

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MARCH 2017 | ₹50

**WILD & WINSOME
SOUTH AFRICA**

**GLAMPING
GETAWAYS**

**WELCOMHERITAGE
BECKONS**

**HAPPY
SONGKRAN
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**INDIA OUTBOUND:
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KEWAL GILL

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
KAMAL GILL

MANAGING EDITOR
ARJUN GILL

SUB-EDITOR
RAHUL SINGHA

SENIOR VISUALISER
ANUP KUMAR PRASAD

TRAINEE GRAPHIC DESIGNER
AMIT SINGH

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (MKTG)
VAGISH MISHRA

SENIOR MANAGER (MKTG)
SAFAL SAALWAR

GENERAL MANAGER (ADMIN)
AJITH KUMAR LR

Today's Traveller is published/printed by Kamal Gill on behalf of M/s Gill India Communications from Office No: 504-505, 5th Floor, Sheetla House, Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019

Printed at: Arnav Pack & Print
B-2/1 Okhla Industrial Area Phase-2,
New Delhi- 110020
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For correspondence and advertising:
504-505, 5th Floor, Sheetla House
Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place,
New Delhi - 110019
Tel: 011 41029079, 41029979
Email: publications@gillindia.com

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WILD & WINSOME AFRICA

'Indian tourists have shifted their focus from just seeing to experiencing South Africa,' reveals Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager India, South African Tourism

TT BUREAU

With six years of rich experience as Country Manager, South African Tourism in India, what, according to you, is the uniqueness of the India market?

Being in the Indian market and seeing it grow has been a spectacular experience. India is relatively youthful, and is ageing fairly slowly. Indian travellers have become more adventurous with activities. Bungee jumping off the Bloukrans Bridge (the world's highest commercial bungee) is becoming a much sought-after activity. Also, recent times have seen skydiving becoming one of the most inspirational activities and extensively on demand by many Indian travellers visiting South Africa. Shark-cage diving, croc-cage diving and hot air balloon rides now feature prominently on Indian itineraries.

This makes complete sense when we look at arrival demographics out of India. The number of 18-34 year-old holiday makers has increased

over last year and more than 50% of our holiday traffic is younger than 44. Also, the market is definitely moving towards experiential travel, that is, there has been a marked shift from seeing to experiencing.

Experiments with food have continued to surge far beyond demand for authentic, local cuisine to also include boma dinners (an idyllic outdoor dining experience, most often held at a game park, with traditional drum performances for entertainment) and visits to local vineyards, complete with pairing-focussed meals. This, alongside, fairly widespread availability of vegetarian food coupled with an understanding of Indian culinary requirements, has further propelled destination South Africa's equity in the holiday consideration set for Indians.

Another interesting fact that has emerged is that we're seeing a growth in lesser visited provinces like Mpumalanga and the Northwest. This definitely points to a more explorer mindset – a lot of these are repeat visitors. Essentially, there has been a shift from staying in big metros, to smaller towns of South Africa – Plettenberg Bay, Knysna, Oudtshoor, etc, which are not only exquisitely beautiful, but offer proximity to more experiences and are not too heavy on pockets either.

What products are popular with the leisure travel segment?

The standout point for Indian travellers is that they can't be categorised – there are no specific adventure travellers or foodie travellers. Rather, Indian travellers showcase wide areas of interests and don multiple hats – while today they might be

adventure travellers, tomorrow foodies and the day after, art connoisseurs! But for all of them, South Africa has something – from the country's magnificent wildlife, adrenaline pumping adventure activities, spectacular and pristine beaches to its world-class cities, shopping, nightlife, food and wine.

South Africa also offers one of the world's best adventure opportunities that have also been highly sought after. South Africa offers the adventure enthusiast countless exciting activities – on land, air and underwater – including numerous cycling, hiking and running trails, surfing, sky-diving. From bungee-jumping off the Bloukrans Bridge, which is the highest commercial bridge in the world, to abseiling off Table Mountain, diving with the great white sharks to snorkelling with sea horses in Knysna, South Africa has been a one-stop destination for the Indian adrenaline junkies.

The spectacular scenery and breathtaking views of the natural landscape with thousands of miles of glorious coastline, pristine beaches, soaring mountains and peaks, dense forests and rolling flower fields and grasslands have also continued to capture the interest of this segment. A growing number of Indian business leisure tourists, who have valid driver's licenses, are also opting for self-drive tours along various scenic routes.

South Africa's wildlife lodges and camps offer legendary luxury experiences. How well has the Indian visitor taken to them?

At these lodges and camps, Indian travellers revel in the sheer variety of animal, bird and plant life; the diverse landscapes ranging from grassland plains to rocky outcrops, creating an ideal habitat for the free roaming Big Five and all the little creatures that contribute to a magical wildlife experience they'll never forget. Indian travellers can also be reassured of finding the cuisines and flavours from all over the world, including many Indian restaurants. While South Africa is justifiably famous for its own cuisine and fresh produce, a full range of delicious Indian-styled food is available in these opulent lodges, making eating easy for non-vegetarian, vegetarian, vegan and Jain visitors.

Besides the array of options offered by lodges and camps, what Indian travellers love are guided bush walks, horse trails,

eco adventure trails (quad bikes), morning and afternoon safaris in open 4 x 4 vehicles and the presence of Indian-origin hospitality staff on the property to make Indian visitors feel at home. From gritty experiences in the bush to opulent luxury in a private lodge, tourists can choose from a number of National Parks spread across the country, including Kruger National Park, Pilanesberg and those along Garden Route.

Which new products do you plan to introduce to the repeat traveller in the year ahead?

We have extensively taken to promoting SATSA, which is a member-driven association that offers inbound tourism service

companies the highest level of quality in the tourism industry. Via SATSA, travellers are being assured of service. The traveller is also assured of service of the best quality, because SATSA members are subjected to stringent checks. Also, our grading council promises you that anything that has a star grading is neat, clean, of the highest hygienic standards and safe. Thus, this gives the traveller a fair idea of all amenities and offerings, which they can choose from depending on requirement and purpose. We have a fresh new adventure activity called Cango Caves Zipline, close to the Cango Caves, which is double zipline (two people can go together at once) in

Oudtshoorn and De Rust areas.

Also, on the anvil are the Historical Tour walks in the CBD area of Oudtshoorn. The walk will cover the beautiful sandstone buildings in town, like the museums, ostrich palaces, etc. Port Elizabeth / Nelson Mandela Bay is still somewhat of an unknown in the market and the only big 7 safari options in the world is a combination of our very special Marine Safari and the famous Big 5 safari. One could complete it all in one day. The Marine Safaris are normally 3 to 4 hours and start in the morning allowing visitors to get back, have lunch, and then depart to either Addo Elephant National Park or a private game reserve.

Moreover, our focus for the year will be bringing to life our new "South Africa – Wow in every moment" campaign, which will help travellers get a better virtual feel of the destination, thus converting intent to travel.



HANNELI SLABBER AWARDED SKAL INTERNATIONAL AWARD 2016

Hanneli Slabber, Country Manager, South African Tourism India, received the Skal International Karl Twiggs Award 2016 for outstanding service in the Travel & Tourism industry. The award was presented by Skal South Africa President Neil Els, who was in India for the South African Tourism roadshow.

Slabber has steered the Indian market towards increased interest in and favour for South Africa during the last six years as the head of South African Tourism in India. Her efforts have yielded strong arrival numbers of nearly 100,000 Indian tourists for three years consecutively, and an annual spend of 1.1 billion ZAR for the past two years.



WORLD TEA & COFFEE EXPO RETURNS TO MUMBAI

Growing in size and stature every year, the fifth edition of World Tea & Coffee Expo comes back to Mumbai from 16th Nov – 18th Nov, 2017, with a host of enhanced features and activities covering the entire gamut of the Hot Beverage sector. Globally recognised at a complete trade show for Tea, Coffee and allied sectors, the three-day annual event shall witness about 90+ exhibitors from 8 countries, showcasing the latest innovative products, machinery, equipment, packaging, technologies, vending solutions, flavours, Retail Chains, certifications, Premises, government boards, etc.

"This niche Expo provides the perfect environment for the hot beverage industry to meet face-to-face and develop real business opportunities. WTCE facilitates participants to strike bulk deals, joint ventures/alliances, franchise deals, appoint marketing agents, knowledge-sharing, meeting government officials and generate large number of business leads," said Priti Kapadia, Director, Sentinel Exhibitions Asia Pvt. Ltd, the organisers of this unique trade show.

MOT LAUNCHES SIM CARDS FOR TOURISTS ARRIVING IN INDIA

Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Culture, launched the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for providing pre-loaded Sim Cards



to foreign tourists arriving in India on e-Visa. Addressing the gathering, he said that this unique initiative will facilitate foreign tourists in communicating with their acquaintances immediately after their arrival in India. Earlier, the Ministry of Tourism had also launched a 24 x 7 Tourist Helpline, 1800111363, in twelve foreign languages so that foreign tourists could get the required information in their own language.

The Minister presented the First Kit containing the Sim to a representative of the Travel and Tourism sector. Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, JS Deepak, Secretary, Ministry of Communications and senior officers were present on the occasion. This initiative has been launched in association with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd., (BSNL), wherein BSNL would distribute pre-loaded SIM Cards to foreign tourists arriving in India on e-Visa. This facility will be initially available in the Indira Gandhi International Airport (T3 Terminal), New Delhi, and later cover the remaining 15 international airports, where e-Visa facility is currently available.

To avail the pre-loaded Sim Card, BSNL will collect an e-Visa copy and the first page of the passport from foreign tourists on arrival at the airport. This facility is only available for tourists arriving in India on e-Visa. Sim Cards will be pre-loaded with a value of Rs. 50 talk time and 50 MB data and will be activated on an immediate basis so as to enable them use of this facility instantly. This initiative is also aimed at providing connectivity to foreign tourists to enable them to stay in touch with their near and dear ones and also help them to contact with the 24x7 multi-lingual toll free helpline of the Ministry of Tourism (1800-11-1363) for any assistance and guidance during times of distress / medical emergency, etc.

FICCI TO ORGANISE SUMMIT ON DIGITAL TRAVEL HOSPITALITY AND INNOVATION

FICCI is organising the second edition of Digital Travel, Hospitality & Innovation Summit on March 22-23, 2017 at FICCI Federation House, New Delhi to address the technological advancement in the field of Travel and Hospitality.

Some of the eminent speakers confirmed for the summit are Dhruv Shringi, Chairman, FICCI Travel Technology Committee & Co Founder & CEO, Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd., Dr. Arun Kumar Manocha, Chairman & Managing Director, IRCTC, Deep Kalra, Chairman & Group CEO MakeMyTrip, Hari Nair, Founder & CEO, Holiday IQ, Nikhil Ganju, Country Manager, Trip Advisor India, Abhishek Rajan, Vice President & Head – Travel Marketplace, Paytm, Vishal Suri, Managing Director, SOTC, Ajay Bakaya, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, Anshu Sarin, CEO, Berggruen Hotels (Keys hotels), Raj Rana, CEO, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, Chinmai Sharma, Chief Revenue Officer, Taj Hotels, Swaminathan Vedaranyam, CEO, Via.com etc. to name a few.

FICCI along with Avalon Global Research will also launch a knowledge Report 'Travel 2.0 – The Next Generation of travel' at the inaugural session of the Summit



Fun Filled in Amazing Thailand

Amazon Cartoon Network Pattaya

FRANCE BECOMES WINTER DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TRAVELLERS

Grand Ski Atout France's annual winter tourism convention has been held for over a decade, showcasing France as a premier winter tourism haven, including serious skiing and sporting players as well as luxury resorts and indulgent experiences.

Sharing her thoughts on the developing interest in ski and France as a winter destination, Sheetal Munshaw, Director, Atout France India, said, "We are very keen on positioning France as a preferred destination for winter getaways, keeping in mind the growing number of Indian travellers holidaying abroad during the winter months."

Sharing his thoughts, Chetan Yallapurkar, CEO Honeymoon Havens, said, "After visiting the beautiful Alps of France I realised there is huge scope for skiing as a sport. The top infrastructure at ski resorts like Meribel and Val Thorens proved that it has the best experience for younger kids to learn skiing and for travellers to explore as an activity during their travel to France. The millennials are excited to learn the new sport and are always in search of information."

Enamoured by her Alpine experience, Asmita Ramnani, Co Founder, Indiana Travel Services, said, "From its delicious local cuisine to the rich culture, France surely offers something unique and memorable. I, for one, can't wait to go back and relish the beautiful sights and cold winds once again, and most of all, inspiring our clients to travel to France on their next winter holiday."



MELIA HOTELS INTERNATIONAL CONDUCTS ROADSHOW IN INDIA

Meliá Hotels International recently concluded its three cities roadshow in Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Mumbai, from February 20 – 22, 2017. The Roadshows were organised with an objective to strengthen and build up relationships with key travel partners across India and showcase the USPs of the brands, viz. Gran Meliá, ME by Meliá, Paradisus, Meliá Hotels & Resorts, Inside by Meliá, Tryp by Wyndham and Sol by Meliá.

Led by Ruben Casas, Senior Director Sales and Marketing, Asia Pacific, and senior hotel representatives, Celine Guyomarch, General Manager, Meliá Yangon, Marta Escibano Martin, General Manager-Sol House Legian, Marta Escibano Martin, General Manager-Sol House Legian, Yeni LeStari, Assistant

Director of Sales - Meliá Bali, Phatsalawadee Pimpila (Pook), Director of Sales, Imperial Boat Beach House, Francisco Manuel Quiros Arroyo, General Manager, Meliá Kuala Lumpur, Ruth Garcia Abellan, General Manager - Gran Meliá Jakarta, and Tonia Sehan (Director of Sales, India, Meliá Hotels International), hosted the Roadshows in India.

