body which made me excited and feel relaxed. The happiness you get is something to be experienced once in your time. The following night we had our dinner at ‘The Dining Room’ where we were served with Indian meal, far away from home but still close enough that’s what



I felt. The Dining Room has indoor as well as outdoor seating, we chose to have our dinner outside overlooking the Indian Ocean making us realise the beauty of the Ocean at night the sound of the soothing waves and air taking you to another world, that’s the beauty of The Residence Maldives, you will fall in love with the beauty of this resort on your first day itself para change. My next day started with a beautiful view of the ocean from my water villa, the way air plays with water is magical, you might get a chance to catch a glimpse of sea turtles, baby sharks or school of fish passing under your water villa. Isn’t it wonderful to come so close to nature and the way the air plays with your hair is marvelous. Each Villas gives their guests privacy of their own, perfect for honeymooners where they can fall in love over and over again. Each villas has a set of

comfortable bikes free of charge, buggy service is also available.

The Residence Maldives offers an unforgettable dining experience at their various restaurants but, Falhuma topped my list, surrounded by the soothing sounds of the lapping waves this restaurant gives you an experience beyond words, as they say food with good wine blanketed under infinite skies and fringed by the azure waters can take you to heaven itself and I won’t mind going to this heaven over and over again. All restaurants at The Residence welcome you with their selection of a la carte dishes, you can enjoy fresh fruit juice for your breakfast at The dining and their catch of the day is a must to try. Beach Bar welcomes you the world of utter water beauty where you can enjoy your drink while swimming or at the beach. The Residence has everything to offer

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- Espresso machine and tea making facility
- Air Conditioning
- Personal Safe
- Hairdryer
- Bathrobes and Slippers
- Butler Service available

to everyone, the staff is so warm, welcoming and greets your every request in a warm way, making you feel like a King or a Queen of the island and who doesn’t love to be one.

Time spent with nature heals your body, mind and spirit-The Spa by Clarins in The Residence is true to that. The first and only Spa by Clarins offers variety of massage and treatment options, your trip is incomplete without a spa slip out of your tired soul and get ready to relax your body, mind and spirit’. The staff is very professional and gentle; my experience at The Clarins was astonishing. The Resort offers a number of excursions such as Dolphin and Sunset Cruise and water activities like snorkeling, kayaking and diving perfect to discover the rich marine life and coral reefs.

The Residence Maldives is very pleasing on the eye and a perfect destination for people who want to rejuvenate and pamper themselves, leaving all the stress and the negativity behind. It leaves you with most astounding experience of your life which makes you want to come back again.

Thank You The Residence Maldives and SriLankan Airlines for organising this FAM trip and adorning me with the mesmerising memories.





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Della intends to carve a niche for itself

Started in 1991 Della has been operating at an award winning level for almost two decades. Jimmy Mistry, Chairman and MD, Della Group, is the driving force and inspiration behind the practice. To him it's all about providing unique designs that exceed the expectations of his customers at the same time keeping up with the international trends within all four business verticals. Read more to know their future and promotional plans.

Sudipta Saha

Q What is your growth plan for the year 2018?

A Della Adventure & Resorts currently has five business verticals with the sixth one launching in the coming year. So I would like to say we've got our plate pretty full for a while! DATA (Della Adventure Training Academy) being the latest addition has generated a great response especially to the idea of military style training with luxury amenities available for civilians. We will be looking at influx of international travellers that was never on the horizon for this unique concept. So with these variations in adventure and luxury tourism and constant innovation, Della intends to carve a niche for itself.

I believe there will be opportunities coming up very shortly to expand into other cities as well. Della stores will look at the launch of its flagship store in Lonavala along with the Online

store later in the coming New Year. We are also looking at expansion of resort rooms, once ready we're looking at 50 new high end resort rooms that are nearly at par in terms of design with the exclusive designer Della Suites!

Q What kind of travel trend evolution have you noticed over the years?

A Customers are always looking for more than just a stay; they are looking at an experience. This has led to see changes in the way travel, tourism and hospitality industry, the world over has been shaping up. There is a need to offer niche experiential travel but also any tourism destination should be able to cater to wider audiences as well as demographics. Over the years, the types of traveller has evolved including adventure seekers, travelling for wellness, super luxury and backpacker travellers,



Jimmy Mistry

music festival based trips, women solo and group travellers, food and local flavour based travel, road trips and much more. We ourselves have set the trends by introducing adventure and luxury together at Della Resorts and following it with the unique Glamping (Glamorous Camping) options. The Corporate

honchos who come here for official gatherings love the property and love to come back with their families.

Q What kind of promotional campaigns are you planning?

A We often introduce exciting offers during festive seasons for both the adventure park and the resort property. Recently for the festive season, we have provided interesting packages on room nights and also on adventure passes. Apart from the same, we have special tie-ups with our long standing corporate clients. We have recently hosted the first-of-its-kind Della Family Adventure Challenge where teams formed by family members competed against each other in various activities. It was a huge success and we look forward to replicating it soon with a unique spin to keep up the tempo.

The Leeu collection appoints 'Knack' Marketing as its representative in India

Set in and around picturesque Franschhoek in South Africa's Cape winelands and in the scenic Lake District in England, the Leeu Collection has appointed 'Knack' Marketing as its official representative in India. The appointment supports the Leeu Collection's strategy to develop the potential of the Indian outbound market.

Team TTJ

The Cape Winelands are considered one of the most precious jewels in the South African crown. An initiative has been taken to introduce this fabulous luxury portfolio of hotels to the India market. The Leeu Collection comprises three five-star properties in South Africa: Leeu Estates, a country house retreat and boutique winery in the Franschhoek valley; Leeu House, an equally exclusive boutique hotel in the heart of Franschhoek; and Le Quartier Français, a romantic boutique hotel and three-bedroom LQF Villa, also located in the village of Franschhoek.

Within the Leeu Collection portfolio is our Leeu Spa & Gym, a wellness sanctuary offering expert massages and holistic treatments; the award-winning Mullineux & Leeu Family Wines; Indaba – The Meeting Place, a well-appointed

event and meeting venue; Heritage Square, home to Marigold, an authentic Indian restaurant; Tuk Tuk Microbrewery, in collaboration with the Cape Brewing Company; and Everard Read Franschhoek, a contemporary art gallery with a unique sculpture herb and vegetable garden. The Franschhoek valley, with its Cape Dutch heritage and strong French influences, is renowned as one of the world's finest food and wine destinations.

The portfolio also comprises

luxury boutique hotel Linthwaite House, located in the heart of England's Lake District and set in established gardens and well-maintained private woodland grounds. Linthwaite House, which is on a hilltop overlooking Lake Windermere, is the perfect base from which to explore the scenic surroundings.

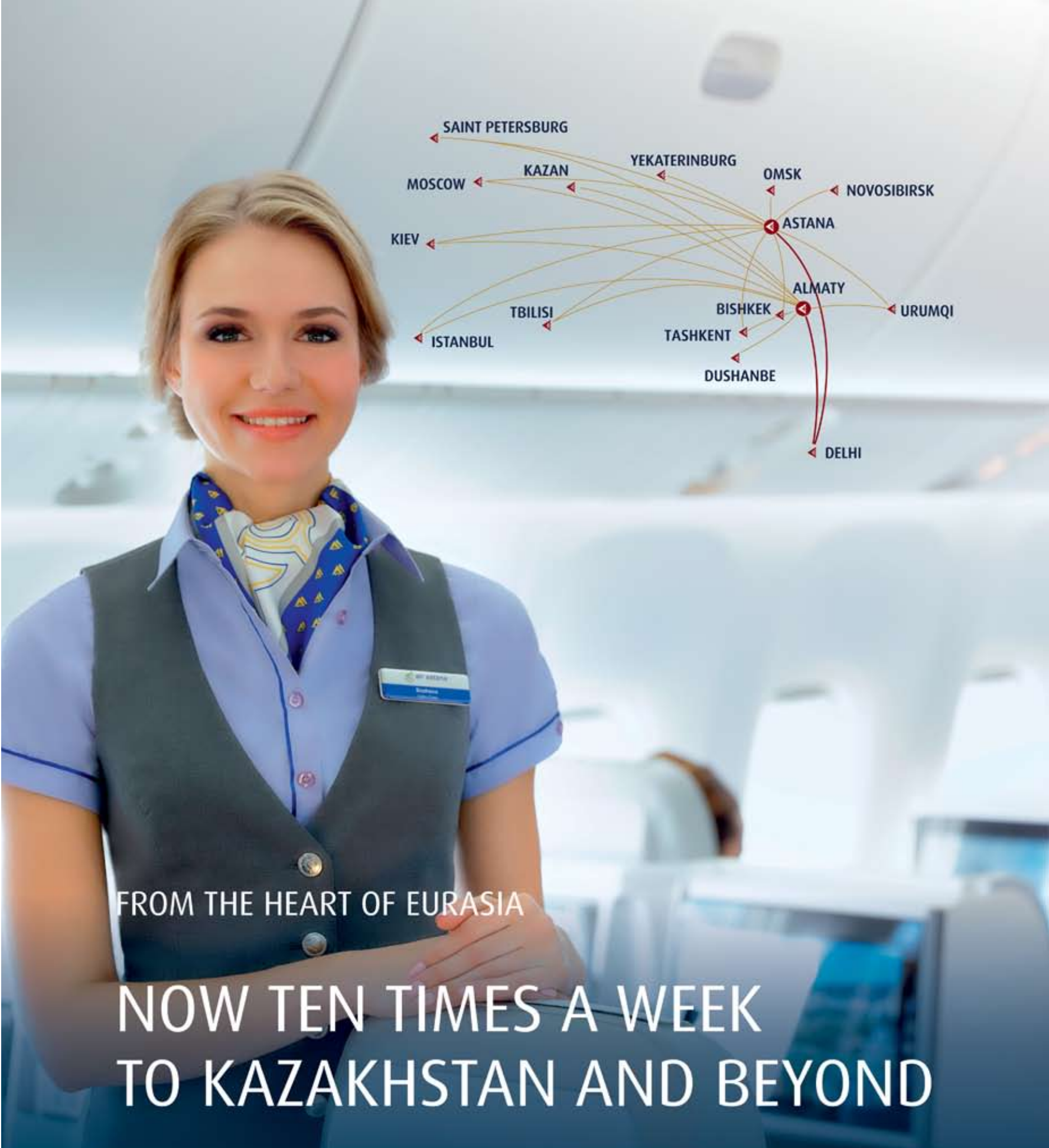
It all started as a personal journey for the Leeu Collection's founder Analjit Singh (aka BAS), an international investor of Indian

origin. He was first captivated by the Western Cape's exceptional beauty and vibrant energy during a trip to South Africa for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Soon afterwards, his company acquired Klein Dassenberg farm in the Franschhoek valley, which he originally intended to be a family home. But then, the seeds were planted to transform it into a world-class hospitality and winemaking destination.