Ruben Casas, Senior Director, Sales and Marketing, Asia Pacific, said, "India has witnessed stupendous growth in the past years and the evolved hospitality scenario provides a positive base for several new businesses to establish and grow. Last year, we set up our Representation office in India to further expand our market share and work extensively in this region and have witnessed a huge increase in its share in our revenue. We are keen on tapping all segments of travellers – family, luxury, honeymooners, wedding, business and leisure, as Meliá Hotels International counts a presence of more than 370 hotels in 40 countries and 7 brands targeting each of those segments."

Vasudha Sondhi, Managing Director, Outbound Marketing, opined, "We are honoured to be a part of the Meliá Hotels International family."

MALAYSIA TOURISM FREE E-VISA FOR INDIANS

"At Thomas Cook India we applaud Tourism Malaysia's initiative of introducing free e-visas for Indians – a smart and strategic initiative by Destination Malaysia to catalyse uptake from the India market – and across both leisure and b-leisure segments. Malaysia has always held a magical allure for travel hungry Indian consumers, not merely for its rich cultural experiences, but equally for its cuisine, engaging outdoor adventure opportunities and, of course, shopping! This is the critical booking season for India's peak vacation season; additionally, Malaysia also features as a favourite among short haul destinations, and hence the free e-visa initiative will serve as a bait for "value seeker" Indian customers to inspire/give impetus to bookings. Thomas Cook has just received a top award from Malaysia Tourism for our performance in 2016 and we expect that the free e-visa will add fillip to our momentum of business towards Malaysia."



Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head-Leisure Travel & M.I.C.E at Thomas Cook (India) Limited

32bFORM IV (See rule 8)

Statement about the ownership and other particulars about magazine entitled Today's Traveller as required to be published in the first issue of every year after the last date of February.

1. Place of publication : Office No. 504 & 505, 5th Floor, Sheetla House, Building No. 73-74, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110 019

2. Periodicity: Monthly

3. Printer's Name: Kamal Gill
Nationality: Indian
Address: Z - 33, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016

4. Publisher's Name: Kamal Gill
Nationality: Indian
Address: Z - 33, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016

5. Editor's Name: Kamal Gill
Nationality: Indian
Address: Z - 33, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016

6. Name and Addresses of individuals who own the magazine and partner or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital: Gill India Communications (sole Proprietor Kamal Gill), Z - 33, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 110016

7. True and precise account of the premises here printing is conducted: Arnab Pack N Print, B-2/1, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-2, New Delhi-110020

I, Kamal Gill, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-
Kamal Gill
Signature of Publisher
Date: March 15, 2017

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- Turn knowledge into wealth
- It's free

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VENTURE MARKETING TO REPRESENT SCB IN INDIA

Venture Marketing has been appointed as the Sales and Marketing representative in India for Sicilia Convention Bureau (SCB). SCB is a one-stop shop MICE information centre for the destination. Daniela Marino, Director of Operations, Sicilia Convention Bureau, said, "India has been a fast growing market for business events and the film tourism market. We are delighted to have Venture Marketing as our representative in India because of their excellent track record for the segment and excellent relationship with the Indian companies. We are confident that through this association members will benefit from the growing share of the Indian market".

Nitin Sachdeva, Executive Director, Venture Marketing, said, "We are delighted to associate with Sicilia Convention Bureau, a one-stop shop MICE information centre for Sicily. We will work to provide Indian planners with detailed information, connect them to the right partners that offer the best quality price ratio for their events in Sicily."



INDONESIA TO WELCOME 30 MILLION INDIANS BY 2018

Significant increase of Indian tourists to Indonesia over the year has encouraged the Indonesian government to further step up their promotion of Indonesia in India. In order to keep up the momentum, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia conducted a 2017 Sales Mission to India which was held at Mumbai and New Delhi, from February 10-13, 2017.

India is a growing market with its ever increasing number of overseas travellers over the years. The World Tourism Organization has observed that India's number of outbound tourists increased from 16.6 million in 2013 to 18.3 million in 2014 and it has predicted that the number will reach 30 million by 2018. This increase is aligned with India's economic growth of 7.8 per cent during the same period.

Data shows that while in 2014 there were 237,990 Indian visitors to Indonesia, the number sprung up to 336,575 by the end of November 2016. In short, the India market is booming and therefore a steady incremental promotional effort is a logical step to keep up the growing trend. Thus, it is relevant that the Ministry has set a high target of 546,000 visits by the end of 2017 for the Indian market, i.e. an increase of 56 per cent over last year's target of 350,000.



CHINESE VISA APPLICATION SERVICE CENTER UNVEILED AT CONNAUGHT PLACE

The 'Chinese Visa Application Service Center' was inaugurated at New Delhi's commercial hub, Connaught Place, making China visa application facilities centrally accessible for residents in and around New Delhi. The centre was inaugurated by HE Luo Zhaohui, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to India, Wei Xiaodong, Vice Director-General, Service Bureau, for the Foreign Ministry and Its Overseas Missions of the People's Republic of China, and Zubin Karkaria, Chief Executive Officer, VFS Global Group, at a ceremony held on 24 February, 2017.

Li Bijian, Minister Counsellor, Chinese Embassy in India, said, "With the inauguration of the new office in the New Year, I hope that the Chinese Visa Application Service Center could further expand and enhance its services in order to promote people-to-people exchanges between China and India and make new contributions to the bilateral relations."

Zubin Karkaria, Chief Executive Officer, VFS Global Group, said, "We are pleased to launch this new Chinese Visa Application Service Center that aims to offer greater convenience and ease to applicants. We anticipate strong tourism growth between India and China and this spacious centre will enable us to cater to the rising demand for China visas and simultaneously enhance the visa applicant's experience."

VIETNAM – AMAZING DESTINATION FOR INDIAN TOURISTS

Embassy of the SR of Vietnam, in association with VietJet Air, Travel Industry Partners from Vietnam and OM Tourism organised Vietnam Travel Mission under the theme, "Vietnam – Amazing Destination for Indian tourists"

In his welcoming speech, HE Ton Sinh Thanh, Ambassador of Vietnam in India, said, "After nearly 30 years of renovation, from a country heavily damaged by the war, Vietnam has become one of the most dynamic economies in the region. He affirmed that 'India and Vietnam are celebrating 45 years of establishment of diplomatic ties this year. The close and cordial relations have their historical roots in the common struggle for liberation from foreign rule and the national struggle for independence. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and President Ho Chi Minh led people in the courageous struggle against colonialism. He mentioned that VietJet Air is planning code sharing direct flights between Delhi and Ho Chi Minh City, scheduled in July 2017, which will definitely add more traffic from India to Vietnam.

He also added that approximately 66,000 Indian tourists visited Vietnam in 2015, with an average of 32 per cent growth annually from 2010-2015, but this still remains a small number compared to the number of Indian tourists who travel overseas every year.



BUMPER SUMMER WITH SA TOURISM

With summer vacations fast approaching, South African Tourism brings trade partners an opportunity to up their game with its SA Specialist Programme

TT BUREAU

The SA Specialist Programme has been created to assist travel agents to become an authority on South Africa and its attractions, to better sell the country as a holiday destination and to enhance their earning potential.

It is an interactive learning experience designed to improve one's knowledge of South Africa and equip them with the skills to sell South Africa as a tourist destination; in essence, participants become an expert on South African travel, giving them the opportunity to market themselves as such and to improve the level of service they give to clients.

With its beautiful scenery, untouched and endless coastline that stretches for more than 2500km, South Africa makes for the



back home with a bag full of thrilling memories. To tend to these demands of the modern traveller, it is imperative that travel agents become more aware about destination offerings which will cater to this emotional need.

This is where being an SA specialist gives you an edge over your competitors. Not only will it help build an inherent trust in your clients but will also make them more willing to choose you for their travel needs. SA Specialists will also be better placed to assist their clients, in tailoring the optimum South African travel experience by being more proactively involved during itinerary planning.

By becoming an SA Specialist and being able to better sell South Africa, agents have the ultimate opportunity to increase their revenue stream and consolidate their position in the marketplace.

Through the SA Specialist programme partners will become South African Tourism-accredited travel specialists who have the knowledge to sell South Africa as a destination. They are also entered into the South African Tourism (SAT) database of SAT Specialists, improving their marketability. They will receive a certificate confirming that they have successfully completed the relevant course, and will be entitled to use the name 'SA Specialist' or 'South African Travel Expert' in their marketing materials.

perfect getaway in summer. Holiday-makers most often rely on travel agents to package and plan their trip, because the African continent remains relatively new territory and they assume a travel agent will be better equipped.

However, travel has gone beyond the passé stay-in-a-beach-side resort followed by local city tours. The modern traveller is hungry for more – he wants to explore, experience and head





GLIMPSES OF THE RIDER'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

One of the biggest and first-of-its-kind biking cum music festivals of the country came to a roaring end with some stellar performances. With more than 20+ brand associations and partnerships, 16+ artists and multiple experience zones, including grub stations, flea markets, gaming arena, adventure zone, Rider's Music Festival was a joint property by Red FM and Phoenix Live.

KTO PIONEERS SPONSORSHIP OF FIRST KOREAN BLOCKBUSTER

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) is proud to be the presenting sponsor of the currently airing South Korean drama, 'Descendants of the Sun'. This blockbuster hit in South Korea has been immensely popular across Asia. The romantic love story has gained top ratings with Korean heart throb Song Joong Ki as the lead actor, who is also the Brand Ambassador of Korea Tourism Organization.



According to Byungsun Lee, Director Korea Tourism Organization, "It has been a great opportunity to be the presenting sponsor of one of the biggest Korean Drama hits, brought to India on their leading media conglomerate, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd on the premium Hindi entertainment channel, Zindagi. Korean sitcoms are extremely popular in Asia and with the positive response from this series, I am confident that more Korean dramas can be presented in the Indian mainstream media to entertain Indian viewers."

RADISSON BLU JAMMU LAUNCHED

Designed with the modern traveller in mind, the brand new Radisson Blu Jammu, which opened recently, offers comfort, style and sophistication in the city of Jammu. Known as the 'City of Temples', Jammu serves as the gateway to one of the most popular pilgrimages in India, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, and several temples, including the Raghunath and Ranbireshwar Temples that are situated around it.

Raj Rana, Chief Executive Officer, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, said, "Jammu is a region that enjoys a strong domestic leisure demand and is home to some of the most visited destinations in India. Integral to our India growth strategy, is expanding in leisure markets and state capitals. With the opening of Radisson Blu Jammu, we will make inroads into the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir; we are delighted to be partnering Skyline Hotels in this iconic hotel."

Vikram Gupta, Managing Partner, Skyline Hotels, added, "We are confident in the strong leadership of Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group and its South Asia team. With their proven track record, experience and expertise in the India market, we are convinced that this will benefit the hotel and I look forward to a mutually rewarding long-term partnership with the Group."



O2 SPA AND ANDHRA PRADESH SIGN MOU

Continuing its expansion plans, O2 Spa, one of Asia's largest day spa chain and India's organised day spa chain, announced the signing of an MoU with the Government of Andhra Pradesh that will see an investment of \$1.75Mn for a period of 3 years, starting from October 2017. This investment is aimed at setting up of O2 Spa facilities across Andhra Pradesh wherein youth from the State will be trained and absorbed, thus creating employment opportunities.



This agreement was signed between O2 Spa and Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation at the Second Sunrise Andhra Pradesh Investment Meet that was held in Vizag. O2 Spa was represented by Sameer Nair, Business Head – India, whereas Girija Shankar, Managing Director of APTDC, represented the Government.

Ritesh Mastipuram, Founder and Managing Director, O2 Spa, said, "The Indian wellness industry is expected to grow at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 per cent for the next five years to achieve a Rs1,50,000 crore-turnover by 2019-20. The growth and requirement of the industry will continue to see an upward curve and so will the opportunity for skilled youth. This partnership with the government of Andhra Pradesh will enable us in reaching out and bettering the lives of many young persons by appropriately skilling them and placing them in apt job opportunities."



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WELCOMHERITAGE IS ALL SET TO SPREAD ITS WINGS

WelcomHeritage Ramgarh is an amalgamation of the heritage and luxury experience with a world-class accommodation and an awe-inspiring heritage interwoven in historical elegance. The property is dotted with historic art and antiques, a legacy passed down for eight generations now.

The property offers 26 well-appointed rooms and suites with five categories, namely Luxury Rooms, Premium Rooms, Heritage Rooms, Heritage Suite Rooms and Ramgarh Suite Rooms. Diwan Khana is the multi-cuisine restaurant that holds the 'gaddi' of the former rulers of Ramgarh. It is an architectural marvel with a pleasant, artful courtyard and a bright sunny rooftop. The menu revisits gourmet antiquities of the colonial world and the Orient, a part from the popular contemporary delicacies from around the world.

The Palace offers an array of recreational activities that includes an in-house gymnasium overlooking a refreshing swimming pool, yoga, Aarti at Mandir Thakurdwara for the spiritual experience, art and craft for kids, indoor games, Curio handcrafts shop and a golf course in the vicinity.



THAILAND EXTENDS VISA FEE WAIVER FOR 21 COUNTRIES

The Royal Thai Government recently approved the extension of the visa fee waiver and reduction for visas on arrival for tourists from 21 countries. The original scheme, established on 30 November, last year, will now be extended until 31 August, this year. Yuthasak Supasorn, Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), said, "Thailand's tourism sector is thriving, but with extra government support, such as, this visa waiver and reduction scheme, which means we can remain the top destination in the region. By continuing, this policy will help motivate visitors from these countries to discover amazing stories in Amazing Thailand."

The extension of the visa incentives for tourists for a further six months was proposed by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and was approved at the weekly Cabinet Meeting earlier this month. The new period, lasting until 31 August, will mean that travellers applying for tourist visas at Royal Thai Embassies or Thai Consulates abroad will not have to pay any fees for entry visas, while the fees for Visas on Arrival (VoA) have been reduced from 2,000 Baht to 1,000 Baht per person.

The new regulation will be effective for passport holders from 21 countries and territories, including Andorra, Bulgaria, Bhutan, China, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Malta, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. See more at: TATNewsroom




RADISSON BLU KAUSHAMBI DELHI NCR HOSTS MR AND MISS INDIA 2017

Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR hosted a gala event of Mr and Miss India 2017. The event was organised in association with Dreamz House Production. Prior to this, sub contests were held in various cities across India to select the semi-finalists. Approximately 60 finalists were then shortlisted for the final round who vied for the title.

The event was judged by prominent faces of the entertainment industry, including Film Director Madhur Bhandarkar, Bollywood Actresses and Model Urvashi Rautela and Zoya Afroz (Pond's Femina Miss India International 2013), Actor Ranvijay Singh, and more.

The whole programme comprised three rounds. Song and dance performances were held to raise the entertainment quotient of the evening. Kamil Khan and Simran wowed the audience by winning the title for Mr & Miss India 2017 respectively. "We are delighted to have hosted such a prestigious event and look forward to many more. We, at the hotel, congratulate the winners and wish them the best for their future", said Hemant Mehta, General Manager, Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR.



Welcome to Meghalaya

It's time to take the road less travelled. When in Meghalaya, experience adventure in the most lush dense forests. Whether it is rappelling from a fig tree, rafting against the river, discovering hidden caves, hiking in the hills, river scuba diving or just camping in the open expanse.

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Department of Tourism
Government of Meghalaya

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E-mail: meghtourism@gmail.com
Web: www.megtourism.gov.in
Phone: 0364-2502580



IBRAHIM HAKKI GUNTAY has been appointed as General Manager of Turkish Airlines for Western and Southern India. In his role, Hakki will be taking charge of Turkish Airlines' strategic success in this region and is responsible for driving growth and expansion of the company's market share in India. Prior to moving to Mumbai, Guntay built his career at Turkish Airlines in Istanbul, starting in 2013 as a Marketing and Sales specialist. He was engaged in various responsibilities and projects within the airline, including General Manager in Niger (2015-2016).



RAJAN MEHRA has been delegated as COO at Club One Air. Prior to joining COA Mehra was the MD, Indian Subcontinent of Universal Weather and Aviation Company, a US-based leader in the business aviation sector. In his new role, he will bring a wealth of rich experience, knowledge and expertise in almost all facets of business aviation in COA. He has played a leadership role in Airport Management & Operations, Marketing, Corporate Strategy, Network Planning, Start-ups & Launches and government relations in some of the world's leading airlines.



ADRIAN KONG has been made Area Director, South Asia (Mumbai), for Singapore Tourism Board. He will be based in Mumbai and one of his key responsibilities will be to oversee STB's tourism promotion, marketing and developmental efforts in South and West India and Sri Lanka. Kong is well acquainted with the Indian markets, having worked earlier in India between February 2012 and January 2014 as Manager with Singapore Tourism Board, in Mumbai. Prior to his appointment as an Area Director, he was overseeing STB's Philippines office for 2.5 years.



BHAWNA VERMA has been designated as the General Manager at Courtyard by Marriott Gurugram Downtown. With an illustrious career of over 16 years in the hospitality industry, Verma brings with her great experience in handling operations, guest satisfaction and engagement and financial success. She will be responsible for overseeing and implementing high operational

standards and driving performance across verticals at the hotel. She holds a degree in Hotel Management from National Council for Hotel Management Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Pusa, Delhi.



NITIN SHARMA has been appointed as Executive Assistant Manager at Crowne Plaza Gurgaon. He will be spearheading the Operations, Sales and Marketing team, in addition to building and honing a dynamic hotel team. Sharma has spent 22 years in the hospitality industry, wearing multiple hats of responsibility. With over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, he has worked with IHG, Nikko Hotels, Uppal's Orchid, Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces and The Grand New Delhi. He is passionate about travelling and playing cricket.



ASHUTOSH RANJAN THAKUR has been assigned the post of Director of Food & Beverage at Courtyard by Marriott Pune Chakan. An industry veteran having more than 14 years of rich experience, Thakur has been associated with some of the best hotel brands in the country. In his new role, he will be responsible for the overall management and operation of the Food and Beverage sections, including restaurant, bar and banquet events. He will also play a key role in ensuring the achievement of established F&B quality and guest service quality standards. He will assist managers in developing popular menus and beverage lists and participate in the hotel's revenue plan and marketing programmes.



AMIT GHOSH has been appointed as Director of sales – Double Tree by Hilton, Pune, Chinchwad. A sales veteran with over 13 years of experience in sales and business development, he hails from Kolkata and has earned his diploma in Hotel Management, from IIAS, Kolkata. He started his career in sales with Amalgamated Bean Trading Company Ltd. (Pune). He has managed several key accounts in hotels like Four Points by Sheraton (Pune), Oakwood Premier (Pune) and Holiday Inn (Pune). In his current position, Ghosh will be responsible for developing sales strategies through ideation and implementation of strategic sales plan.



S KARTHIKEYAN has been appointed as Vice President – Sales, at Sarovar Hotels Pvt. Ltd. An IIM Lucknow Alumnus (2011 batch), he brings with him an experience of over 9 years in Hospitality Sales and Marketing. At Sarovar, he will be responsible for conceptualising and implementing sales strategies, both at the corporate and regional level, and will contribute in further strengthening the group's efforts in driving more business from existing as well as new markets.

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In conversation with
Hemant Mehta,
General Manager,
Radisson Blu Kaushambhi Delhi NCR

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What are your strategic plans for development for the year 2017?

We are looking promising with the business from both corporate sectors and social functions. We have prioritised our actions to focus on new markets while keeping hold of and serving the old as well. We have also restructured the business mix of the Domestic and International market with a belief that this is going to be a positive move with strategic marketing plans at each stage.





What is the USP of your hotel?

The hotel is the First 5-Star Deluxe property in East Delhi NCR. Maintaining the brand's image, we offer one of the biggest banqueting facilities of around 50,000sq.ft, which can accommodate 3000 guests in a day or 1500 guests in each of the two venues. To enhance your stay, the hotel also features a clean, modern design room concept by architect Thom Catallo, to ensure your comfort and convenience. The open-to-sky pool on the terrace is yet another USP of the hotel.

What is your hotel's corporate positioning?

The hotel has a healthy mix of social and leisure travellers. We also get good MICE business. As a premium brand, the corporates visiting us are usually from the upper hierarchy who are seeking business stays or visits with a luxury experience. The hotel also has an added advantage of 10 different event spaces which are apt for any kind of event with guests ranging between 8pax – 3000pax.

What are the facilities that your hotel offers for weddings and events?

Radisson Blu Kaushambi Delhi NCR offers a one-stop solution for your entire event requirements as you get an option of customising your event with the onsite wedding planner, tailor-made menus, entertainment partners, audio visual services, exclusive florist, theme creator, in-house SPA, saloon, and much more. With multiple event spaces the hotel serves as a single place for all your social events.





CORPORATE JET-SETTER

MAJ. PRAMILA MOHITE (RETD)
HEAD OF OPERATIONS (TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY)
MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA LTD

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

Goa was one of my most memorable and cherished trips.

Q: You dream of going to?

I dream of traversing the globe with Paris being the cherry on the cake.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

Too many to choose from!

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Ranbanka Palace, Jodhpur, would definitely have to be my best hotel experience because of their exceptional ambience and hospitality.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

I can never have enough of Goa. The beckoning beaches, the inviting hospitality, warm and friendly people, historical significance and of course, the casinos highlighting the splendid night life in Goa, is a place I plan to visit again and again.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, which depicts a rich historical heritage of

the place is my most memorable vacation with family. Our stay at Taj Bundelabad was all that a traveler could wish for.

Q: Your best holiday with friends?

Quite a tough choice but Darjeeling (HMI – Himalaya Mountaineering institute) pips the race.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

Ranbanka Palace, Jodhpur, is one of the best places for great food. The décor takes one back to the Rajasthan of yore.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

While travelling, I generally watch out for the location, weather for sure, type of food, the most convenient mode of travel, location of my Hotel and the type, places to see in that city, adventure activities and cultural activities.

Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?

To have the best in class Travel practices and ensuring top class safety/security of my employees.



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CORPORATE JET-SETTER

RAMESH MANDALIA
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER
PSL LIMITED

Q: Most memorable trip to any destination?

My most memorable trip would have to be London and Australia.

Q: You dream of going to?

I dream of going to Ladakh, Kulu Manali, New Zealand and the UAE.

Q: Favourite airline and why?

My favourite airline would have to be Air India and Jet Airways, because of their exceptional services.

Q: Best hotel experience and why?

Staying at the Taj and ITC definitely account for my best experiences as they are punctual with customised services and a touch of simplicity.

Q: A place you plan to visit again?

I would love to visit London and Australia all over again.

Q: A family vacation that stands out?

My visit to London was my most memorable vacation.

Q: Great food you enjoyed and where?

It would definitely have to be Chokhi Dhani in Jaipur and Hotel Krishna at Ujjain.

Q: What to watch out for while travelling?

I would say travelling is likely to throw you some unexpected hurdles, so one should learn to be comfortable in every situation.

Q: As a travel buyer, what's your philosophy?

I would like to believe and live by, "Dreams Comes True."



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iNFHRA FM EXCELLENCE AWARDS: MUMBAI CHAPTER

iNFHRA hosts the fifth FM Excellence Conference & Awards at Mumbai Cricket Association Recreation Centre, on February 15, 2017

TT BUREAU



The fifth in the series and Mumbai's first ever FM Excellence Conference & Awards was organised at Mumbai Cricket Association Recreation Centre, on February 15, 2017, and was well attended by more than 125 corporates.

The day was graced by the presence of Rajat Malhotra, Chief Operating Officer, IFM West Asia, Jones Lang LaSalle, Rajesh Munjal, Chief Operating Officer, CarzOnRent India, Shreerang Athalye, Chief Operating Officer, Aurum Ventures, Angad Luthra, Managing Director, Group L, Dharminder Salwan, Director, Corporate Real Estate Services (APAC), BlackRock, who shared the dais and their experience in Mumbai's first ever Panel Discussion on CXO's Expectation from the FM & Admin Department.

The prominent jury comprised industry professionals from 360 Infra Solutions, BlackRock, Edelweiss Financial Services, Godrej Industries, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company, Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services, Niteen Parulekar Architects, Raymond, Reliance Retail, Schneider Electric, Sharekhan, Treebo Hotels, and some FM Professionals.



Winners





Esteemed Jury

Below are the Winners & Runners up across various categories:

Corporate Real Estate & Space Management powered by TREEBO HOTELS

Winner: Wilson Manvel Ajgaonkar, Vikhroli Corporate Park Pvt Ltd

1st Runner-Up: Protick Basu, RMZ Infinity

2nd Runner-Up: Amit Ravindra Wani, Tata Motors Ltd

Corporate Travel, Transport & Logistics powered by VIA.COM & CARZONRENT INDIA, and supported by NEXA and OLA CORPORATE

Winner: Chanda Malvankar, Mahindra Logistics Ltd

1st Runner-Up: Shweta Thawani, Netmagic (An NTT Communications Company)

2nd Runner-Up: Sandya Advani, Accelya Kale Solutions Ltd

Ecological Sustainability powered by ARRAYSTORM & ZETA

Winner: Protick Basu, RMZ Infotech Pvt. Ltd

1st Runner-Up: Ashok Vithal Kamble, Cushman and Wakefield Property Management India Pvt. Ltd

[Nirlon Knowledge Park]

2nd Runner-Up: Santosh More, Reliance Retail Ltd

Innovation & Technology powered by SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC, and supported by SMART FM, INNOFITT & 75F SMART INNOVATIONS

Winner: Naresh Korwan, Aditya Birla Group

1st Runner-Up: Sumit Gore, Wipro Ltd

2nd Runner-Up: Bhushan B Gawde, Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd

Safety & Security Award powered by INTERNATIONAL HOUSEKEEPING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES, and supported by GROUP L

Winner: Samir Kumar Jha, Bharat Diamond Bourse

1st Runner-Up: Qaiss Asaar, Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd

2nd Runner-Up: Protick Basu, RMZ Eco World Infrastructure Pvt Ltd (SEZ)

The Awards were also supported by AMPS Facilities Management, APLOMB Techsolutions, Buzil Rossari, Chai Point, D&M India, IGL Relocation, Mystair Hygiene, Smart Enviro Systems, Vestian, Workplace India, Writer Relocations, Today's Traveller and Commercial Interiors magazine. For more information on the awards and to associate with the same, kindly email on support@infhra.com



CXO Panel



MALAYSIA OPTS SUSTAINABILITY

Tourism Malaysia promotes sustainable and niche tourism at SATTE 2017

TT BUREAU

The three-day programme held at the Pragati Maidan convention centre, saw an opportunity for buyers and sellers to network with each other and develop new tourism products and packages. The 24th edition of the South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE 2017) held from 15 to 17 February was jointly launched by the Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation, Government of India Dr Mahesh Sharma and Minister of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

The Malaysia delegation was led by Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Tourism Malaysia, state representatives and members of the Malaysian travel trade fraternity. A total of 32 participants with 16 organisations comprising state tourism promotion boards, travel agencies, hotel, airlines, tourism product owners and a healthcare travel council are taking part in SATTE at the Malaysia Pavilion.