"It is in my DNA to build, to create, to develop. The Leeu Collection is the manifestation of my vision for sophisticated escapes and unique guest experiences steeped in passion and pleasure," says BAS.

The Cape winelands is a beautiful area where travellers can enjoy the stunning landscapes, but when that is combined with top-notch hospitality it creates a whole new dimension to the itinerary.





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TTJ TRAVMART Ahmedabad: Exploring business opportunities

After the success of TRAVMART Raipur, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Indore, Jaipur, Pune, Guwahati and Bhubaneswar TTJ's ninth TRAVMART was organised in Ahmedabad at Novotel amidst the gathering of stalwarts of travel trade industry from Ahmedabad, Surat and Vadodra. The aim behind the

event was to reach out to the travel professionals in tier II and III cities and explore the potential of these cities.

Sellers such as Parfait Hospitality, TUI, Orange Tourism, DIMAZ, 24X7 rooms.com, Yorker Holidays, My Indian Holiday, Ezeego, Track Holidays, The leaf Holidays (STH), Holiday Carnival, Star DMC,

Holiday Bookers, Guiddoo World, Africa Incoming, Vacanza Global Tours, Central Asia Guided Tours and Andaman Experts were the prestigious partners. With the gathering of travel professionals from the city, the Office Bearers of travel trade associations were also present. The event was a huge success and with this TTJ added yet another

feather to its cap. Novotel being the host for event did extend their warm hospitality to the participants.

TTJ TRAVMART Ahmedabad was supported by various Travel Trade Associations like OTOAI, ADTOI, ETAA, TAFI, TAG and The Voice of Chandigarh Newspaper and Travel with Style as its supporting media partners.





Arsenal welcomes Cover-More as official travel insurance partner

Arsenal Football Club has announced Cover-More, one of India's leading travel insurance providers, as their Official Travel Insurance Partner. The partnership will run for three seasons.

Team TTJ

Cover-More Group, parent of TrawellTag Cover-More, is a global specialist and integrated travel insurance and medical assistance provider operating in 14 countries including India, New Zealand, UK, Australia, China and the USA, where the group owns Travelex Insurance Services. From December 2017, Cover-More will create Arsenal travel insurance, car-hire insurance and match ticket cancellation insurance solutions for fans attending and travelling to games throughout the season, as well as insurance packages that cover the club's pre-season tours.

Mike Emmett, Cover-More Chief Executive Officer said, "We aim to protect the individual Arsenal fan experience when they want to go to a game, whether they're travelling from Islington or India, Sydney or San Francisco."

He further mentioned, "We will employ technology to customise our proposition for each fan and use geo-location to offer them meaningful types of protection products. Examples are a ticket-protection



product that also rewards fans if the team wins on the field or switch-on-switch-off travel insurance products for diehard Gunners fans whether they live within or outside the UK."

Arsenal Football Club has thrived on a pioneering and innovative spirit throughout their 125 years in existence. They make their fans proud wherever they are in the world and it is that focus on innovation, the fan experience and their loyal worldwide following that makes this an exciting partnership for Cover-More.

Dev Karvat, CEO of TrawellTag Cover-More Group further said, "Arsenal was one of the world's

leading and most supported football clubs with millions of fans worldwide and in India. He said that Arsenal Mumbai Supporters' Club was the first Arsenal Supporters' Club in India to be officially recognised by Arsenal F.C. in 2008."

"This is an exciting partnership for TrawellTag Cover-More in India and globally, and we are thrilled to be associated such a historic and iconic brand like Arsenal," added Dev Karvat.

The partnership will help Cover-More, which is part of the Zurich Insurance Group, to build global brand awareness by promoting their services through the club's digital

platforms, on pitchside LED branding and post-match interview backdrops within Emirates Stadium. Cover-More will also become an official partner of the club's increasingly popular Emirates Stadium Tour experience, which currently welcomes 250,000 visitors per year.

Arsenal is one of the leading clubs in world football with a strong heritage of success, progressive thinking and financial stability. The club was founded in 1886 in Woolwich, south London, before moving to Highbury in north London in 1913. We moved to Emirates Stadium in 2006.

The Arsenal Foundation uses the power of football and the Arsenal name to inspire and support young people in north London and across the globe. The Arsenal Foundation raises funds each year and works with a number of key partners including Save The Children, Islington Giving, Willow and the Gunners' Fund. Locally, Arsenal in the Community has delivered programmes to drive positive social outcomes for more than 30 years.

8th ADTOI Annual Convention 2017 to be held in Visakhapatnam

ADTOI is organising its 8th ADTOI Annual Convention-cum-Exhibition 2017 with the theme- Domestic Tourism: 'Explore India-One Country, Many Worlds' with the support of Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority as State Partner on November 17-18, 2017 at Novotel, Varun Beach Vishakapatnam.

Team TTJ

Visakhapatnam, which is popularly referred to as Vizag, is named after God Vaishaka and is one of the most enchanting cities of Andhra Pradesh. Vizag is popularly referred to as the Goa of the East Coast and The city of destiny. As per the Swachhta Bharat rankings of 2017; it is the third cleanest city of India. It is a port city, located along the shores of Bay of Bengal. Vizag has a rich and vibrant culture and heritage. Today, Vizag embraces it's past and present seamlessly, making it an interesting and attractive city to spend holidays. Vizag is blessed with natural beauty, with hill ranges, pristine beaches along its coastline and lush, natural valleys. The city is surrounded by three hills, Sri Venkateswara Konda, Ross Hill and Dargah Konda. Each hill is home to a shrine, dedicated to three different religions. Vizag has

some very interesting destination of tourist interest such as Araku Valley, Borra Caves, Kailasagiri Hill, Rama Krishna Beach, Submarine Museum and Dolphin's Nose & the Port to name a few.

The convention is also supported by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, Gujarat Tourism and support is also expected from MP Tourism, Kerala Tourism, West Bengal Tourism, Odisha Tourism, J&K Tourism, Telangana Tourism and other Stake Holders of the Industry.

As per the tentative programme

the inaugural session of the convention will be held on November 17, 2017 evening. Trade exhibition will be inaugurated by the Chief Guest and other Govt. functionaries from the State are participating in the Convention, Day two will have three business sessions, State presentations, b2b meeting. Invitation has been extended to Shri K J Alphons, Hon'ble Minister of State for tourism, Smt Rashmi Verma, Secretary (Tourism) and Shri Suman Billa, Joint secretary, Govt. of India, for gracing the occasion

and awaiting their consent. The convention is expected to be attended by about 300 delegates comprising of Govt. dignitaries/ ADTOI members on PAN India basis/ Hoteliers/ Airlines/ PR and Media.

The response is encouraging, Pre Convention FAM tour to Sunray Resort Vizag on November 16, night and Post- Convention FAM tour to Araku Valley on November 19 has been arranged and most of the delegates who have already registered are availing the tour.





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Brouhaha Sanya!

It was a roller coaster ride of memories coupled with cluster of experiences at Sanya, a city on the Southern end of China's Hainan Island in the wake of the FAM Tour organised by China Southern Airlines and Sanya Tourism, in order to strengthen tourism ties between China and India. The Global Yoga Exchange seminar also served as an important base of this FAM tour.

Shivangi Gupta

We left India on the night of October 24, 2017 and reached Guangzhou the next morning after five hours of travel from China Southern Airlines. It was indeed the best travel experience; it is laudable for the reason of its speedy services, hygienic food, and serene ambience. Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong Province is the third largest city in China after Shanghai and Beijing. It is a city where one would easily find many Indian restaurants at reasonable prices which is a good news for the vegetarians. However, our itinerary allowed us to consider the city only as a waiting point from where we had to catch the domestic carrier of China Southern Airlines to depart for Sanya. It took us one hour and a saga of bonhomie to know our team mates and there we were at Sanya or 'Saaiyaan' as the natives pronounce it. We checked into the Cactus Resort at Sanya and headed for the breakfast comprising of popular Sanya cuisines such as Jiaji duck, Dongshan Lamb, luscious shrimps, fresh fish and the list is endless. Sanya's rich, appetising range of seafood like sea cucumbers and sea urchins give its credit to its location, the city is surrounded by the South sea keeping the city perennially pollution-free and airy all year long. Sanya is a perfect destination for fashion, leisure, weddings and exhibitions. The city also possesses beautiful wedding destinations as well readymade destinations for pre-wedding shoots where nearly 300,000 couples flock in to shoot photos, according to the Sanya Tourism Wedding Association figures of 2015.