Speaking at SATTE, Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri said, "Sustainable tourism development is no longer just a mere cliché, but has become a major contributor to a more environmentally sustainable economy. With the right investment, tourism can be a lead change agent in the move to a green economy by driving economic growth and job creation. At the same time, it simultaneously improves resource efficiency, minimises environmental degradation as well as raises environmental awareness among travellers."

UNWTO has designated 2017 as the "International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development" and Malaysia is keen to promote its four UNESCO Heritage Sites, namely,



Minister for Tourism & Culture of Malaysia Dato Nazri and Tourism Minister of India Mahesh Sharma



Rajan Sehgal, Pradip Lulla, Hon. Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Bin Abdul Aziz, Guldeep Singh Sahni, Dato' Sri Hj Mustafar Hj. Ali and Datuk Seri Mirza Mohammad Taiyab

Kinabalu National Park in Sabah, Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak, Melaka and George Town cities and the archaeological heritage site of the Lenggong Valley.

India is the sixth top tourist generating market for Malaysia with a total 722,141 Indian visitors recorded in 2015. Last year, from January to October, Malaysia received a total of 540,530 Indian tourists. Malaysia hopes to achieve 1 million arrivals from the India market this year.

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FITBIT BLAZE

Price: ₹ 19,000 approx

It's time to finally start loving yourself when you look into the mirror. It's time to get fit in style. Fitbit Blaze – a smart fitness watch built with continuous heart rate, Connected GPS, on-screen workouts, multi-sport tracking among many other features.

PLAYSTATION VR

Price: ₹ 38,000 approx

Discover a new world of unexpected gaming and entertainment experiences with the PlayStation®VR. With gamers in mind, PlayStation delivers a new world of unexpected gaming experiences through its device.

KINDLE OASIS

Price: ₹ 28,000 approx

Whether you are a voracious reader or someone who likes to flip a page as a pastime, you'd love the Oasis, even if it is the most expensive Kindle around. The newest Kindle is the thinnest and lightest ever, which is equipped with an all-new ergonomic design with physical buttons to effortlessly turn the page.

BOSE LIFESTYLE 650 SYSTEM

Price: ₹ 273,000 approx

For your movies and music, it's the most uncompromising 5-speaker home theatre system that has been launched from the house of music connoisseur, Bose. The Lifestyle 650 home entertainment system is beautiful in every way.



SME CONCLAVE 2017



TiE hosts the annual "SME Conclave 2017," at WelcomHotel Sheraton, New Delhi, on February 10, 2017

TT BUREAU



TiE Delhi-NCR, one of the world's largest network of successful entrepreneurs and professionals, hosted its annual "SME Conclave 2017," at WelcomHotel Sheraton, New Delhi, on February 10, 2017. The conference saw participation from over 200 entrepreneurs and brought together specialist organisations in the field of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME), from not just Delhi-NCR, but also from cities such as Agra, Chandigarh and Jaipur, amongst many others.

The event kick started with 'Welcome Remarks,' presented by Brijesh Agrawal, Co-founder, IndiaMART.com. The keynote address at the session, titled, 'My Story,' was addressed by Aman Nath, Founder & Chairman, Neemrana Hotels, and Ajay Jain, Founder, Kunzum. A second keynote address titled, "Digital India," was addressed by S Radha Chauhan IAS, President and CEO, National eGovernance Division, Government of India, and Brijesh Agrawal, Co-founder, IndiaMART.com.



The conclave hosted various other sessions around Digital & Technology Information; Start Showcase; Demonetisation and its impact on SMEs; Union Budget Decoded, Impact of GST on SMEs and Funding Avenues Available for SMEs.

While the session on 'Taking Your Company to IPO' was addressed by Dhruv Shingri, Co-founder & CEO, yatra.com, Sunil Dutt, President, Reliance Jio Infocom, talked about Digital India. The event gave entrepreneurs an opportunity to interact, network and address the implications of the recent budget and other such government ventures, such as 'Digital India,' on the sector.

On the occasion, Geetika Dayal, Executive Director, TiE Delhi-NCR, said, "Over the past years, SMEs have evolved as an indispensable part of the Indian economy. With the government's renewed focus on infrastructure and digitalisation of rural India, this sector would definitely get the much needed thrust and opportunities across sectors. At TiE, we salute their spirit and re-affirm our commitment to support them at every step of their journey."



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AVIATION



GLOBAL LAUNCH OF SKYREV360 BY P ASHOK GAJAPATHI RAJU

Airports Authority of India (AAI) is looking beyond national boundaries and interests and is undertaking newer business initiatives by exploring global aviation markets for providing consultancy, construction, management services, export services and undertaking operations abroad in relation to airports, air navigation services, ground aids and safety services beyond national borders. AAI is venturing into unexplored business territories with an aim to generate more and better business opportunities and to maximise and enhance non-aeronautical revenues.

The SKYREV360 was globally launched by P Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Minister of Civil Aviation, in the presence of RN Choubey, IAS, Secretary Civil Aviation, Government of India, Dr Guruprasad Mohapatra, IAS, Chairman AAI, S Suresh, Member Finance, AAI and other senior officers and delegates from 19 countries. A three-day workshop was also organised for the visiting delegates from ANSP's and Airport Operators from 19 countries in Goa. Speaking on the occasion Minister lauded the efforts of AAI in bringing out the first ever end to end solution of e-billing for the aeronautical and airport charges, which has been brought out by AAI in Make in India initiatives. Secretary Civil Aviation gave an insight to AAI's cutting-edge technologies like GAGAN, NOCAS and gave glimpses of India's new Civil Aviation policy and Regional Connectivity Scheme of Government of India. Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra, IAS, Chairman AAI, emphasised AAI's aim to generate more and better business opportunities by exploring unexplored business territories. **tt**



LUFTHANSA TO FLY AIRBUS A350-900 TO MUMBAI THIS SUMMER

Reaffirming its commitment to India, Lufthansa Group will deploy its newest long haul aircraft, the Airbus A350-900, to India's financial capital during the summer schedule of 2017. From April 16 onwards, Mumbai becomes the third destination worldwide to welcome the gamechanging aircraft. Flying on Lufthansa's Munich (MUC) to Mumbai (MUM) route, the A350-900 will offer Mumbai area residents travel choices and better connections to Lufthansa's vast global network.

Earlier this month, Lufthansa Group marked a key milestone in Indian aviation by starting the first commercial operations of A350-900 to Delhi. The Lufthansa A350-900 is the world's most modern and environmentally friendly long-haul aircraft. In comparison with similar types of aircraft it consumes 25 percent less fuel and produces 25 percent fewer emissions. The noise footprint is up to 50 percent smaller than comparable aircraft models. The aircraft offers Lufthansa's most modern on-board product, assuring passengers the highest level of comfort in all travel classes, with a wider cabin, self-service area in Business Class, new seats in Economy Class, bigger windows, large TV screens, innovative mood lighting, personalised playlist, and much more. The Lufthansa A350-900 is configured to seat 293 passengers: 48 in Business Class, 21 in Premium Economy and 224 in Economy Class. **tt**



ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES TO HOST ICAO GLOBAL AVIATION TRAINING AND TRAINAIR PLUS SYMPOSIUM

Ethiopian Airlines, proudly announces that it will host the ICAO Global Aviation Training and TRAINAIR PLUS Symposium with the theme: "Together, Enhancing Training to Build Capacity," at the seat of the African Union, Addis Ababa, from April 11 through 13, 2017.

Group CEO Ethiopian Airlines, Tewolde GebreMariam, said: "It is a profound honour for all of us at Ethiopian Airlines to host the ICAO Global Aviation Training and TRAINAIR PLUS Symposium, which brings major industry players together, to exchange best practices and experiences in human resources development and aviation training, and more specifically, on the TRAINAIR PLUS Program for the advancement of global aviation. I believe this symposium will also be an opportunity for us to showcase our hospitality, the state-of-the-art Aviation Training facilities at our Aviation Academy and the key role Ethiopian is playing in the development of the African Aviation industry." **tt**

OMAN AIR BOOSTS FLEET WITH NEW BOEING 787-9 DREAMLINER

Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, continues its ambitious expansion plans in 2017 with three new additions to its fleet this year. The latest aircraft is the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, which joined the fleet on 23rd February, 2017; this is in addition to the two new 737-800s which were added to the fleet in 2017. The wide-body Boeing 787-9 is a stretched version of the advanced long-range twin engine B787-8.

Her Excellency Hunaina Sultan Al Mughairy, Ambassador of Oman to the United States, attended the aircraft delivery ceremony at the Boeing facility in Seattle, along with Eng. Abdulaziz Al Raisi, Executive Vice President-Products & Brand Development, on behalf of Oman Air. The aircraft's inaugural flight departed Seattle on 23rd February and arrived at Muscat, on 24th February, 2017. **tt**





DIGITAL TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY & INNOVATION SUMMIT

March 22-23, 2017

FICCI, Federation House, New Delhi



Thought Leader Keynote Address

- **Dhruv Shringi**, Chairman FICCI Travel Technology Committee & Co founder & CEO Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd
- **Deep Kalra**, Founder & Group CEO MakeMyTrip
- **Dr. Arun Kumar Manocha**, Chairman & Managing Director, IRCTC

Eminent Panel of Speakers

- **Simon Akeroyd**, VP Corporate Strategy and Business Development, Amadeus Next
- **Swaminathan Vedaranyam**, CEO, Via.com
- **Sharat Dhall**, President, Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd
- **Hari Nair**, Founder & CEO, Holiday IQ
- **Abhishek Rajan**, Vice President & Head – Travel Marketplace, Paytm
- **Nikhil Ganju**, Country Manager, TripAdvisor India
- **Chinmai Sharma**, Chief Revenue Officer, Taj Hotels
- **Amit Taneja**, Chief Revenue Officer, Cleartrip
- **Geeta Jain**, CEO, Carlson Wagonlit Travel
- **Raja Natesan**, CEO, Uniglobe Travel South Asia
- **Siddharth Dabhade**, Head of Industry, Google India
- **Indiver Rastogi**, President – Global Business Travel, Thomas Cook (India) Limited
- **Ajay Bali**, Managing Director, BCD Travel
- **Ashish Kumar**, Managing Partner, Agnitio Consulting
- **Sanjiv Kapoor**, Chief Strategy & Commercial Officer, Vistara

- **Sachin Nene**, Regional General Manager, Air Arabia
- **Kamal Hingorani**, Sr. VP & Head InFlight Services and Customer Experience - SpiceJet Ltd
- **Pran Dasan**, Regional Manager, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Fly Dubai
- **Vishal Suri**, Managing Director, SOTC
- **Neerja Bhatia**, Vice President, Etihad Airways, Indian subcontinent
- **Sriram Rajmohan**, CEO & MD, Club 7 Holidays
- **Belson Coutinho**, Head – Marketing, Ecommerce & Innovation, Jetairways
- **Karan Anand**, Head – Relationship, Cox&Kings
- **Manoj Dharmani**, VP - Sales & Marketing, Go Air
- **Varun Gupta**, CEO, Goomo
- **Ankush Nijhawan**, Co Founder, TBO Group
- **GB Srithar**, Regional Director, South Asia, Middle East & Africa, Singapore Tourism Board
- **Ajay Bakaya**, Managing Director, Sarovar Hotels & Resorts
- **Karan Mohla**, Executive Director, IDG Ventures
- **TC Guruprasad**, CEO & Managing Director, CentrumDirect Limited
- **Kapil Kaul**, CEO & Director, CAPA South Asia
- **Anshu Sarin**, CEO, Berggruen Hotels (Keys hotels)
- **Raj Rana**, CEO, South Asia, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group
- **Zia Sheikh**, Chairman & MD, Svenska Design Hotels
- **Essa Sulaiman Ahmad**, VP - Emirates, India & Nepal

and many more

Panel Discussion Topics of 2017

- Digital Disruption in Travel, Tourism & Hospitality landscape
- The Changing face of a corporate traveller
- The Evolution in hotel distribution system: Are we leveraging it ?
- Serving the Next Gen Smart Holiday Traveler. What do we need to do?
- Leveraging technology in cross selling and up selling to boost revenue growth
- Is consolidation and funding funnelling the growth of travel Industry?:
- From Arrival to Departure: Re Defining passenger experience at

Who will Attend

- Travel Management Companies
- Tour operators
- Hospitality Companies
- OTA's
- Airlines
- Mobile App Developers
- Booking & Reservation Systems
- Business Automation & Management
- E Commerce & Payment System
- CRM & Customer Management
- Corporates and many more

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Non-Member	₹ 2,700
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Hina Gupta

T: +91-11-2348 7540

E: travel.registration@ficci.com

For Sponsorship/ Exhibition please Contact

Anirban Chatterjee

T: +91-11- 2348 7459

E: anirban.chatterjee@ficci.com

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SWISS TO OFFER EXPANDED SUMMER SCHEDULES

Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) will be further expanding its range of air services from Zurich and Geneva in the coming summer schedules. San Francisco will newly receive a daily Boeing 777-300ER service from Zurich, from 22 April onwards. SWISS will also be operating its Boeing 777-300ERs on six of its 12 weekly services to Chicago, between June and October.