At night, we attended the welcome dinner at the Marriott which was accompanied by myriad introduction speeches by renowned

Yoga Guru Bharat Bhushan who has received Padma Shri in the field of literature and education and Acharya Pratishta, an Indian classical dancer and an exponent of Yoga. The second day, October 26 marked the commencement of the first ever Global Yoga exchange conference at the Yalong Bay Convention Centre which included the orations by Bhushan and Pratishta on the importance of Yoga, their life experiences and the latest developments in Yoga discipline. The seminar was concluded by facilitating the students who have pursued Yoga in their lives. Next was the China-India tourism exchange conference which started off with a promotional

video of Sanya Travel followed by the speeches by representatives of Sanya Government, followed by yet another India travel promotional video. The last affair was interaction between the tour operators of China and India. It was quite an interactive session which will serve as a robust base for prospering relationship between India and China. We then got on to our bus and headed to hotel St Regis for lunch. Just when we were talking about how much we were missing the Indian 'chapati' and aloo matar ki sabzi', the scene at the buffet took us by surprise, served by chefs from Tamil Nadu, we had Indian cuisine for the lunch. Serendipity indeed!

Next day we headed to the Nanshan Temple or South mountain temple which is encircled under the Nanshan Temple Park. It is a Buddhist temple in Sanya and situated 40 kms from the City. Buddhism being one of the major religions in China, the Nanshan Temple is active all year long and serves as an attractive destination for thousands of tourists across the world. The temple is a major part of an area known as Nanshan Buddhism Cultural Zone. The key feature of this zone is the three sided bronze statue of Guan Yin Buddha which is 108 meters tall, overlooking the waters of South China sea. Under the tutelage of the Nanshan, the worshippers and also the Indian diaspora will not only experience the divine sense of Buddhism Culture, but will also find an escape to their conundrums and can gain freedom from all the fulminations of life. One can delve himself in the peaceful ambience of light sunshine, lush greenery, soothing background music and other beautiful architectural gems. The temple has many vegetarian restaurants nearby including many nutritious dishes like tofu, seasonal vegetables, konjak and bean products. The trip ended with some duty free shopping in the city. Sanya is an experience to remember.



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Zimbabwe geared up for India

Zimbabwe has begun to re-magnetize travellers with the promise of giving you a lifetime experience. Its teak forests, cypress-spattered hills, wealthy wildlife and adventure that will give you an adrenaline rush – certainly, it is one of the friendliest and most spectacular countries in Africa. Sanganaai World Tourism Expo presents the 'Zealous Zimbabwe' to the world and showed the huge tourism potential it possesses.

Bharti Sharma



Karikoga Kaseka

Sanganaai World Tourism Expo, an annual Tourism Trade Fair organised by the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority was hosted from September 27 to October 1 in Bulawayo. The event showcased the widest variety of Africa's best tourism

products and attracted international visitors and media from across the world.

The fair is the successor of Shanyai/Vakatshani, the Zimbabwe International Travel Expo (ZITE) that was held annually at the Harare

“ Tourism can do really well if we increase our efforts and strategic partnerships with India. We would like to do some roadshows and we also believe, the operators, media need to come and see the products available in Zimbabwe. As they are going to sell packages and promote our destination in India. We have adventure, wildlife, culture, eco-tourism and heritage; there are a lot of unique products. The percentage of Indian tourists is relatively small. Zimbabwe is a favourable destination for family, honeymooners and MICE; we have activities that can attract any traveller. India market is now coming up like anything and we want to know what really attracts them to Africa. So, a good awareness programme is needed for the operators and media to come and see Zimbabwe.

*Jeffreys Manjengwa,
Zimbabwe Tourism Authority*



“ Sanganaai is always a great show to have, specially in our part of the country. I prefer that we don't have it in the peak season so that we can host our buyers. We are meeting new people, making new relationships. The Indians are easy to work with. It's a sorted market and open to what we have to show them. I grew up with Indians and know how to praise Indians. Our camps offer Indian food options.

*Sharon Stead,
CEO, Amalinda Safari Collection*



International Conference Centre. ZITE started as a small expo in 1982 and grew over the years to become one of Africa's leading tourism showcases by 2007. The past eight editions of Sanganaai/Hlanganani were a resounding success and attracted the leading African destinations and major world tourism markets such as South Africa, Botswana, Malaysia, China, Zambia, Malawi, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Indonesia, India, Italy and many others.

The event witnessed 350 exhibitors compared to 236 who attended the 2016 edition which is a 48 per cent growth in exhibitor

numbers. With on record 224 international buyers and 24 international media exhibitors the event saw the speed dating sessions earmarked at enhancing interaction between international buyers and exhibitors.

The editions have seen the whole world converging in Zimbabwe in the form of high calibre international buyers as well as exhibitors. The fair targeted National Tourism Boards, Embassies, International Airlines, Tourism destinations, leading Tour Wholesalers, Tour Operators and Travel Agents, Accommodation Providers, Car Hire and Transport





India soon to enter the list of B Category visa

Operators, Suppliers of goods and services to the tourism industry, Investors, Government Ministries. Exhibitors derive value from structured, themed, and informative international tourism conferences and workshops. Also, the participants explored tourism investment opportunities in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe is on its way to boost the tourism like never before and thus ZTA is promoting itself in Asian countries and has started with India. Karikoga Kaseka, Chief Executive, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority feels, "India is a potential market for us. Earlier, the efforts we put in were not proportionate to the size of the market. We really need to place our efforts to tap this huge market as it's a significant

market for us."

Zimbabwe will be introducing few changes to the category of visa it offers to Indians. In order to increase the tourism numbers from India Zimbabwe is shifting India to Category B visa. Sharing on the same, he says, "We are pushing India to category B from C of visa. In Category B, nationals are required to apply for and obtain a Zimbabwe visa prior to travelling and can apply through a Zimbabwe High Commission in your home or neighbouring country. Whereas in Category C, nationals are granted a Zimbabwe visa at the port of entry on payment of requisite visa fees and are obtained on arrival at the Airport or border post."

Commenting on the promotional activities and marketing strategies, he shares, "We have not been actively promoting Zimbabwe in India but ZTA is going to come up with a marketing strategy for India. It will be ready by the end of this year and then further the implementation of marketing plans will take place."

Zimbabwe has numerous tourism products with an array of activities. He

“Sanganai will definitely help us to make more contacts and also, to showcase our products to the participants. From Asia, India is one of the prime markets and we look forward to it.”
*Tilahun Alemayehu,
 Traffic & Sales Manager
 Victoria Falls*”

further adds, "The products we have in Zimbabwe are suitable to Indians. Our major selling point is Victoria Falls. Zimbabwe has variety of tourism products. African culture is not very different from India; this can also be the selling point for us as it feels like home. We will be targeting MICE and leisure in India. Zimbabwe is now ready for India market. We didn't know the needs and wants of the Indian travellers, but now we are aware of their expectations. Indians will not be disappointed when they visit Zimbabwe."

Karikoga is optimistic that the Expo will steer and activate tourism Business, as tourism stakeholders from all over the world meet and network while showcasing the widest variety of Africa's best tourism products and attracting international visitors from across the world. He further shares, "We are hoping that the exhibitors get a good business from Sanganai and it will make Zimbabwe more visible globally and we expect more and more business after the expo."

“This expo has been very good and we have made very good contacts. Zambia Tourism hopes to grow in India market. Since 2015-16, we have been coming to India for our promotion and shows and targeted Mumbai and Delhi. India is a very big market and we are seeing numbers coming in from India. In 2016, Zambia got some tour operators from India and it resulted in some bookings. We will invest more in the market, I hope to make it our key market.”

*Stein Liyanda,
 Director Finance, Zambia Tourism Board*”



A paradise of comfort and convenience

Mercure Hotels, the gorgeous 4-star hotel made its debut in the Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat which is the ancient kingdom of Lord Krishna. The hotel promises to serve its customers everything from pin to plane. An architectural gem, Mercure is a blend of both contemporary and luxury interiors and yet is rooted to the local heritage of the city that the tourists seek. With a short drive from Dwarkadhish Temple, five minutes from the railway station, an hour's drive from Porbander Airport, and little more than two hours from Jamnagar Airport, Mercure swears to provide a mix of comfort and convenience.

Shivangi Gupta

An AccorHotels Brand, Mercure Hotel in Dwarka is equipped with all kinds of guests arrangements, with a total of 99 rooms distributed in five floors including one suite. At the lobby there is a restaurant named 'Makhan' which is well-suited for providing breakfast, lunch and dinner, systemised for both buffet and a la Carte arrangement depending on the guest preferences. The property owns one conference hall also called FMR i e Flexible Meeting Room; the room can be shaped into different layouts to organise different gatherings. For fitness freaks, the hotel has a well-designed gym with almost every possible fitness equipments present.

Arindam Mukherjee, Hotel Manager, Mercure Hotel, shares in-depth details of the new property, "Apart from the general hotel rooms, we also have one room for the disabled, we have one washroom suited for the convenience and comfort of the disabled. There is also a proper sitting arrangement for the disabled. We have 20 rooms which are inter-connected. They are for the joint families. We are also working on building the swimming pools, gardens, etc."

With relation to the customer mix, Arindam believes that Dwarka having the perennial identity of a religious city will always receive more families in large numbers. With its rich, beautiful and divine attractions of Nageshwar Temple, Gopi Talav Theertham, Rukmani Devi Temple, Bet Dwarka Temple, the city receives diverse tourists but majority are families both neutral and joint.

Arindam says, "Major focus is always to promote Dwarka city as a whole. We also aim to promote various unrevealed Dwarka destinations such as sunset point, light house, Shivrajpur beach, Maata beach, etc. Lot of people are



Arindam Mukherjee

not actually aware of the mesmerising beauty of Dwarka. Now with the robust media and stars like Amitabh Bachchan advertising the Gujarat state, Dwarka is coming into light. We expect guests to stay for longer periods, because visiting Dwarka is not a story of one-two days. The Accor brand is investing first time in Dwarka. We are very optimistic. We have very good queries. The people

are increasingly booking our hotels through online portals. It has been just one month since we have opened and we are getting good responses. It is only because of the hotel's location and such is the city Dwarka that you can't stay just for a day or two, it always has to be the whole package. Apart from promoting the hotel, the motive is also to educate and inform people about Dwarka."

"The only prevailing challenge is that currently tourists come here only to fulfill their spiritual purpose, but tourists want variety of experiences today and hence many more re-creational projects are coming up in the near future. I am confident that it will widen the confines of attractions of this Holy city, Arindam says.