The summer schedules see the addition of no fewer than five new seasonal destinations: Bergen, Cork, Figari, Niš and Sylt. Inflight comfort will be further enhanced within Europe with the entry into service of more new Bombardier C Series aircraft, which will operate from both Zurich and Geneva. And, SWISS sister carrier Edelweiss will introduce a new service to the Greek island of Zakynthos for the summer season.

SWISS will be raising its capacities between Zurich and San Francisco in the coming summer schedules. The present three weekly Boeing 777-300ER flights will be increased to daily service with the new fleet flagship from 22 April. As a result, five intercontinental destinations will receive a daily Boeing 777-300ER service in the 2017 summer timetable: Bangkok, Hong Kong, Singapore, Los Angeles and San Francisco. SWISS will also be operating the Boeing 777-300ER on six of its 12 weekly flights to Chicago, between June and October 2017. **tt**



AIR CANADA UNVEILS NEW LIVERY INSPIRED BY CANADA

At three events held simultaneously across Canada in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, Air Canada unveiled for its customers and employees, a bold new livery inspired by Canada for its entire fleet, elegant new uniforms for its employees, and a taste of some of the new onboard menu offerings that its customers can look forward to.

"Air Canada's new livery signals a pivotal inflection point in our 80-year history," said Benjamin Smith, President, Passenger Airlines. "On the occasion of Canada's 150th anniversary year, with our new livery, new uniforms for our employees, the award-winning international cabin standard introduced with the launch of our Boeing 787 aircraft, and enhanced onboard offerings, the future Air Canada represents the strength of our nation and the future-looking spirit of our airline."



Sudhir Raheja, Member (Planning), AAI inaugurating the Big Binge Fest in the presence of Anuj Aggarwal, Member (HR), AAI, and President, AAIOL, AK Dutta, Member (ANS), AAI, and the office bearers of Kalyanmayee.

BIG BINGE FEST AT AAIOL

The Big Binge Fest event was organised at Airports Authority of India Officers' Institute (AAIOI) in association with M/s. Pine Tree Pictures on 25th & 26th February, 2017 (Saturday & Sunday), from 12.00 hrs. to 22.00 hrs. The attractions of the Fest were 70 stalls, including four stalls by NGOs sponsored by the Women welfare organisation of AAI Kalyanmayee, food/Bar stalls, live music bands, kids zone and other fun activities. The Fest was inaugurated by Sudhir Raheja, Member (Planning), AAI, in the presence of Anuj Aggarwal, Member (HR), AAI, & President, AAIOL, AK Dutta, Member (ANS), AAI, and the office bearers of Kalyanmayee. The attendance was in large numbers. The Fest was really a great success and thoroughly enjoyed by all fest goers. **tt**

EGYPTAIR AND ETIHAD AIRWAYS SIGN CODESHARE PARTNERSHIP

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and EGYPTAIR, the flag carrier of Egypt, have announced a new codeshare partnership to be introduced in phases, from March 2017. Under the initial phase of the agreement, Etihad Airways will place its 'EY' code on EGYPTAIR operated flights between Abu Dhabi and Cairo, while EGYPTAIR will place its 'MS' code on Etihad Airways flights between the two capital cities.

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways Chief Executive Officer, said: "EGYPTAIR is one of Africa's most established and renowned airlines, with an extensive network spanning cities across the African continent. This new codeshare agreement reinforces Etihad Airways' commitment to a partnership strategy with airlines around the world that provide guests with more travel options to destinations worldwide."

Captain Sherif Ezzat, EGYPTAIR Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, said: "EGYPTAIR is always keen on enhancing its network through partnering with strong airlines. Thus, we are delighted to be partnering with Etihad Airways." **tt**



TODAY'S
traveller
20
Years
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EXPLORER



Happy Songkran from THAILAND!

Songkran, the Thai New Year, held from April 13-15, 2017, fosters a sense of community building and displays cultural extravaganza at its best

TT BUREAU

Songkran is a traditional mid-summer festival celebrated in Thailand. The word "Songkran" is derived from Sanskrit, and denotes transformation or change of the various zodiac signs. According to astrology, the commencement of summer is marked by the sun moving towards Aries. Water plays a major role in all the celebrations surrounding Songkran, as it is perceived that it cools down body temperatures.

The festival also shows respect towards older relatives, evokes their blessings and is a time for prayer for those who have passed away. All the activities engaged in during this period – from building sand pagodas, sand merit (merit being a kind of atonement according to Buddhism) and throwing water at one another, in order to foster a sense of community.

AYUTTHAYA FESTIVITIES

Songkran is celebrated at the Ayutthaya historical park in Ayutthaya, which is also a World Heritage Site. Elephants and humans come together to celebrate this exciting festival. Visitors celebrate Songkran by splashing water with the elephants at the front area of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ayutthaya office. Some other activities include donating dried food and rice to the monks in front of the hall in Wat Mongkol Bophit, and watching a colourful elephant and flower parade.

At Wat Thong Bo, which lies in the Bang-pa sub district of Ayutthaya, throngs join the Buddha statue bathing rite, making a merit, donating food to monks and watching the Ta-khab flag or 'No' parade.

CHIANG MAI CELEBRATIONS

In the northern city of Chiang Mai, Songkran is also called 'Paweni Pi Mai Muang,' or the 'Sangkhan Long' day. This day is also considered as the last day of the year in the northern region. The morning of April 13, witnesses the bursting of firecrackers in the belief that the sound emitted by them drives away any evil from the past. In the evening, a parade to commemorate Chiang Mai's significant Buddha statue is organised around the city. On April 14, which is also called "Nao" Day, people abstain from being rude or using swear words, as doing so is believed to bring bad luck for the entire year.

On April 15, also known as 'Phya Day' or the 'Beginning of a new era,' locals start their mornings early, visit temples to make a merit, pour water on the hands of abbots while asking for blessings and listen to preaching by monks. On this last day of the Songkran festival, locals cleanse themselves by brushing their bodies, which also symbolises the doing away of bad luck.



BANGKOK SPLASH

One of the most popular places to celebrate Songkran in Thailand is Khao San Road. Throngs of Thai people, especially teenagers, come here to enjoy the water battle with foreign tourists, carrying water guns of all shapes and sizes and shooting at each other joyfully and tirelessly. Another place that celebrates Songkran on a grand scale is Silom Road. During the Songkran Festival, Silom Road is closed from late afternoon for the water splashing activity. However, a BTS train track above, which acts as a large sun shade, makes splashing water at Silom exceptionally cool.

KHON KAEN FEST

One of the most famous Songkran celebrations occurs in Northeast Thailand in Khon Kaen. The festival features ox-cart processions decorated with flowers and beauty pageants. Khao Niao (Sticky Rice Road) witnesses grand celebrations similar to Bangkok's Khao San Road, where one can throw water as well as participate in folk dances with the local people.





MEGHALAYA FOR ADVENTURE!

Meghalaya presents limitless opportunities for the adventure-seeking traveller and provides a unique experience with every visit





TT BUREAU

In the Northeastern state of Meghalaya, nature seems to lend itself to adventure. With its lush forests, cascading waterfalls, pristine rivers and mysterious caves, the state has emerged as a frequent hotspot for tourists and travellers. Meghalaya possesses some gorgeous trekking trails that a trekker only dreams about; the remarkable caves, which are as unpredictable and fascinating as ever, are a caver's delight, while the Shillong Golf Course simply captivates both golf lovers and visitors with its vast green expanse. Choose from a myriad adventure and sports, including caving, trekking, golfing, and more.

GO CAVING

The three hills of Meghalaya – Khasi, Jaintia and Garo, contain some of the best caves that the state has to offer. In the Khasi hills, the numerous caves are scattered in the areas of Cherrapunjee, Shella, Pynursla, Nongjri, Mawsynram and Langrin.

KREM MAWKHYRDOP

The main entrance of this famous cave is located at the bottom of the western flank of Lum Lawbah. The entrance is easily found by following the river behind the cement works of the Mawmluh Cherra Cements Limited, downstream for about 200m, to a point where the river disappears underground. The best option to enter the cave would be through a high-level bypass entrance which runs parallel to the main passage.

KREM LIAT PRAH

It is the longest natural cave in India. Liat Prah is one of approximately 150 known caves in the Shnongrim Ridge of the Jaintia Hills district, Meghalaya. Explored and surveyed as part of the on-going Abode of the Clouds Expedition project, its current length of about 25km is likely to increase as nearby caves continue to be connected. Liat Prah's dominant feature is its enormous trunk passage, the Aircraft Hangar.

SIJU CAVE

Just 132km from Tura, Siju is famous for Dobakkol or the bat cave, with impressive stalagmites and stalactites. It is one of the longest caves in the Indian subcontinent and contains some of the

finest river passages to be found anywhere in the world. There are magnificent limestone rock formations inside which will fill any visitor with awe.

TREKKING ADVENTURES

Meghalaya offers some of the best trekking routes through rain forests to the river front at the bottom of the valley, to the legendary root bridges which are found exclusively in the state.

DAVID SCOTT TRAIL

One of the most popular trekking routes is the old mule track marked by David Scott, traditionally used by people to travel from Mawphlang to present-day Bangladesh. This entire picturesque route extends to a five-day trek or can be divided into shorter treks, the most common being from Mawphlang to Lad Mawphlang, a one-day trek (16km). This four-hour walk takes you past clear streams, by waterfalls over rushing rivers, through meadows, jungles, valleys and also through a Khasi village on a hilltop.

BALPAKRAM NATIONAL PARK

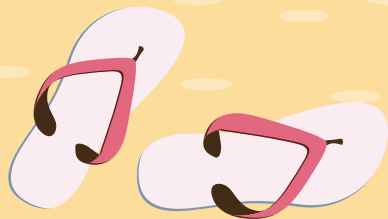
One of the most attractive spots in Garo hills is Siju. Making a base here, one can trek towards the Balpakram National Park to a village called Rongsu (14km), which can be expanded into a longer trek to include the Balpakram National Park. Balpakram National Park offers a wide variety of treks, particularly ideal for wildlife treks. A trek through this tropical forest is an unforgettable experience. Langur, hornbills and other birds are quite easily spotted and sometimes the elusive sambar can also be seen.

GREAT GOLFING

With its panoramic views and scenic beauty, Shillong Golf Course attracts golf enthusiasts from all over the world.

SHILLONG GOLF COURSE

The site on the Shillong Golf Course is located provides a scenic view. Developed in 1898 as a nine-hole course, it was later converted to 18 holes in 1924, by Capt. Jackson and C.K Rhodes - both did a remarkable job in preserving its natural beauty and carved out the course amongst pine trees on gently undulating land. It is the third oldest Golf Course in India and was first surveyed in 1933.



ODISHA'S SERENE BEACHES

The beaches of Odisha offer a perfect combination of tranquillity and recreation, and one is left asking for more after every visit

TT BUREAU

The beaches in Odisha, with their ethereal beauty and serenity, can really bring out the holiday spirit in a person. Watching the waves climb over each other while you sit idly, lost in some contemplation, or take a leisurely stroll along the beach even as the waters of the sea caress your feet, every moment provides an extraordinary experience. The moderate sun overhead and the white sands below participate in equal measure in one's frivolity and merrymaking. What sets apart Odisha's beaches from the rest is the settlement of various tribal communities with their aboriginal lifestyle, on many of them. With a vast coastline stretching across 402km, Odisha houses many beautiful beaches that are still unexplored.

PURI BEACH

For centuries now, Puri Beach has witnessed the arrival of countless pilgrims, all eager to take the traditional purification dip. Puri, being the abode of Lord Jagannath, is considered to be one of the most important Hindu pilgrimage destination. However, for decades now, this beach is also filled with countless beach lovers. The fine white sands of Puri Beach and the roar of the breakers rolling in from the Bay of Bengal have fascinated visitors throughout the ages. The local fishermen, with their catamarans and wide brimmed cane hats, are welcomed by tourists for they not only provide you with a ride on their boats but also act as lifeguards.





ASTARANGA BEACH

91km from Puri lies the tiny but peaceful Astaranga Beach. The panoramic views that this beach offers absorbs you entirely, both body and mind. The name owes its origin to the multi-coloured horizon which can be witnessed here during sunset. Astaranga is also famous for being a major fishing centre. A small fish market sits next to the beach where the fishermen sell their catches to the impatient vendors. In the morning, one can witness the boatmen returning from the sea, their nets dangling over their shoulders.

BALIHARACHANDI BEACH

Baliharachandi Beach, located 8km from Puri, is a famous picnic spot. This beautiful beach can be defined by its unending stretches of golden sandy beaches accompanied by the salubrious weather, along with a terrific view of the roaring sea ahead. Causrinaplants which stand adjacent to the desolate ocean coast lends an enchanting aura to the entire beach. Besides its splendid beauty, this beach is also famous for containing the religious shrine of Goddess Harachandi. One can also catch a glimpse of the shy Baliharina, a kind of deer, which inhabits this area.



CHANDIPUR BEACH

Chandipur Beach, at first sight, gives the impression of sharing the same characteristics with the other beaches in Odisha. However, Chandipur Beach is particularly fascinating, because here, the sea water recedes away from the shore line about 5km twice a day. The sea gives the impression of literally vanishing before one's eyes, before reappearing rhythmically at regular intervals, as if playing a game of hide and seek. When the waters have receded, one can also take a jeep ride. The beauty of this beach is also enhanced by the presence of small red crabs.