"Post the GST implementation in the country, there has been a slump in the market, but money never becomes a barrier while planning religious trips, we

never see people saying 'NO' to religious spending. The price of flight bookings may go high, the train ticket prices may rise but people don't usually cancel religious trips, 99 per cent of our guests are tourists thus the hotel bookings usually don't come to a cease," says Arindam.

Dwarka serves as a perfect destination for variety of activities such as beach visiting, sight-seeing, marine life, pilgrimage, ferry rides etc. The adventure of scuba-diving which is soon to be introduced in the city will live up to the desires of every person visiting the paradise. Sudama Setu, a passing bridge over Gomti River, named after Lord Krishna's childhood friend 'Sudama' connecting Jagat Mandir and Panch Nad, constructed for the benefit of tourists as well, it also gives a jaw-dropping view of the Gomti River, the Jagat Mandir which in total gives a view of a calm, serene charismatic atmosphere from atop the bridge.



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The panoramic Garden Route of South Africa captivates the Indian Travel trade

A road trip along South Africa's Garden Route should definitely be on your client's list of travel adventures. Wonderful scenery, delicious food, good wine, super nice people and lots of adventures awaits them. As 'seeing is believing', TTJ shares impressions of some highly spellbounded audience in the travel trade from India who had recently been on the route, on a FAM hosted by the South African Tourism Board.

Prashant Nayak

The Garden Route sweeps eastwards along the coast of the Cape, running from Mossel Bay to Port Elizabeth. Here one can see pristine beaches along the rugged coastline flanked by dense forests, mountain ranges and wild flowers. One can find charming towns and villages and enjoy fantastic hospitality of the region. This journey has been inspiring travellers, artists and writers for generations and is certain to give you memories to last a lifetime. Again, the best part is that South Africa is not really expensive and you can spontaneously plan your route on site depending on what you want to experience the next day. This is pure freedom and adventure.



Pratik Shah

Pratik Shah, COO, Kulin Kumar Holidays has been on the route a few times but says he always comes

Pezula Resort & Spa in Knysna, which has a gorgeous golf course and spa offering luxury treatments. 34 Degree South located at the Knysna pier is one my favourite eating out which offers mixed cuisines like Asian, Italian, Mexican, American etc, complimenting the lagoon views."

Pratik also mentions, "Indians have showed a great response and feedback on this destination. Not only spends on accommodation and nights are increasing but also Indian clients have started spending on adventure this destination has to offer namely zip line, quad biking, bungee jump, sky dive, sand tobogganing and many more. Because of diversity in taste of food as with every Indian traveller, Garden Route has wide choices of eateries. Even for strict vegetarians, not only the choices in cuisines are in plenty but also the quality is also highly commendable."

According to Gayathri Murthy, DGM, Travel Tours that the route is an opportunity for adventure seeking travellers and also for people who are visiting South Africa for a second time and are looking beyond the usual places of interest that are generally showcased in a South African itinerary. The Indian traveller has time constraints and wants to cover as many places and activities in a short span of time. Garden Route thus, can cover a lot of action in shorter time spans within a smaller radius. Hence, the region can appeal to the Indian Traveller.



Gayathri Murthy

Gayathri further shares, "I did know of the Garden Route earlier and had suggested and have sold the same to a few of my clients. I had not visited South Africa before and this was my first visit. Towns like Plettenburg Bay on the Cape are amazing and so serene. The WOW factor is the amazing range of adventure activities that this region offers its visitors. Garden Route makes one young and agile with the adventure activities that it has to offer. Also, the safety measures adopted for all adventure activities are amazing and very comforting."



Rakhi Malkani

For Rakhi Malkani, Senior Manager, Customised Group Holidays, SOTC Travel Limited it was the first time on the route and she is definitely happy to have been there. Rakhi says, "The best way to explore Garden Route is self drive and it just doesn't feel like you are in a typical African country. The route is safe; less populated with amazing beaches, superb properties with sea views and also has lot of b&b options which gives a homely feeling. My WOW factors were the bungee jumping at the Bloukarns, the Segway tours, dinner at Knysna, the stay at The Views Resort at Wilderness and the boardwalk at Port Elizabeth. Overall, mine was a superb trip. The Garden Route should definitely be on the bucket list of everyone's travel plans while in South Africa."

back amazed by the destination and with its numerous offerings. The most thrilling and beautiful activity he experienced this time was the Tandem Paragliding. The flight gives spectacular aerial sights of towns of Wilderness and Knysna.

Pratik tells, "Garden route is one of the most spectacular regions for any traveller segment, be it honeymoon, family, adventure, food and winery or group travel. All the towns and cities in Garden Route namely Knysna, George, Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth are simply beautiful and splendid. Knysna is my personal favourite on the Garden Route because of its beautiful lagoon, waterfront shopping, local markets which are set on weekends and a variety of accommodations to choose from. My personal favourite is the Conrad



Also, for Jatin Shah of Comfort Voyages, this was not the first time on the route but the FAM itinerary

and the business networking sessions made the difference to know the kind of varied options available to the traveller.

Jatin says, "My perception of the Garden Route has definitely changed after this visit as I experienced diverse activities like the Red berry Farm, Giraffe feeding, and a lot of new adventure activities. In terms of my adventures, the WOW factor was the Tandem Paragliding which was something new, exciting and different. It was one activity which I haven't experienced before in my travel life. The Garden Route must appeal to the Indian traveller in every way possible, from wildlife to adventure to vivid sceneries; it is a complete package which one must experience on his/her visit to South Africa. The South Africa sojourn is incomplete without the Garden Route and it gives a complete and content feeling of great holidays in the wild."

As a destination there is a lot South Africa has to offer and most of the travel trade are just about touching the basics when it comes to what sells here in the India market. It has a lot more potential and trips like these will help them with the required exposure to build new itineraries and offer a different perspective of the country to travellers.

Priti Shah at SOTC mentions, "My understanding of the Garden Route was more like a scenic drive and staying for one or two nights max which I supposed was enough, but it has a lot more than just great views. There are so many activities and one can easily spend close to three- four nights on the Garden route. The Garden route has an array of activities on offer to people of all ages and interests. The experiences are also quite varied from relaxing quaint beach side towns to forest



Priti Shah

Priti further adds, "The WOW moment for me was clearly the Bungee jumping but every single activity that we did had its own fun element. Canoeing which seems fairly simple and relaxing activity is not as easy as it looked and it was super fun to manoeuvre and get the canoe to just stay in the right direction. Another highlight for me was the close encounter with the White Lions at the Inkwenkwezi reserve. Also, there is a wide variety of food even for vegetarians and I must admit the portion sizes are humongous. Most places on the Garden Route have adapted well to the Indian palate and even the local places could manage decent Indian food which is an important element for our market."



Tasneem Poonawala

Similarly, Tasneem Poonawala, Cox and Kings is of the opinion, "This was my first trip. It was far better than what I had perceived it to be. It is definitely undersold and understated. FITs, group, luxury and self drive can very well fit in beautifully. Besides, it has a lot of activities as well as different level of accommodation catering to a wide spectrum of travellers. It's a complete package with all the practical variations. Now, we have to drive home the point that, not only South Africa offers a range of adventure sports, but it is super-duper, safe, tried and tested."

For Tasneem, the stay at Views Boutique Hotel as well as Belvidere Hotel, were totally mesmerising and

the food at Surval Boutique Olive Estate was absolute chic and classy. Adventure wise, the Meerkat safari and at Inkwenkwezi (the place of the white lions), the experiences were something else.



Sakshi Kadam

Sakshi Kadam, Senior Manager – Products and Contracting, Thomas Cook is quite happy to tell that, "South Africa has been my dream destination. After selling this for the longest time, I wanted to travel to the country since long. After the visit, I have fallen in love with the country. It is exactly the same what I have read and heard it from others. Garden Route is an amazing region. The landscapes are beautiful with the mountains on one side and the ocean on the other. It's a treat to the eyes. The multitude of adventures and wildlife, the splendid hotel experiences and the food along with a great weather makes it a perfect destination for Indians."

Garden Route is perfect region for those who have less time but want to explore maximum. One can combine the experiences of best cuisine, wildlife, adventure, beaches and entertainment in one region. South Africa tour cannot be completed without visiting Garden Route. It has to be there for its rich nature and abundant adventure activities.



Swargita Joshi

Swargita Joshi, Assistant Manager Leisure, Mercury Travels Limited also shares, "In fact, Garden route is one of the regions which are there in all our itineraries. However, the itineraries are generally restricted to Knysna, Oudtshoorn. This particular tour helped me get the thorough, detailed knowledge about the region and realise that there are many other places such as Plettenberg Bay, Wilderness, Port Elizabeth which can be considered for stays especially in the peak season when Knysna, Oudtshoorn are overbooked."



Pushpa Khubchandani

Pushpa Khubchandani, Director, Uniglobe Pawansut Travel confides, "I knew about the Garden Route and had been to Knysna but not Wilderness, Plettenberg Bay and it was a superb experience. This was one trip, where every day was memorable and all experiences were enriching like the picnic lunch at Wilderness Park; my first Quad Bike and the Segway Rides, etc. One of the beautiful experiences of my trip was paragliding. It has been my dream to paraglide and this trip gave me an opportunity to turn it into reality. From my bungee jumping experience what I learnt was: Keep faith, live in the moment and face your fears. My first helicopter experience was also exhilarating. Among safaris, I had heard of so many safaris before; but the Meerkat Safari was the cutest and out of the world."



Jatin Shah

reserves full of adventure. It also is the perfect place for a Self-drive which is an added attraction."

Exciting times for TrawellTag Cover- More after acquisition by Zurich Insurance

In April 2017, Cover-More group was acquired by Zurich Insurance Group and together became one of world's leading global assistance and travel insurance providers. Dev Karvat, CEO of TrawellTag Cover-More is happy to speak of the acquisition, new developments and how travel insurance is growing at steady space but will speed up in a few years.