CHANDRABHAGA BEACH

Chandrabhaga Beach, set in the village of Chandrabhaga in Puri district of Odisha, is one of the best beaches along the eastern coast of India. The beach lies in close proximity to the famous Sun Temple of Konark. The beach is known for its extraordinary beauty and solitude, but, it also holds great importance in the cultural and traditional identity of Odisha. It is also known to have witnessed the rise and fall of the Konark Temple. Chandrabhaga Mela, a seven day fair, is organised at the beach to honour Lord Surya.



JHARKHAND'S CASCADING WATERFALLS

One of Incredible India's greatest travel attractions, the sweep and fall of Jharkhand's waterfalls emphasise the natural beauty of the state

TT BUREAU

If enchantment is what one seeks, one should visit Jharkhand. A place as ancient as time itself, it bowls you over at every turn by its overwhelming natural beauty. Apart from this, the state's long tradition binds the past to the present in a fascinating way.

Jharkhand's past can be captured and described in varied ways – as a meeting ground, the common place of Indian history, a plural embracing of religious beliefs, a multitude of heroes, gods and goddesses – the remnants of which rub shoulders with the living. The Chotanagpur region in the state has an abundance of fossil remains and prehistoric artefacts, all of which point to the possibility of the transformation of homo erectus to homosapiens having occurred here. With such a rich history, priceless heritage and nature's bounty, Jharkhand is unsurprisingly a highly coveted tourist destination. Its many waterfalls are not only scenic, but are excellent picnic spots. While in Jharkhand, have a rendezvous with Nature, as you visit some splendid waterfalls.

DASSAM FALLS

About 40km away from Ranchi on Tata Road lies a village called Taimara, near which flows the Kanchi river. Falling from a height of about 144ft, the Kanchi River morphs into a pretty fall called Dassam Falls. It is also known as Dassam Ghagh. The waterfall is enclosed by verdant landscapes which embellish its beauty. The river also offers tourists the chance to engage in some recreational activities like river rafting, swimming and other water sports.

GETTING THERE: Situated about 40km from Ranchi off the Ranchi Tata highway, you take a right turn from NH-33 at Taimara. 3km after crossing Taimara, there's a diversion from where a left turn takes you to Dassam.





Hundru Fall

HUNDRU FALLS

One can locate Hundru falls about 45km away from the town of Ranchi. The Swarnarekha River, falling from a height of 320ft, is known as the Hundru Falls. A beautiful pool is formed at the base of the fall which allows visitors to enjoy themselves in various ways – bathing, enjoying a picnic and other activities. The diverse shape of the rocks found here which has been shaped from attrition by the continuous fall of water, thus enhancing its beauty. The ‘Gazetteer of India,’ penned by an English writer during the British Raj, extols the place highly, saying that it’s a place worth visiting despite its remoteness.

GETTING THERE: Tourists can visit the Hundru falls from Ranchi via the Ormanjhi-Sikidiri route.

JONHA FALLS

Jonha is named after the nearest village and is also known as Gautam Dhara, due to a widespread belief that Lord Buddha bathed here. A temple and ashram dedicated to Buddha was built atop Gautam Pahar by the sons of Raja Baldevdas Birla. It’s also called Gunga Nala, because the stream apparently has its origins in the Ganga ghat. A descent of 453 steps leads one to the base of the waterfall and to the far flung villages of Konardih and Duarsini on the other side of the stream.

GETTING THERE: From Ranchi, take the NH-32 to Angarha. From there, a left turn takes you 2km to Hundru, whereas the straight road takes you to Jonha and Sita. 16km from Angarha is Amrutbagan Chowk, from where a 5km-drive will take you to Jonha.

USRI FALLS

Usri Falls, a waterfall located in the Giridih district of Jharkhand, is a popular tourist and picnic spot. The Usri River, a tributary of the Barakar River, flows down a steep gorge, before finally falling about 39ft in three separate streams. The scenery encompassing it is breathtaking, and therefore a favourite spot for picnic lovers.

GETTING THERE: Giridih is well connected through both railway and road. Private taxis, tongas and auto-rickshaws are available. There are regular bus services available from Giridih to other parts of the town. The nearest railway station is Giridih. The nearest airport is Birsa Munda Airport, Ranchi.



Moti Jharna



Dassam Falls



Ranchi Lake - Bada Talaab





A WELCOME BREAK

You don't need a million dollars to have a million-dollar experience... all you need are priceless moments that sparkle as indelible memories. WelcomHeritage Connaught House in Mount Abu offers you just such an experience

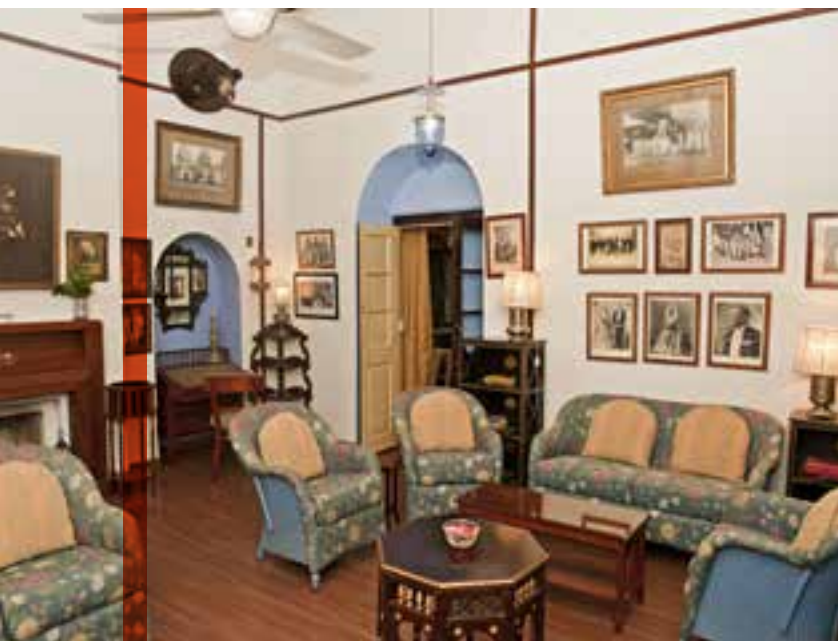
KAMAL GILL

WelcomHeritage Connaught House is a charming "typical English" cottage, tucked away in a quiet and peaceful fold of lovely Mount Abu, once the summer capital of Rajasthan. It is set amidst shady gardens and is within walking distance of the town and the famous Nakki Lake.

The private property of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, it was used by Jodhpur's last English Chief Minister, Sir Donald Field, in the 1930s and 1940s.

With an exquisite little garden, Connaught House is a perfect retreat; an ideal base from which to explore the forests and visit the sensational Delwara Jain Temples. The cottage is most valued for the repose and charm it offers. This delightful English cottage is neat, compact and surrounded by impeccably maintained gardens.

One of the most charming features of the property is the manner in which chairs, benches and swings are provided in shady alcoves, private verandahs, picturesque porticos and imaginative settings. I remember a particular sit-out perched thoughtfully above a massive black boulder which plateaued onto a flat large area. There were cane chairs and a table, where I spent a lovely half day, reading and writing under a thick canopy of leaves provided by ancient Banyan trees.



The bird life is rich as are the shrubs, trees and foliage which bear little tags announcing their names..Magnolia, Silver Birch, Hibiscus,Oak, Blackberry, Mango and so on.

WelcomHeritage Connaught House has 10 cottages with facilities like television, Internet, safety lockers, etc. It has a cottage dining hall and an upper wing dining hall serving authentic Marwari cuisine, North Indian cuisine, Chinese and Continental cuisine. It offers indoor games, bird watching, sightseeing and picnics at the Lake side, camp fire dinners and Theme Dinners at different locations in the premises.

While staying in Mount Abu, you can experience the town's local and street food, which includes Dal Bati, Desi Chhach, Mirchi Bada, Churmaa, Govind Gatta, Bajreka Kheech, Rajasthani Khichdi, Mutton Sula, Maas Bootha, Lal Maas and Bajreka Sogra.

You can also take excursions to Adhar Devi Temple, Guru Shikhar, Shri Raghunathji Temple, Achal Garh Temple, Shankar Math, Brahma Kumari Park, Gyan Sarovar, Peace Park, Gaumukh, Sunset Point and Honeymoon Point.

The hotel is easily accessible. It is 185 km from Udaipur airport and 30 km from the railway station at Abu Road.





Poem lovely as a tree

*I am
A travelling stranger
Stopping by.
Catching my breath
On this unused bench.*

*I look around—
Tall trees
Arch into a languid sky.
I feel a rush of rest,
Like I belong
Here,
In the arms
Of this ancient Banyan tree.*

*I'm tiny,
As I nest under
This giant sun shade,
Old, old,
As can be.
Thick and silver
Knotted branches
Spread low, low,
Just above my head.
I can reach out,
Touch its rough
Aged, ringed surface.
Rest against a branch
U turned into the earth.*

*My body echoes the deep sigh
Released by
Hanging roots.
Like sculpted pipes
Pulled straight down
By gravity,
Into crusted black rocks
And boulders
In search of earth.*

*A soft breeze rustles
Resting leaves.
They move
Before turning over
Into sleep.
The sky,
Clean and washed,
Sparkles through
Each green leaf cluster,
Fresh and silently watchful.*

*The sound of squirrels,
Bird calls, tweets and chants
Break the stillness.
Now and then
Wafting shrub scents
Tease the senses,
Which have gently settled
In a rare repose.*

*I breathe,
The tree breathes.
It's just a moment
In a sun drenched winter garden,
Painted with wild colours
Of Hibiscus, Bougainvillea and ferns,
High in the hills of Abu.*

- Kamal Gill
Connaught House, Mt. Abu

GIVING VINTAGE A NEW DEFINITION!

Visit Rokeby Manor – Landour's premier heritage estate, where living is the fan of the bygones

TT BUREAU

Rokeby Manor, in Landour, Mussoorie, is a colonial era bungalow that has been painstakingly revamped into a charming boutique hotel.

Rustic rooms in English country style, Valley View rooms with stunning views or luxurious suites with private balconies, each room at Rokeby Manor is unique. Restored to original 19th century décor, the bungalow has retained its cosy fireplaces, traditional wooden beams and quiet nooks, where old world charm meets modern comforts.

An old bridle trail, which circles the three summits of Landour ridge, and known as the chukkar, became motorable in the late 1950s, but a morning walk in the brisk air is still the time-tested way of enjoying Landour's sights. The trail eventually leads to Lal Tibba – the best spot to catch a glimpse of the Himalayas, a 200-km long view of peaks like Swargarohini, Bandarpunch, Chaukhamba and Nanda Devi. The circular route continues via the old Landour cemetery and Kellogg's Memorial Church back to Rokeby. All the walking is just a pretext to build an appetite worthy of Rokeby's restaurant Emily's!

The promise of delicious Continental and Indian cuisine in the hills is luring tourists and locals alike who are willing to drive or hike up for signature dishes like Mustard Chicken. Emily's sister establishment Clock Tower Café in Landour Bazaar, with funky decor and music posters, is a great place for pizzas, pastas, burgers and Chinese fare. Away from the clamour of the town, Rokeby is a



welcome patch of serenity. The lovingly renovated rooms with stone walls, quaint arches and parquet floors open out to a Tea Garden and The Highlands, an elevated outdoor venue that boasts a temperature controlled Jacuzzi and is ideal for barbecues.

Strewn across the hillside are a cluster of 19th century colonial cottages called Rokeby Residences, each offering standalone experiences. Bothwell Bank House is a three-bedroom mountain home that provides a historical charm with original fireplaces and wooden beams, equipped with a kitchen, barbecue and an outdoor Jacuzzi. Set on a quiet,

sunny elevated slope overlooking the breathtaking views of the Himalayan range, is a charming small 2-bedroom apartment house called Bothwell Bank Cottage, an authentic stone-clad mountain log cabin with a knotty pine wood décor, which has all the comforts of a home. Another two-storeyed bungalow, Pine Tree Lodge, is inspired by Scandinavian architecture, with colourful patchwork stools, vintage lamps and traditional Finnish artwork.

Rokeby's array of services also comprises The Stray Dog Café & Bar, which includes Stübli Café, serving Swiss and European cuisine and Ale House, an old English pub. Whatever your choice of stay in Landour, exclusivity is guaranteed. Go on nature walks to Jabarkhet nature reserve or Kulti village, or trek the nearby hills of Nag Tibba. The region is simply a delight for nature lovers and

photographers. And, if all this activity seems too much, pamper yourself with a full-body massage or facial and other treatments at Rokeby's 'The Little Salon & Spa Shed'.

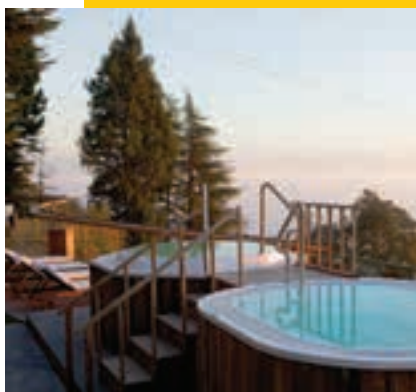
The Landour Bakehouse is the latest attraction at Landour. Many of the bakery, desserts, and pudding recipes here are derived from the Landour Cookbook, which is over a century old! One can sip on a traditional steaming pot of tea and ponder over the history of this quaint little town, while enjoying the views overlooking the majestic snow peaks of the great Himalayan Range through the whispering pines that stand tall.

A ropeway takes tourists up to the second highest peak, Gun Hill, where a gun used to be fired at noon to tell locals the time. After the gunshots triggered a string of accidents, the practice was abandoned in 1919, though the name stuck...The quaint

old ways of telling time are no longer in use, but in quiet nooks like Landour time does take a break and stand still...

GETTING THERE

Landour is 37.5 km from Dehradun by road (1 hr 30 min) and 7km from Mussoorie. The nearest airport is Jolly Grant, Dehradun. Jet Airways has recently launched a new direct flight from Mumbai and Indigo has started one to Dehradun from Delhi, besides connections by SpiceJet & Air India.





GLAMPING'S THE WAY TO GO!

Convert to canvas as you seek out great places to stay, in yurts on the beach, buses in gardens or grass-roofed boats in fields

INDIRA LAUL

Just ten short years ago, camping in the great outdoors meant a dusty tent furnished with a foam mattress and a fibre rug thrown in for good measure. But, that doesn't cut it anymore. Today, you can choose between a floating cabin, an extravagant chateau-inspired tree house, or a cleverly converted shipping container set beside its own lake.

Glamping, or luxury camping, has undergone a rapid and metamorphic rise and become a mainstream favourite the world over. Today's campers have upgraded to more comfort and love the quirky, fun, family-friendly appeal that glamping spells, not to mention that it offers more space and fresh air than your average cottage. Innovative offerings to an ever demanding clientele include high levels of luxury, such as hotel-standard beds and Egyptian cotton sheets, mini-bar, cappuccino maker, private hot tub, massage packages, among others. Today's Traveller has found you glamping places where you can go wild, be alone, hike or bike – in short, thoroughly indulge yourself.



KHWAN GLAMPING BEACH RESORT, KOH SAMUI

Khwan Glamping Beach Resort is located just 50m from Maenam Nam Beach and 30m from Maenam Town Center. Forget your traditional resort or the beachfront hotel with sea view balcony – this is luxury glamping where luxury knows no limits.

Whether you're visiting Koh Samui for business or leisure, check out Khwan Glamping's luxury tented living space, which sets an example for sustainable living and provides the comfort and ambience of a home away from home.

The interiors of the luxury tents resemble an art hotel. Art lovers will find delight in the authentic and original pieces of art, designed by the resort's hand-picked selection of artists. Discover the plush amenities featured in the chic boutique and gallery resort and enjoy a stay in one of the exclusive luxury tents, each designed with the help of a different original artist.

The resort offers high-end services, a large community pool with a pool bar and a spa in one of the luxury tented villas, with facilities for massage treatments. Fine dining is provided by Chef Mattias and includes Nouvelle cuisine and Fusion Thai food, seafood specialties and a wine selection.



TREEHOTEL, SWEDEN

Located in Harads, which is part of Swedish Lapland and only 50km from the Arctic Circle, Treehotel stands near the River Lule and is about 100km from Luleå Airport. Blessed with a magnificent landscape, Treehotel is a camouflaged cube of mirrors that nestles deep within a forest in northern Sweden.

Inspired by the film, 'The Tree Lover,' by Jonas Selberg, and created by some of Sweden's top architects, Treehotel's 'tree rooms' are aesthetically beautiful while respecting the natural environment. There are cabins that look like birds' nests, one that looks like a spaceship and one inspired by the wings of a dragonfly. And, if you happen to visit between September to March, you could get lucky and witness the magical Northern Lights above the pines.

From Treehotel's rooms you get a superb view of the Lule River valley, miles of forest and the powerful river. The entire experience promises to be unforgettable, starting with a friendly reception at Britta's Pensionat before being guided to your tree room. Each tree room is unique and the modern design coupled with the forest's tranquillity creates an instant feeling of luxurious relaxation.

Hosts Kent and Britta ensure that guests are indulged at every meal at Britta's Pensionat. The 1930s-1950s retro setting is inviting and cosy, and this, combined with the tree rooms' contemporary design, creates an entirely unique dimension for every Treehotel guest. Both summer and winter activities are on offer if you opt for a weekend stay. However, if you choose to simply enjoy the quiet, timelessness and harmony around you, that too, is an option.

ECOVALLEE YURT CAMPING, DORDOGNE, FRANCE

A haven from the buzz of everyday life, Ecovallee, in Dordogne, France, is a family-run camp, is set in 12 acres of land, just 300m from the fortified town of Lalinde. Reconnect with the natural world and simply be yourself as you practise yoga, meditation, and enjoy other healing therapies like reiki and kinesiology. Sleep in a yurt at the edge of the woods, shower under the sky and dine under cover in the outdoor kitchen. Lights, refrigeration and washing are powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity, while all structures are made using natural or recycled materials wherever possible.



As you walk down the path from the reception area, you will be greeted by hornbeam, beech, oak, acacia, sweet chestnut, hawthorn and pine. You step out of the woods next to a large, canvas-covered kitchen and eating area, overlooking the valley. This is a great place to sit and watch wildlife, and let your eyes roam over the trees on the far side of the field.

Stay in one of two 18-foot big Kyrgyz-style yurts on either side of the kitchen. Made from coppiced chestnut and covered with canvas, they are equipped with two single beds and simple, practical furnishings. Large, comfortable hammocks around Ecovallée let you read, contemplate or have siestas.

Two small yurts, one a beautiful 12-foot coppiced ash yurt with its own outdoor kitchen and eating area, and a 12-foot yurt in the main field are also available for stay.

WHITEPOD: LES CERNIERS, SWITZERLAND

If you have a yen for exploring the Swiss Alps, here's a truly unique way of doing it – go glamping in style to Les Cerniers, in Switzerland. Located at the base of the Dents-du-Midi mountain range in the village of Les Cerniers, Whitepod takes advantage of Switzerland's intrinsic snow-capped beauty and the adrenaline-pumping adventure of the mountains to create the ultimate in glamping luxury.

Valerie Bonvin, Media Director for Whitepod, says, "Our concept is unique because of our combination of luxury and nature, which creates a unique way to travel."

Whitepod camp comprises 15 geodesic dome pods, around a central chalet and spa. The Chalet Les Cerniers is the main reception of the resort and also houses the restaurant where guests can enjoy a complementary buffet breakfast or evening drinks around the fireplace. Each luxury pod comes with a wood-burning stove to keep it warm, organic luxury bedding for ultimate comfort and full-service bathrooms.

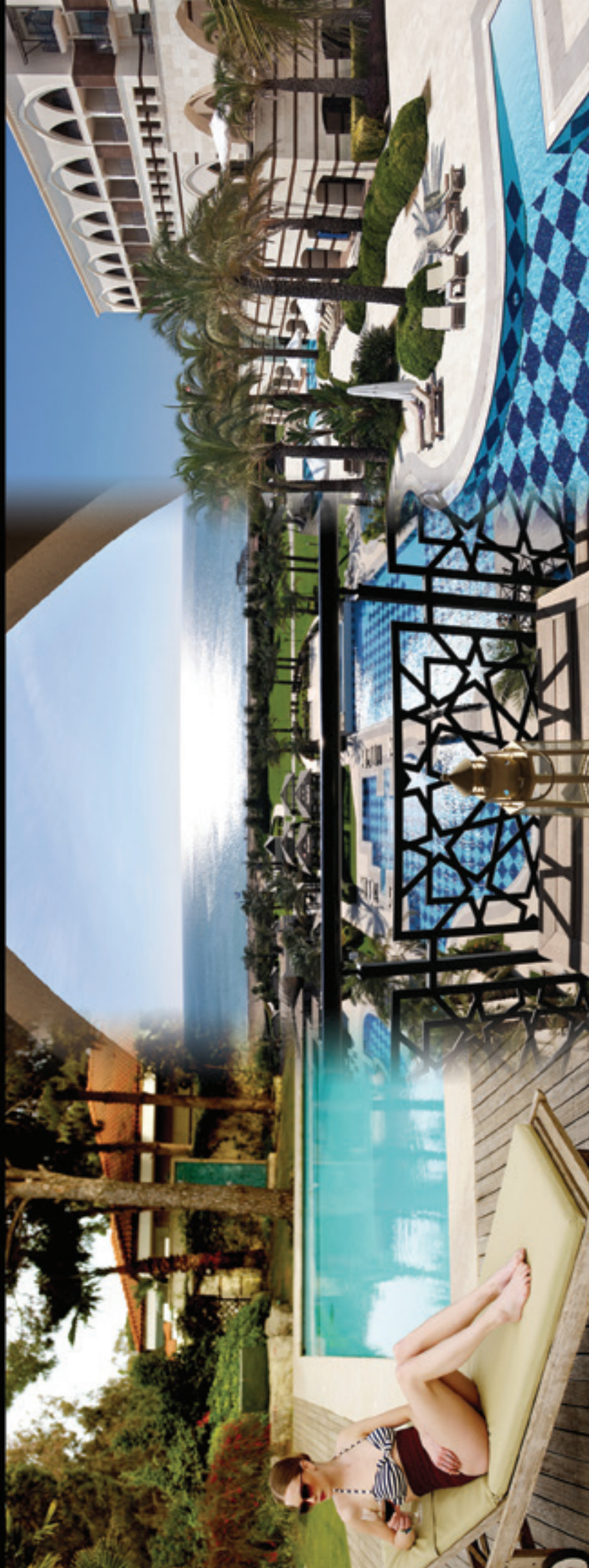
Wake up to stunning views of the Alps and Lake Geneva from the pod's large bay windows and private deck. Each pod can house two persons, while five of the pods come with mezzanines that can hold two extra beds for children. Depending on the season and the day of the week, the pods can be anywhere from \$370-\$600 per pod, per night. The extra beds for children over the age of 12 are about \$70 per night during the week and about \$100 per night during the weekend.

Whitepod attracts a lot of couples, as also people with their families or groups for seminars. What's more, Whitepod resort has its own ski slope that extends over four miles of powdery snow and is perfect for beginners and intermediate level skiers, and the cost of skiing is included in the rate you pay for the pod. Also included, are the relaxation area services, such as a sauna and a Japanese bath. Less than 30 minutes away, fun activities such as paragliding and thermal baths are available.





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INDIA OUTBOUND: IN ROBUST HEALTH

India Outbound demonstrates a healthy 2016 (YE), and a healthier 2017 in the making

RAHUL SINGHA

Whether it is to meet family settled abroad, a shopping indulgence, an international sporting event or just a leisure escape, Indians are increasingly travelling abroad. The UNWTO predicts that India will account for over 50 million outbound tourists by 2020. While business travel (40 per cent), holiday (20 per cent) and VFR (20 per cent) trips dominates outbound volumes, people are also opting for niche products like MICE, luxury travel, sports tourism, luxury cruises and honeymoon destinations.

The growth in the outbound Indian travel and tourism industry can be attributed to a GDP growth rate of 7 per cent, rising levels of income and changing lifestyles, development of diverse tourism offerings, by various foreign tourism boards and travel-friendly policy and regulatory support by the government authorities. Other reasons for outbound travel to spiral northwards include air connectivity

With over 65 million passport holders who are potential travellers, India has emerged as the second fastest growing outbound market, only second to China in terms of visitor numbers. India is the fastest in terms of percentage growth.

with LCC's expanding its footprints in Tier II and Tier III cities and significant growth in women, senior and millennial travellers. Drawn by the new age online travel portals, social media references, encouraged by aggressive marketing by tour operators

and coupled with attractive packages, have all led to the significant rise of outbound travel from India. Outbound tourism is expected to expand further once the economy dusts itself back into full glory.

And significantly, Foreign Tourism Boards have invested in putting their best foot forward in showcasing their destinations to the hungry Indian traveller and making the most of the situation. Foreign Tourism Boards and National Tourism Organisations are all gearing up to welcome these growing numbers travelling abroad.

Data shared by tourism boards of countries reveals interesting strategies and marketing fundamentals that propel their destinations to preferred status for the India Outbound market. This becomes all the more significant keeping in mind tighter spends and smaller budgets at the disposal of corporate and leisure markets. Today's Traveller gives you an insight into these developing trends and how destinations are managing these challenges with new attractions and events to attract visitor arrivals from India.



Destination Australia

NISHANT KASHIKAR

**Country Manager, India & Gulf,
Tourism Australia**



Tourism Australia witnessed a double-digit growth in arrivals for the third consecutive year, with Australia recording 256,400 visitor arrivals from India as of year ended (YE) November 2016. This was an increase of 12 per cent relative to the same period the previous year, making India the ninth largest inbound market for arrivals. Spend by Indian travellers also saw a sustained growth, with Indian visitors spending AUD 1.15 billion (approx. Rs 5,750 crores) on their Australian holidays for the year ended September 2016, notching an increase of 7 per cent over the previous year. The encouraging part of this growth story has been that the holiday purpose of visitation recorded an increase of 17 per cent in arrivals and 19 per cent in spend.

The growth was supported by significant marketing initiatives undertaken through the year. With initiatives such as the Restaurant Australia campaign, showcasing Australia's incredible aquatic and coastal experiences in an all new television commercial and collaborating with Star Plus' top-rated show 'Ye Hai Mohabbatein,' to name just a few.

For 2017, Tourism Australia plans to continue the momentum with focussed strategies across geographies with heightened enthusiasm, thereby encouraging Indian travellers to visit Australia. Increase in air connectivity, the launch of the next phase of The Great Australian Airfare Sale and close association with key distribution partners to provide travellers with the most attractive packages, are some of the initiatives for 2017.



Destination Austria

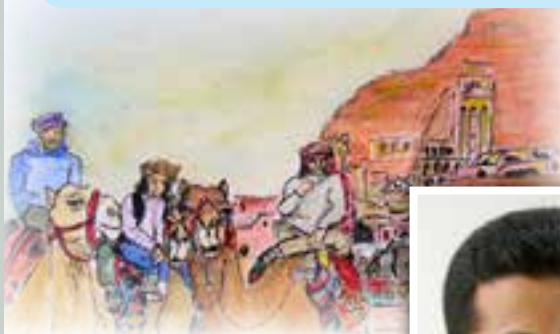
CHRISTINE MUKHARJI

Director, ANTO India



Last year has been phenomenal for Austria as far as tourist footfalls go, with the Austrian National Tourist Office having registered an increase of 25 per cent in the number of Indian tourists visiting the country.