Dev Karvat

Prashant Nayak

Cover-More Group, now a part of Zurich Insurance Group and parent of TrawellTag Cover-More, is a global specialist and integrated travel insurance and medical assistance provider operating in 14 countries including India, New Zealand, the UK, Australia, China and the USA, where the group owns Travelex Insurance Services. With robust local experience and strong global expertise, they protect more than 3.8 million journeys every year as a group.

Today, the Indian leading global assistance and travel insurance providers, TrawellTag Cover-More, reported ongoing strong growth for their business six months after their acquisition by Zurich Insurance Group.

According to Dev Karvat, "The steady growth and success of TrawellTag Cover-More in India is attributable in part to the

ownership by Cover-More Group and the subsequent integration into Zurich's global travel insurance business. The Zurich brand is well-recognised and has an excellent reputation worldwide. We plan to further leverage the association with Zurich to drive more innovation into our business and achieve stronger growth in the travel insurance market in India."

Mike Emmett, Group CEO, Cover-More Group, said that Zurich and Cover-More together represent the third largest travel insurance provider in the world and that future growth will follow from the strength of customer value propositions and distribution partnerships.

"Our business in India is now multi-channel and very well positioned for the ongoing emergence of tech-savvy digital travellers," said Emmett.

According to leading market research Company, Finaccord, the

market for travel insurance policies in India is expected to reflect continued trip growth over the period up to 2019, and to grow at a faster rate than previously. Finaccord estimates a compound annual growth rate of 10.6 per cent in outbound trips with gross written premiums expected to grow to USD 235.0 million in 2019, equal to a compound annual growth rate of 20.8 per cent in nominal terms.

Dev feels the India market represented great opportunity for travel insurance providers prepared to focus on customer value and, increasingly, online innovation. The acquisition by Zurich gives their business the ability to pursue their growth ambitions with the strong backing of Zurich's brand. They expect the next six months to show the continuing evolution of their customer value propositions.

In newer developments, from December 2017, Cover-More will

create Arsenal travel insurance, car-hire insurance and match ticket cancellation insurance solutions for fans attending and travelling to games throughout the season, as well as insurance packages that cover the club's pre-season tours. The partnership will help Cover-More, which is part of the Zurich Insurance Group, to build global brand awareness by promoting their services through the club's digital platforms, on pitchside LED branding and post-match interview backdrops within Emirates Stadium. Cover-More will also become an official partner of the club's increasingly popular Emirates Stadium Tour experience, which currently welcomes 250,000 visitors per year. This is also an exciting partnership for TrawellTag Cover-More in India and Dev is thrilled to be associated with such a historic and iconic brand like Arsenal.

STAG makes learning an experience

'STAG Club-The Unstoppable' is an association of airlines executives, constituted in the year 2007. With a total membership of around 60 airline senior executives and they all congregate on the evening of last Friday of every month for cocktail and dinner. Here's a glimpse of one of their meetings which celebrated the spirit of being together and festivity.

Sudipta Saha

STAG Club has an interesting story to say, related to its formation. As it's an association of airlines executives, every member has its own fascinating story to share and cherish their journey in the sector. The association has made it a ritual to meet on the last Friday of every

month and discuss matters not only related to aviation industry but even the travel industry in a congenial atmosphere of which both are an integral part.

The Stag Bash for the month of October 2017 was held in the mid-month to commemorate the festivity season specially the festival

of lights, Diwali. The prime reason for the Bash is to get together the airline executives of both the yesteryears and the current generation to enable them to understand the working of both the eras which would eventually turn into a learning experience for both the youngsters and the seniors. Sometimes, guest

speakers or professionals are also invited from the industry to talk about current issues related to the industry. Disseminating useful information by the seniors sharing their knowledge and experience during the Bash is perhaps the most fundamental reason of these social get-togethers.



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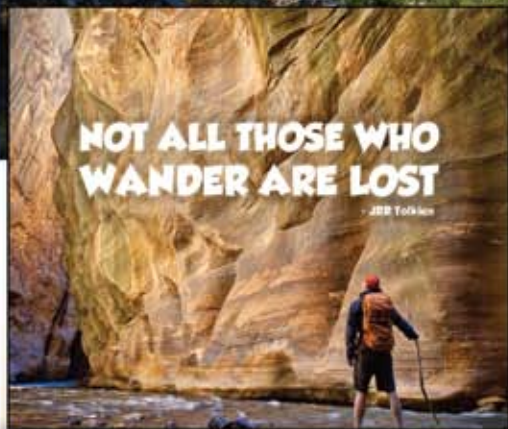
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TUTC's new property in Dudhwa welcomes guests to luxury lodge experience

The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC), having redefined the concept of glamping in the country is all set to extend its philosophy of luxury to lodges and palaces. The luxury camping company is expanding its footprint with the launch of a rebranded luxury lodge experience – Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa, nestled deep in the rainforests of the Terai, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Team TTJ

TUTC's Jaagir Lodge, Dudhwa invites guests to an enchanting jungle safari experience that emulates tranquility through the colonial luxury and contemporary comforts. Located in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas, the colonial structure built in the 1940's is a gateway to India's four distinct forests reserves - Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur and Pilibhit. Within close proximity of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, the lodge is a witness to the long-standing Bengal tiger conservation programme - 'Project Tiger' championed by well-known conservationist, Billy Arjan Singh.

Dudhwa is one of the most biodiverse regions and endangered ecosystems in India. One of the few protected areas in the country, the park is inhabited by 38 species of mammals, 90 species of fish, and some 500 species of birds. TUTC's Jaagir Lodge



not just promises guests a luxurious stay but also familiarises guests about the conservation initiatives in India's most diverse and productive Terai ecosystem. Accompanied by India's best-trained conservationist and naturalists, one can learn about the successful campaign of turning Dudhwa into a natural habitat for Indian one-horned rhinoceros.

Cycle around sugarcane farms to

explore the rich flora and fauna, ride elephants or take a boat ride to see the gharials hunting the shallows or marvel at the Indian crocodile. Hear stories of survival from the bold ethnic group of the Tharu tribe who happily co-exist with the wild and call themselves 'people of the forest', or simply listen to chirping birds as they sit cosily on their private veranda soaking in the mesmerizing scenes as the forest

changes colours. Celebrate authentic food with elaborate menus satiating different taste buds, curated by award-winning chefs that make way for an epicurean exploration.

Talking about the new addition, Rajnish Sabharwal, COO, TUTC said "We are very excited to unveil our new jungle lodge safari experience in Dudhwa. A beautiful colonial structure like Jaagir Lodge preserved deep in the forests of the Terai is a rare find and we thought it was a great opportunity to bring this hidden gem to the esteemed travelers seeking wildlife encounters in the comforts of luxury. With this, TUTC aims to enter the untapped luxury wilderness tourism space while we continue to acquaint travelers with new experiences and exceptional locations in India. TUTC's Jaagir Lodge Dudhwa is infused with the same warmth and exceptional services as our other luxury camping properties."

UP Travel Mart receives an overwhelming response

The Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP) had organised a full day Travel Mart as 'TTM 2017' on October 14, 2017 at Hyatt Residency. This was the first-ever mart organised first time in Lucknow for the Uttar Pradesh Travel Trade. Akquasun Group was the lead sponsor of the first ever travel event, TTM 2017.

Team TTJ

Around 230 travel trade professionals from across UP and 62 travel trade partners from metro cities and overseas; attended this one to one table top meeting event. TTAUP Office Bearers; Vivek Pandey, President; SMA Sheeraz, Vice President; Mohd Naeem Khan, Hon.

Secretary; Sandeep Srivastava, Jt. Secretary and Rajiv Arora, Treasurer along-with TTAUP Executive Committee; Mohd Azam, S Banerjee, Gayatri Khanna Pradeep Chaurasia, Ambuj Kishore & Avinash Giri; welcomed the distinguished guest & travel trade Partners.

The chief guest for the day

was Honourable Tourism Minister (Uttar Pradesh); Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi who in her address note elaborated the necessity of such travel trade oriented shows to be organised more frequently in near future for organised and overall growth of tourism sector in Uttar Pradesh.

The objective of Travel Trade

Association of UP (TTAUP) for hosting TTM 2017 in Lucknow was to enhance relationship of Uttar Pradesh travel fraternity with travel fraternity based in the metro and overseas; to understand travel business in more professional aspect and explore opportunities to develop and expand travel and tour business in Uttar Pradesh.



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India-a focus market for SriLankan Airlines

SriLankan Airlines brings smile, providing excellence and quality service with a good connection to partner countries. Chinthaka Weerasinghe, North India Region Manager states that India would be the focus for SriLankan Airlines.

Neha Sharma

SriLankan Airlines had joined One World Alliance in the early 2014, becoming a popular choice for traveller traveling to Maldives. Being a part of the One World Alliance gives opportunity to travellers to add every bonus program of every airline within the alliance. Chinthaka Weerasinghe further mentioned, “We are looking at consolidation in India with a large focus to get Indian tourists on our national airlines. Tourism has been a big attraction with a double digit growth along with leisure, wedding and MICE.

Preboarding the flight, I was excited to experience this beautiful aircraft and the moment I boarded I was impressed with the amiability of the staff who were greeting passengers with joined hands wearing a peacock-print, turquoise Kandyan sari.”

Boarding the airline’s business class, luxury awaits you and one can enjoy the comfortable seat-bed and get into the world of luxury where crew members take care of all your needs. When it comes to in-flight entertainment one



can make a choice from the variety of entertainment options available from music to movies. The food on-board was scrumptious with a variety of options to go for, I had a veg meal with a glass of wine and was really satisfied with it. The journey of almost four hours came to an end in the blink of an eye.

Serendip Lounge of SriLankan Airlines at Colombo Airport

a pleasant surprise with the buffet and a bar to foot massage and a separate rest room the lounge had everything for everyone. I decided to go for a foot massage first while enjoying a cup of coffee, passengers from all over the world were there, some were seen checking their business mails while enjoying a glass of wine while some were seen chatting with their friends or family. With a variety of food options,

I enjoyed my layover at the SriLankan-Serendip lounge.