For 2017, Mukharji says, "We look forward to keeping up a steady growth rate in arrivals and overnights of Indian tourists to Austria. We began the year with our annual workshop to Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi, where 15 of our Austrian partners from various regions, cities, hotels, sights and Incoming agents interacted with our Indian travel companies. We look at highlighting some new regions as well, in addition to selling our main cities. We look forward to working closely with the travel trade to project Austria as a must-visit destination for the Indian traveller."



Destination Jordan

ASHIT TANEJA

**Country Manager, India
Jordan Tourism Board**



The aggressive promotional activities carried out by Jordan Tourism board in India have led to an increased number of Indian tourists travelling to Jordan. The beautiful destination, home to various natural scenic wonders, have been promoted through sales calls, joint promotions, FAM trips and aggressive promotions to educate the potential Indian traveller.

Taneja states, "As we plan to continue promoting Jordan aggressively in 2017, the year seems very promising. The plan includes presence on multiple platforms such as online, print, FAM's focussing on Indian destination weddings, Bollywood movie shoots, etc. We hope to encourage more Indian tourists to visit Jordan through these activities."



Destination Mauritius

VIVEK ANAND

Country Manager, MTPA India



For Mauritius, 2016 has been a great year, registering a growth of 15 per cent in tourist arrivals over last year, taking the number to 83,000. There has also been a significant growth in MICE and weddings at the destination and a growth in the high-end FIT segment.

For 2017, Anand states, "We are targeting 100,000 tourists in 2017, which is an increase of 20 per cent over 2016. We expect a healthy growth in the MICE and wedding segment and will be promoting Mauritius as a destination 'Beyond the Beach'."

He goes on to add, "In 2017, while maintaining our endeavour to increase Indian footfalls from adventure, honeymoon and family segments, there will be a focus on golf, weddings, film shootings and incentive movements. We will continue with roadshows and workshops to impart destination knowledge to the agents. In order to engage the consumers, we have started an advertising campaign, which includes mainline media, billboards and digital media. We will also participate in various events across the country, to engage directly with high net worth individuals."



Destination NSW

SANDRA CHIPCHASE

Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW



In the year ended September 2016, New South Wales (NSW) welcomed more than 120,000 visitors from India (up 10.1 per cent), who spent \$293 million in NSW (up 8.8 per cent). These incredible figures demonstrate that India is a key and growing international visitor market for Destination NSW.

From stunning beaches, unique wildlife, iconic harbour attractions, exciting events and festivals and beautiful surrounding areas, NSW is well placed to welcome visitors from India. Air India's direct service from Delhi to Sydney has significantly boosted tourism to NSW by providing greater opportunities for Indian visitors to enjoy their fantastic tourism products, experiences and events in Sydney and Regional NSW.

This year brings many new and exciting prospects for Destination NSW, including their bumper calendar of events such as Vivid Sydney – the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas. Other highlights in 2017 include Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour – an awe-inspiring production against the striking backdrop of the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Royal Easter Show, Hunter Valley Wine and Food Festival, Wings Over Illawarra, College Football Sydney Cup and the Australian premiere of Beautiful – The Carole King Musical.



Destination Mt. Titlis

RAYO CHOSKI

Regional Director, India

For Titlis Cableways, Hotels & Restaurants the year 2016 was nothing short of an enigma. However, circumstantially, it all panned out well with numbers showing a fantastic upward trend in the last quarter of the year, thus, registering a growth that saw the year end as the best year ever from the Indian market. The increase in tourist footfalls can be attributed to the increase in MICE business and Europe being a preferred destination for the Indian traveller in winter.

For the New Year, Choski reiterates, "We normally make our forecasts by the end of November the previous year. But, with Demonetisation, the booking sentiments have been reversed. The new service tax on tour operators, plus the implementation of the GST from July, will have a bearing on the cost of travel, which would naturally affect the cost of tours to shift upwards."

He goes on to add, "Traditionally, bookings are weak just before and after the budget. From our side, we can only prepare to welcome Indians with a top-class product which has been such a success in the market and to ensure that we deliver to their expectations, and even more. We shall continue with our strategy of working very closely with our partner tour operators, GSAs and MICE operators as their success augurs well for us."



Destination South Africa

HANNELI SLABBER

**Country Manager, India
South African Tourism**

Last year has been absolutely stellar for South African Tourism for various reasons. Arrivals spiked by 26.6 per cent in comparison to 2015. By September 2016, arrivals had hit 73,902. This makes India South Africa's eighth largest long-haul tourism source market.

Representative, SAT, states, "As always, we are extremely optimistic about the New Year. We will aim at surpassing our achievements during 2016 and we look forward to setting new benchmarks internally as well as in the industry. We're hoping to achieve a 10 per cent increase over last year's arrivals and to ensure that we continue to draw in over 100,000 Indians in the coming year."

The stupendous figures can be attributed to the positive response from South African and Indian partners for the 4-city roadshow held in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Kolkata at the beginning of the year. Indian travellers shifting their focus to experiential travel and Indian travellers becoming more adventurous are factors that have contributed to such numbers.



Destination South Korea

BYUNGSUN LEE

**Director, Korea Tourism Organization,
New Delhi**

Indian Tourist arrivals to South Korea increased by 27.3 per cent in 2016, the country welcomed 195,579 visitors from India, the same year, in numbers.

The constant efforts made by the Korea Tourism Organization, New Delhi office, on educating the travel trade partners to promote the destination and a proactive business approach from the DMCs (Destination Management Companies), have been the key factors in the result.

For the future, connecting with the end traveller through tactical media platforms and an increase in airline connectivity from Delhi (with Asiana Airline having seven times a week frequency and Korean air with five times a week) will play as game changer this year. Promoting various affordable packages from Delhi and Mumbai with the partners and association with neighbouring tourism boards to jointly promote both destinations and create a win-win situation are other factors that are on the anvil.



Destination Spain

IGNACIO DUCASSE GUTIERREZ

Tourism Counselor, Embassy of Spain in India & Director, Tourism Office of Spain in India

The year 2016, has been a pretty good year for Spain in terms of the number of arrivals from India to Spain. While the forecast for the year was a growth of about 8-10 per cent, the country managed to exceed that by registering a growth of over 14 per cent instead, with a total close to 100,000 Indian tourists travelling to Spain, with December 2016 registering the maximum growth vis-à-vis previous Decembers, right from 2010.

Several events such as the World Tapas Day organised in June, the IIFA awards, Roadshows in Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru, and the inauguration of the Air India direct flight from Delhi to Madrid in December were instrumental in the promotion of the destination and developed a strong interest amongst Indian consumers to travel to Spain.

For 2017, Gutierrez states, "We have outlined a series of important activities for 2017. We began the year with our participation in SATTE 2017 and we will travel to various Tier I and Tier II cities such as Pune, Cochin, Hyderabad and Chandigarh to give presentations and we will be organizing various FAM trips for the media and travel trade to showcase our destination, among several other initiatives. Given the current situation of the Indian economy, we are still expecting a growth of about 10 per cent in 2017."



Destination Switzerland

CLAUDIO ZEMP

Director, India, Switzerland Tourism

The source Market India had the best year ever in 2016 with a growing trend of Indians opting to visit Switzerland outside the established peak season. Switzerland Tourism has also launched a 'one-day-ski-experience' product specifically for the Indian market, which makes it easy and hassle free to spend a day on the slopes, which already has seen a great uptake and is a big success among Indian travellers.

For 2017, Zemp says, "We are very excited that Ranveer Singh has decided to become our brand ambassador. We look forward to highlighting St Moritz, Lucerne and Engelberg and all the other exciting activities in Switzerland, such as sky diving, paragliding, helicopter flying, and of course, skiing. So, we expect a big demand for experience based travel to Switzerland in 2017."



Destination Thailand

ISRA STAPANASETH

**Director, TAT
New Delhi**

India is an emerging market for Thailand considering that the outlook for outbound tourists from India is set to grow by leaps and bounds. Thailand registered a footfall of over 1,193,822 Indian tourists to Thailand in 2016, thus, registering a growth of 11.63 per cent.

Thailand is in the process of shifting focus from being a value for money destination to a value for experience destination, while wedding and celebrations still remain the main targets for Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT). However, Thailand has a variety of choices for the Indian traveller that ranges from medium to high end choices, big fat weddings and celebrations, leisure travel, Medical Tourism, Health & Wellness, golf, etc.

TAT has also participated in various joint activities with travel agents and airlines to target the long weekends, summer and winter vacations. Leaving no stone unturned, TAT, has also participated in various luxury road shows, FAM trips for trade (travel agents, media, wedding planners, frontliners, and luxury), hosted joint promotions with travel agents and media, B2b & B2C, Wedding and Luxury fairs, among several others. Celebrations are underway with 2017 marking 70 years of diplomatic relationship between India and Thailand.



Destination Taiwan

NOEL SAXENA

**Country Head,
Taiwan Tourism Bureau,
India**

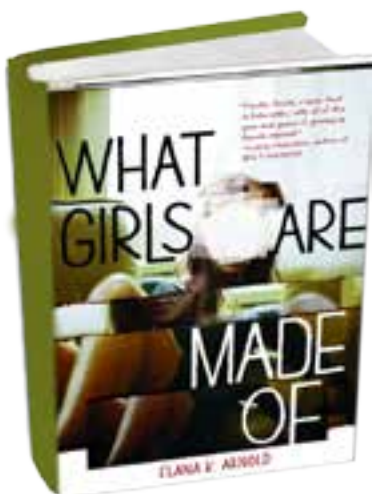
The year 2016 has been a successful year for Taiwan Tourism Bureau in India. The various sales, marketing and PR activities throughout the year have helped increase the arrival figures from India to Taiwan.

Initiatives such as Media FAM trips with SCOOT airlines and an easy visa policy for Indian tourists are some factors that would keep the momentum of Indian tourists visiting Taiwan high.

For the future, the tourism board plans to focus on consumer and trade activities in 2017 after easing out visa policies for Indian travellers. Indian nationals are now entitled to a free Taiwan visa which can be applied online – so, it's now even easier to plan a leisure holiday or MICE event to Taiwan.

PICK OF THE MONTH

The latest collection of books, games, audio CDs and DVDs are here to keep you entertained for the month



BOOK: WHAT GIRLS ARE MADE OF

When Nina Faye was 14, her mother told her that there was no such thing as unconditional love. She believed her then. Now, at 16 years of age, she is ready to prove her loyalty to her lover by doing anything for him. However, a break-up ensues, and Nina finds herself lost. She rethinks the nature of her relationship with her supposed lover. Brokenhearted, she tries to find the true meaning of love. Volunteering at a high-

kill animal shelter, she realises that love comes first to those dogs that are endowed with youth, symmetry and quietness. Is this what love is? She sets out to find the answer.

Genre(s): Young adult, Contemporary

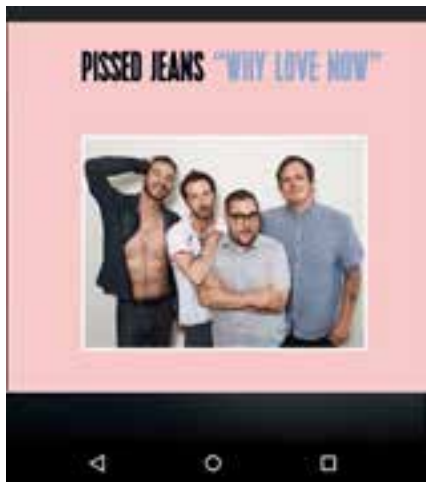


DVD: OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

In an attempt to acquire a new client, a condescending office manager decides to throw a huge Christmas bash. The CEO of the company is the manager's sister and she is considering closing down the branch because of poor sales. In an attempt to win over this prospective client, the manager hopes to turn the company's branch into a successful and profitable faction. Hoping to boost his image, personally and professionally, the office manager plans a Christmas party that should be the mother of all Christmas parties.

Genre(s): Comedy

MUSIC: WHY LOVE NOW



Coming from a hard core tradition deeply embedded in the absurdity of existence than the sweaty anarchy of their predecessors, The Pennsylvania have firmly established themselves as torn up, burnt out and laughing at the system. Why Love Now, their fifth LP and fourth with Sub Pop, reveals the band at its sludged-out best, trudging through jagged riffs and slow-moving drum beats before diving into a head

rush of violent bliss. Tracks like "Worldwide Marine Asset Financial Analyst" and "Ignorecam" surge through the mix with combative lyrics.

Genre(s): Hardcore punk, Noise rock



GAME: GHOST RECON: WILDLANDS

Ghost Recon: Wildlands is set in a Bolivian land mass, where four players, comprising a military task force are sent to disrupt a drug cartel and the government that it's aligned with. Players are given specific missions – steal some intel or kidnap some informant – and how they go about achieving those is up to them. The open world – the first such instance in Ghost Recon's ten-game history, promises diverse environments like mountains, forests, and deserts that are explorable by ground vehicles, helicopters and parachutes.

Genre(s): Tactical shooter

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Posted on 16th & 17th of every month from
Lodi Road HPO New Delhi - 110003
No. of Pages - 60 without cover

Postal Regn No. - DL (S)17/3507/2017-19
RNI No. : 68182/1997



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