Flying in SriLankan is incomplete without getting an experience in the economy cabin, especially when it’s comfortable with the perfect in-flight entertainment to pass your time, with spacious seats and a footrest which is hardly to find in an economy cabin, crew members who are always ready to take all your requests the journey was comfortable. “SriLankan Airlines is celebrating 25 years of operations from Delhi next year which speaks volume about their service and commitment to the India market. Currently operating 125 flights per week from India, Sri Lankan is planning to increase to 134 flights in the coming months,” said Chinthaka Weerasinghe.

They stand true to their tagline, ‘You’re our world’ which reflects in their services. An hour felt like a minute and a minute felt like a second this is the beauty of SriLankan Airlines which needs to be experienced once in your life.

On the track of achievement

In the last few years Australia has turned out to be one of the most attractive destinations for Indian tourists. With a catalysing rate of growth in the number of Indians visiting Australia year by year, the country has found a place in many Indians’ travel bucket list. Tourism Australia completes its 50 glorious years in India. Nishant Kashikar, Country Head India and Gulf, Tourism Australia elucidates about various strategies, and campaigns that became the base for such a success.

Shivangi Gupta

Tourism Australia is eyeing the Indian market with immense hope and anticipation as India with the rising number of middle-age people, currently near 300 million is likely to rise to 500 million by 2025, according to the McKinsey Reports. Factors like GST and rise in the number of business travellers has further opened windows of hope and uplifted tourism in Australia.

Nishant Kashikar, Country Head, Tourism Australia shares, “We are on a track to achieve fourth consecutive year of double-digit growth in numbers of arrivals and spending, and have nearly 2,83,000 tourists from India which is an increase of 16 per cent from last year. With relation to the marketing and promotional campaigns, our first focus is on ‘content’ we have worked with top



Nishant Kashikar

production houses such as Balaji Telefilms and regional channels such as Sun TV, Colors Kannada, Zee Marathi, and Living Foodz to create a lot of content which can create awareness and aspiration for Australia. The whole idea is to give a compelling reason to the

people to visit Australia, which happens once you showcase your destination through the eyes of the Indian travellers.”

‘Advocacy’ is the next focus, they have recently signed up with Parineeti Chopra to become the first woman ambassador in ‘Friends of Australia’ advocacy panel. She has an accumulative following of almost 30 million on Facebook, twitter and Instagram, she will encourage her fans to visit Australia. Third is ‘partnership’, we have joined hands with key distribution partners and airline partners and put our best foot forward in bringing collaborative and co-operative marketing campaigns.

With respect to the post GST scenario and its effect on travel industry, Nishant expounds, “We are quite resilient to these changes. When the country went

through the demonetization phase in November 16, we launched a campaign called the ‘Australia on Sale’ or the great Airline market place. In a span of three weeks we garnered around 10,200 bookings that were immediately after demonetisation. When GST came into effect we launched another campaign, the next version of the ‘Australia on Sale’ and in the span of three weeks we got over 18,100 bookings so we have coping mechanisms for every situation.”

The scope of business travellers into Australia has also taken a good shape, Nishant further, explains, “We have 1000+ members from Maruti Suzuki, Honda, Asian Paints and 300-400 groups of Havels, ICICI Prudential and various others small to king size companies that travel to Australia. Australia’s attractiveness has been on the rise. Let’s hope for the best.”



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Showcasing Hyderabad to the world through Skal Congress

2017 has been a year of achievements for Telangana, this youngest state is not only committed to developments and planning but is also moving ahead in terms of organising events of all scale. 'City of Nizams,' Hyderabad hosted the 78th Skal World Congress from October 5 to 8, 2017.

Sudipta Saha

Hyderabad welcomed all the delegates from all over the world with an open arm and huge tourism opportunity as it hosted the 78th Skal World Congress at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC). The four-day event was organised in partnership with Telangana Tourism Department and Union Ministry of Tourism. Skal Congress is considered to be an ideal platform to showcase Hyderabad and display its other important tourist sites.

Clubs in Sacramento and San Francisco. 2017 is the 'Indo-US Tourism Year'. A large contingent from USA participated in the Skal World Congress besides Australia, Mexico and many other countries. During the four days, Skal International Excellence Awards and Sustainable Tourism Awards were presented.

More than 600 delegates representing the tourism boards of 85 countries such as Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Belgium, Bermuda, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech



**VALMIKI HARI KISHAN
DIRECTOR - YOUNG SKAL
INTERNATIONAL HYDERABAD
& EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Skal International Hyderabad has been dreaming big to the most prestigious World Skal Congress for which there is a long process and bit of competition too. There were eight countries bidding for 78th Congress to be hosted in their countries, so we from India particularly from Hyderabad won the bidding with huge majority. Skal Hyderabad wanted to show the world the newly born state Telangana and its capital Hyderabad as many knew only the metro cities in India. Undoubtedly it will add more value to the city, state and even country that we gave a 'Wow' feeling to the guests with lots of satisfaction by using the entire infrastructure

available in Hyderabad which attracts major MICE events in India. Our state which is newly born need to be showcased to the world about its Nijami customs and traditions and its culture which is completely different from other Southern cities in India.

There were several areas focused during the Skal World congress majorly to improve its membership growth particularly with Young members worldwide. Another major focus was to strengthen the Young Skal members worldwide and to reach out to all the branches of travel and tourism in the World and be the biggest association in the world from the tourism industry and finally to motivate and encourage responsible tourism as well as sustainable practices in the Trade.

It's very important as it was in 2003 Skal World Congress for the first time came to India when Skal International Chennai won the bid. Now it's been almost 14 years and more over Indian Skal member's contribution is huge in number of clubs and members so it's high time that India must pitch once again. So it's us from Hyderabad who took the bold step and brought it under the dynamic leadership of our President SK Vijay Mohan Raj and also got the support of Skal International India - National Committee.



The proceedings of Skal World Congress started on October 5 with a welcome party. The Congress formally kicked off on October 6 with the state's Deputy Chief Minister Mohd. Mahmood Ali inaugurating the four-day event, in the presence of David Fischer, Skal International President; B Venkatesham, Secretary, Telangana Tourism; and Vijay Mohan Raj, President of Skal Hyderabad Chapter. The theme of the Congress was 'Together We Can'. The Opening Ceremony is known as the Flag Ceremony showcasing the flags of the delegates' country. On the third day of the event, important issues were discussed and new objectives were set.

Republic, Spain, Fiji, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA, Zimbabwe, Sweden, Norway, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Venezuela and many more participated in the event.

The Skal World Congress launched the Young Skal Hyderabad, the first such club in Telugu states. During the Congress, 12 Indian cities (Skal Chapters) twinned with 12 USA cities (Skal Chapters). It is the first time that any entire nation has fully twinned with another SKAL Nation. Skal Club Hyderabad twinned with Skal





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Experience Christmas at Corinthia Hotels

Corinthia Hotels offers the best of Christmas, when city squares are transformed into traditional winter wonderlands and packed with the sights, sounds and smells of the festive period. Traditional handicrafts, Christmas tree decorations, mulled wine, festive food specialities, outdoor ice skating rinks and an appearance by the big man himself, Santa Claus, create the true spirit of Christmas.

Corinthia Hotel, London



Celebrate the Festive Season in style this year at Corinthia Hotel London. As "A letter to Santa" unfolds elegantly throughout the hotel, Corinthia London has carefully crafted a selection of festivities that capture the magic and spectacle of the season. Throughout the month of December guests residing, reviving or dining in the hotel will be able to write and then post their very own "letter to Santa"... the best letter will win a daily prize. For those guests residing with us on Christmas Eve, the magic will really come alive as guests will write and post their very own letter to Santa and see what surprises await on Christmas Morning! With the warmest welcome, wonderful celebrations, lavish lunches, festive dinners, roaring fires, and decadent Day Spas, join us this Festive Season and let us craft and deliver the ultimate experience for you. On Christmas Day, as part of your experience, begin your day with a delicious English Breakfast in The Northall and then choose from a traditional Christmas Lunch in The Northall or a magnificent Italian Feast in Massimo Restaurant & Bar.

Corinthia Hotel, Prague



The five-star Corinthia Prague is a five-minute drive from the historical city centre where the main Christmas markets are held between December 2nd and January 6th. Find them at the Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square, five minutes from each other. A large brightly-lit Christmas tree dominates both spaces, surrounded by brightly-coloured wooden huts selling traditional handicrafts, glassware, jewellery, embroidered lace, wooden toys, metalware, ceramics, scented candles, Christmas tree ornaments, hats, gloves and scarves, puppets and dolls. Visitors can watch traditional foods being made and sample them too, such as ham, roasted on spits, barbecued sausages, cakes and pastries, plus locally-brewed Pilsner and Budvar Czech beer to wash it down with. The hotel offers a luxurious haven of relaxation in the shape of the Apollo Day Spa for when guests need to unwind from the bustle of the city.

Corinthia Hotel, Budapest



The five-star Corinthia Budapest is one of the city's impressive landmarks and is the perfect place to languish when returning from the busy Christmas market on Vorosmarty Square in the heart of the city. Running between November 10th – December 31st, the market boasts over 100 wooden stalls and two outdoor stages for live entertainment such as light and music shows. For a change of diet, the hotel offers everything from Far Eastern cuisine to Spanish tapas, as well as somewhere to relax, in the hotel's original 19th century Spa, magnificently restored and managed by ESPA. The hotel is offering an Enchanted Christmas package for stays between December 18th-30th 2017.





GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM



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ICPB organises its 30th AGM

The 30th Annual General Meeting of India Convention Promotion Bureau with elections to the Governing Board was held on Thursday, September 28, 2017 at The Ashok, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. At the AGM, the Annual Report of ICPB, Balance Sheet for the financial year 2016-17 also the budget for the financial year 2017-18 and 2018-19 was approved and adopted. The AGM was followed by the elections to the different positions on governing board of ICPB under the supervision of Mohamed Farouk, Assistant Director General (IC) as Returning Officer for the elections.



Sharjah Tourism Board conducts four-city road show

Sharjah Tourism Board has recently concluded tourism promotional road show for stakeholders and travel agents in Ahmedabad, Chennai, Hyderabad and Jaipur. The four-city road show was organised. With aim to increase visibility of the emirate of Sharjah as a cultural, business, leisure and educational destination amongst Indian travellers and to increase engagement with education boards, tourism sector, policy makers and business communities. H E Khalid Jasim Al Midfa Naiken, Chairman, Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority, Govt of Sharjah, "India is a very lucrative market and we are aware of the potential it holds in terms of inbound visitor traffic into Sharjah. We are happy to be tapping this important market through our four-city roadshow. We received an overwhelming response from travel agents and stakeholders and we look forward to doing more roadshows in the near future."



THAI Smile Airways wins Best Regional Airline in Asia Pacific from Globe Luxury and Premium Awards

THAI Smile Airways reaffirmed the success of its tapping into the India market by winning the Best Regional Airline in Asia Pacific Award from Globe Luxury and Premium Awards. The award was organised by Stimulus Research Services, one of the best-in-class business research services providers, to honor the best performance service businesses in India and the United Arab Emirates for the outstanding achievements that impress customers. Gaurav Bhatura, Country Head India of THAI Smile Airways recently received the Best Regional Airline in Asia Pacific award from HH Sheikh Tahnoon Bin Saeed Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan. The event took place at the Palazzo Versace at Dubai and was attended by 250 plus Heads and Aviators across the Asia Middle East region.



Akquasun Group hosted a FAM in order to introduce a brand new resort to Kandima Maldives from October 11-14, 2017 with travel support from SriLankan Airlines



Dubai Parks and Resorts conducts roadshows in Mumbai and New Delhi

The Nijhawan Group representing Dubai Parks and Resorts organised their multi-city roadshow and dinner in Mumbai on October 4, and New Delhi on October 5 showcasing the theme park. Ankush Nijhawan, MD, Nijhawan Group, welcomed the agents and Lisa Goswell, Director-International Market Development, Dubai Parks and Resorts gave a brief presentation. The event witnessed an attendance of over 80 travel and trade partners. India is one of the fastest growing travel markets in the world. Close proximity to Dubai puts India ahead of other source markets for Dubai Parks and Resorts. Indians are willing to explore the world for unique travel experiences. The roadshows focused on asserting Dubai Parks and Resorts' position in the Indian tourist market as the ultimate family entertainment destination.



Alitalia launches direct delhi-rome service

Alitalia is flying back to India after a nine-year absence with a new direct service between Delhi and Rome operated every day for the whole winter season until 24 March 2018. The first flight from Rome took off on October 29, 2017, while the inaugural flight from Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi took off on October 30, 2017. Passengers will feel they've already arrived in Italy upon boarding Alitalia's 250-seat Airbus A330 operating the flight, equipped with exclusive Made in Italy amenities and completely refurbished cabin interiors to reflect Italian elegance and style. 'Magnifica' business class guests can relax in luxurious Italian brand Poltrona Frau leather seats that fully recline to a comfortable flatbed position, and enjoy award-winning onboard dining featuring the best of Italian regional fine dining menu which has won the prestigious 'Best Airline Cuisine' award from the American magazine 'Global Traveler'. The onboard menu features the best of Italian regional food accompanied by wines from the country's best estates and the 'Ferrari Trento DOC' sparkling wines. Alitalia's new 'dine anytime' meal service allows customers to decide when they prefer to eat. After their meal, business class passengers will also have the chance to choose from a special coffee menu, offering three different blends of espresso selected for Alitalia by the famous Italian brand Lavazza. Furthermore, all classes feature onboard Wi-Fi connectivity for phone calls, Internet and e-mail.

Visa update



CHANGES IN VISA FEE NORMS FOR ETHIOPIA

The Embassy of The Republic of Ethiopia has discontinued the Demand Draft mode of

visa fee submission with effect from Oct 16, 2017. Henceforth, all visa and attestation fees have to be deposited in the bank account of the Embassy as under:

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New Delhi- 1100057
Account No : 409000418273
Title of Account :
EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA

IFSC CODE : RATN0000182

After depositing the payment, Bank Receipt has to be attached with the relevant application at the time of submission.

CHANGE IN SUBMISSION TIMINGS FOR THAILAND VISA

The Royal Thai Embassy (New Delhi) has revised its visa submission timings with immediate effect.

Please make a note of the timings given below:

- 08:00 hrs to 10:00 hrs (For Agent Submission)
- 08:00 hrs to 11:00 hrs (For Applicant Submission)

Submission is also extended in Evening from 14:00 hrs to 16:00 hrs, however all such applications shall take one additional day for processing.

Courtesy: JetSave

Air China



Xia Baohui

Xia Baohui has been appointed as General Manager Air China (Delhi Office). Baohui is a sales and growth hacking expert with experience of more than 18 years in aviation industry. He has headed the sales and growth initiative of Air China in different parts of world such as China, Bangkok, Bangalore, Taipei, Mumbai. His responsibility will include overseeing of all aspects of airline sales, ground handling, catering and commercial activities, marketing through GSA's.

Renaissance Lucknow Hotel



Pankaj Gupta

Pankaj Gupta is the General Manager at Renaissance Lucknow Hotel. Self motivated and a proven team player, he holds strong operational background in hospitality industry. Pankaj holds 17 years of experience in hospitality operations and has worked at hotels like Lemon Tree, Indore; Holiday Inn, Agra; Sarovar Hotel, Kolkata; Royal Orchid Hotels and Aloft Bengaluru Whitefield.

Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park



Amit Kumar

Aloft Bengaluru Cessna Business Park has announced the appointment of Amit Kumar as the Hotel Manager. Bringing more than 13+ years of experience on the table, he has proven to be a very essential and effective addition to the Marriott family. In his new role, he would head the overall hotel operations and create new business opportunities, develop talent, create business development plan and guidelines for maintaining market leadership. Amit has a proven track record of leading and executing business strategy.

Lords Hotels & Resorts



Manish Kumar

Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar – a Lords Hotels & Resorts hotel property has appointed Manish Kumar as its Operations Manager. Prior to joining Lords Hotels and Resorts, he served as the Director of Operations with Mohammad Omar Bin Haider Holding Group P.S.C. Group of Hotels. Mr Kumar has vast experience in Front Office management, General Operations and Revenue Management and will lend expertise in executing his role at Lords Eco Inn, Porbandar. The hotel property is located just a couple of minutes' walk from the beach and is a haven for tourists looking for a relaxed vacation.

OYO



Garima Nagpal

Garima Nagpal, a seasoned hospitality professional with over four decades of experience has joined OYO, India's largest hospitality company. In her new role as Head of Quality, Garima will be responsible for network-wide upgradation of OYO hotels to ensure highest levels of quality, including hygiene and ambience. The appointment is in line with OYO's commitment to solve supply-demand imbalance and offer beautiful and quality living spaces. Of her extensive hospitality career, Garima has spent nearly 30 years as the Head of Housekeeping across several hotel chains.

The Resort, Madh- Marve, Mumbai



Sanket Thakur

Sanket Thakur has recently joined The Resort, Madh- Marve, Mumbai as Asst. F&B Manager. At the Resort, Sanket will be responsible for carrying out various duties to ensure that customers receive excellent service. He will prepare management, variance, and financial reports on periodic basis. He will manage everyday operations, accounting and financial matters of F&B store. Also Identifying and rectifying operational, financial and employee issues will be part of his job responsibilities. With over seven years of experience in hospitality.

Hahn Air



Jörg Troester

Hahn Air's Head of Corporate Strategy, Industry and Government Affairs, Jörg Troester has been reappointed as board member of the European Regions Airline Association (ERA). The announcement was made at the Athenaeum InterContinental hotel in Athens, Greece, during the ERA General Assembly, which took place between the October 17 and 19. With over 20 years of experience in the aviation industry, Troester is an expert in the field of airline distribution and the author of various white papers which have significantly influenced industry-relevant legislation.

Clarks Inn Group of Hotels



Rupam Das

Rupam Das has been transferred and promoted as Regional Director – Operation & Business Development at Clarks Inn Group of Hotels. In the current profile Rupam will be responsible to bring in increased efficiency in hotel operations, enhanced brand visibility as well as oversee growth of the company's hotel portfolio through new acquisitions across its various brands. Additionally he is also heading Clarks Holidays, a vacation ownership offering by Clarks Inn that seeks to redefine leisure experiences of discerning holiday travellers, both in India and overseas.

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group



Christoph Mares

Christoph Mares has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer of Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, effective January 1, 2018 and will be responsible for global hotel operations as well as overseeing the operational functions of Food and Beverage, Rooms and Quality, as well as Spa and Wellness. Christoph will be based at the Group's Hong Kong corporate office, moving from his current position in London as Executive Vice President, Operations Director, Europe, Middle East, Africa and India (EMEAI). Christoph has over 25 years' experience in luxury hotel management around the world.

Holidays Carnival Europe

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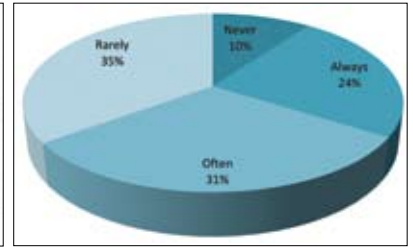
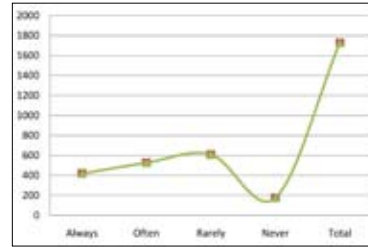
Travel aspirations and technology adoption turn Indians into impulsive pilgrims: OYO survey

- 65 per cent respondents visit a site of pilgrimage for reasons other than religion or spirituality
- 55 per cent respondents undertook travel to a pilgrimage destination impulsively
- Wi-Fi connectivity at accommodation, even at a

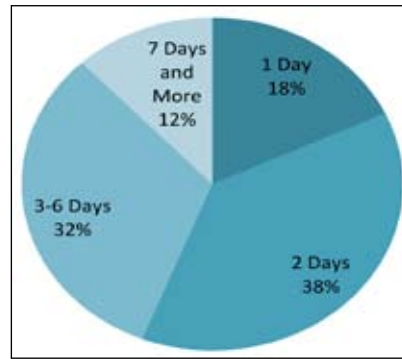
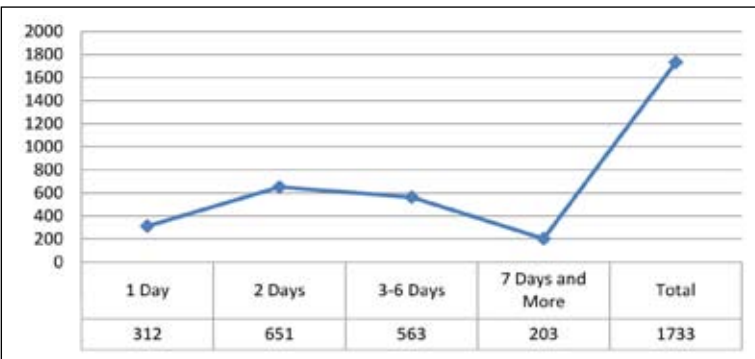
Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Kolkata) through detailed in-person interactions with 1700 respondents.

Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & CEO, OYO, says, "Travel to religious destinations is among the largest segment of domestic travel business. In the last few years, these destinations have

LAST YEAR HOW OFTEN DID YOU PLAN PILGRIMAGE



WHAT WOULD BE THE AVERAGE DURATION OF YOUR PILGRIMAGE



destinations. These 'pragmatic pilgrims', often travel as family-group spanning different age-groups, and therefore, look for a variety of experiences. Those travelling with friends of the same age-group also often look for interest-based activities to make the holiday memorable."

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY:

- Impulse travel to pilgrimage destinations is becoming popular in India
- 45 per cent of travellers admitted that they are likely to plan spontaneous trips to pilgrimage spots in 2018
- Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity is an important factor to determine choice of accommodation
- While booking a hotel, cleanliness and comfort topped the consideration set

religious destination, rated as very important by 35 per cent respondents—nearly 60 per cent update their social media profiles at least once a day

- 25 per cent pilgrims look forward to—shopping and an equal number seek club leisure activities with their trips

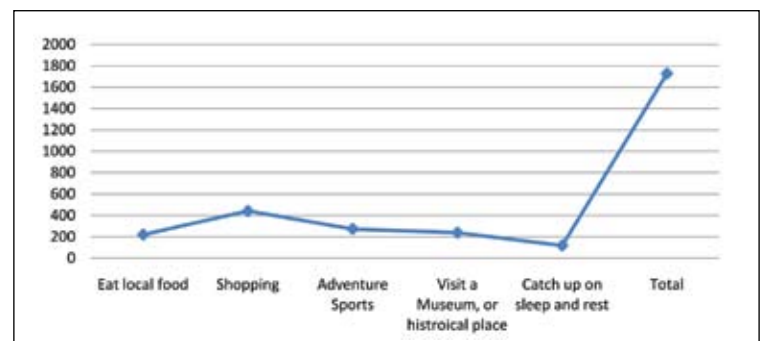
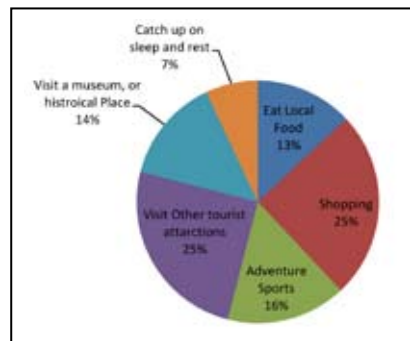
A growing number of Indian travellers are seeking a holistic experience when they travel to destinations traditionally known for their religious symbolism. They now look for more experiences to club with their pilgrimage to optimise their travel. These insights have been revealed in the 'Connected Pilgrims Survey' conducted by OYO, India's largest hospitality company. The survey was conducted across 11 cities (Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Patna, Bengaluru, Chennai, Lucknow,

seen a resurgence, particularly as young people visit them for the range of experiences they offer—such as, arts and craft in Pushkar, rafting adventures in Rishikesh, culinary delights of Amritsar. The opportunities at these destinations, both for travellers and service providers are fragmented, primarily due to infrastructure issues and lack of standardised option. Today, lakhs of travellers heading to diverse pilgrimage

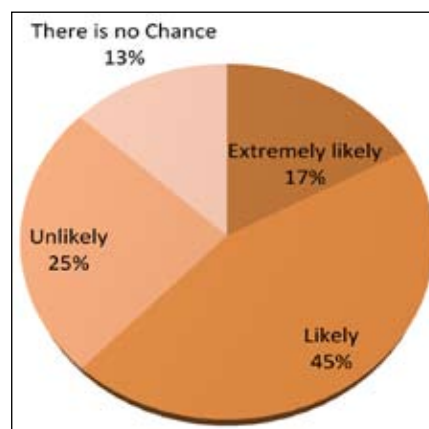
destinations such as Shirdi, Thirupathi, Ujjain and Puri have an assured accommodation option through OYO. We conducted this survey so that travel service providers like us could better understand the expectations of these guests and how to serve them."

Ritesh further added, "We have found that Indian travellers are looking for a holistic experience when they travel, even to religious

WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO DO?



OVER THE NEXT ONE YEAR, HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO PLAN A PILGRIMAGE SPONTANEOUSLY?

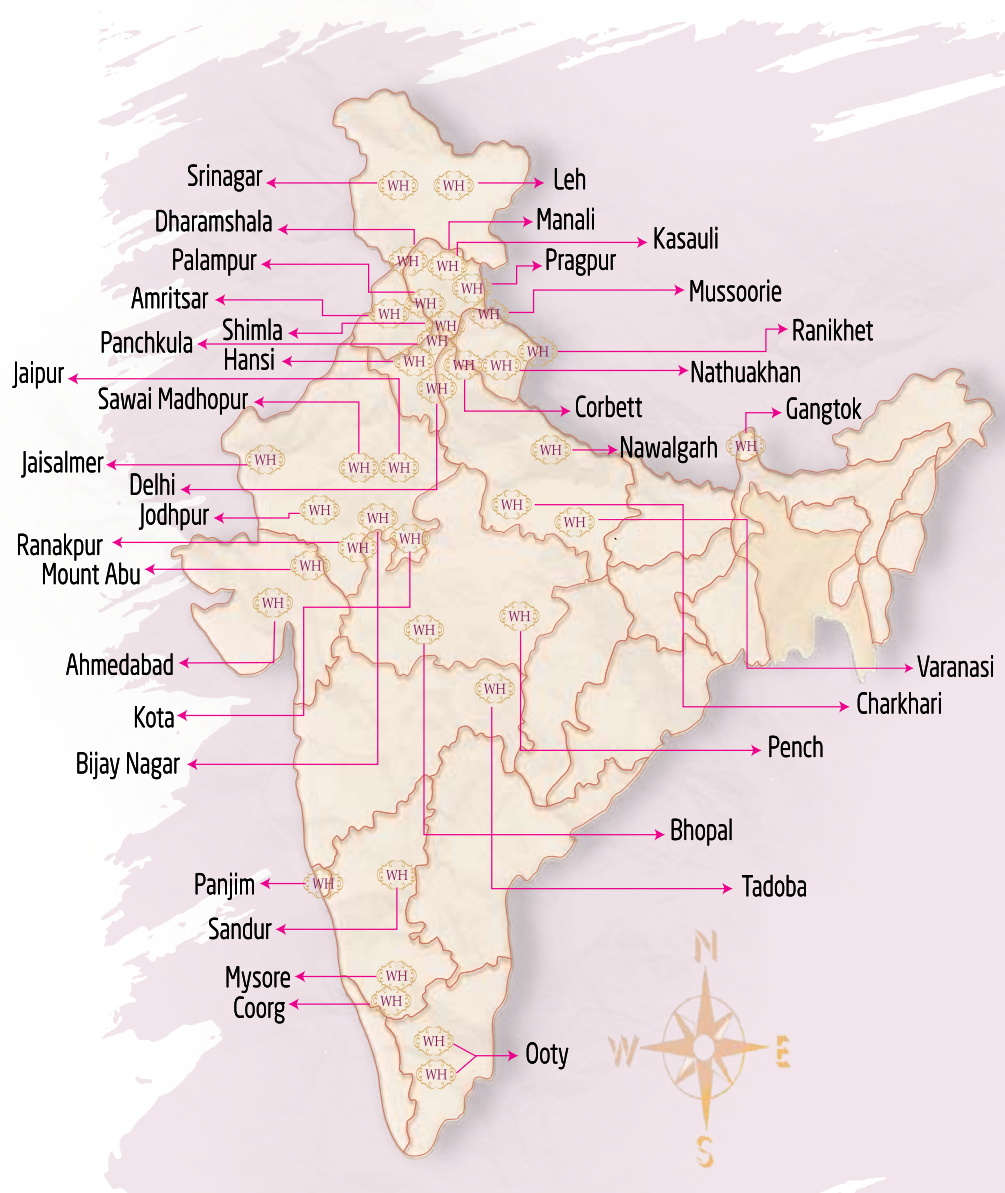


- 65 per cent respondents suggested they would visit a site of religious prominence for reasons beyond spirituality or religion

Just like the behaviour exhibited in other forms of leisure travel, short weekend breaks appear to be the growing norm for pilgrimage travel. Over 50 per cent respondents stated that their pilgrimage duration would be between 1-2 days.

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