The second edition of Islamic Travel Mart takes place in Mumbai

With over 700 trade visitors attending the two-day show, Islamic Travel Mart, India’s only travel trade show dedicated to the high potential Hajj, Umrah, Ziyarat and Halal travel market concluded its second edition in Mumbai.

Held from October 5 to 6 at the Expo Centre, World Trade Centre, the show was inaugurated by Chairman Shaikh Jina Nabi and CEO Dr Maaqsood Ahmad Khan of the Haj Committee of India, the chief guests at the show. They were joined by dignitaries including Ebrahim Hasham Rokawala, Chairman, All India Haj Umrah Tour Organisers Association (AHIUTOA); Dr Yusuf Ahmed Kherada, Founder, Al Khalid Tours & Travels; Afzal Patel, Managing Director, Atlas Umrah; V S Abdul Kareem, Chairman & Managing Director, Creative Holidays India Pvt Ltd.; Nayar Mohammad Shabnan, Chairman, Federation Haj PTOs Of India (FHPITO); Moulaan Syed Aeajz, Chairman, Haj Umrah Private Tour Operators Association (HUPTOA); Sameer Karnani, President, TAAI; Aruna D Shetty, Director, IAAI and Abbas Moiz, Managing Committee, TAFI.

Sh午后a Jina Nabi, Chairman, Haj Committee of India took a tour of the exhibition and observed, “The exhibition here is outstanding. Travel agents from Saudi Arabia and India are both here. We met them all and promised to help them in all possible manners.”

Al Khalid Tours & Travels, a prominent name among Hajj and Umrah tour operators participated in the show as the Premium Partner. The company is recognised by the Government of India and Saudi Arabia for their service towards pilgrims. Speaking at the inauguration, Dr Yusuf Ahmed Kherada, Founder, Al Khalid Tours & Travels said, “This is the best show dedicated to the Muslim Hajj and Umrah travel cause. No other such shows are there in India. The show unites us with agents from India and abroad. I hope the show explores new possibilities so that in future more and more people can be a part of the show.”

Over 20 exhibitors from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and India participated in the two-day show. Featured exhibitors included ELAP Group, Mawasim, Millennium Hotels And Resorts, Manazil Al-Mukhtara Company, Al Hussam Umrah, Rahhal International Makka Booking, Abu Al Joud, Al Aaifya, Rawabi Emirates, Rawad Holidays, Maqbool Umrah & Ziyarat Services by Creative Group, Classic Tour & Travels Pvt Ltd, The Global Chef Kitchen and OIC Halal.

On the second day of the show, Maqbool Umrah & Ziyarat Services by Creative Group held a discussion cum magazine launch addressing Pilgrimage and Islamic Travel Mart by Fairfest Media is an excellent example of an exhibition for all the stakeholders of Hajj and Umrah travel. It gives an opportunity to authentic service providers with whom business can be done and pilgrims can be catered very well. I congratulate Fairfest Media for organising such a wonderful show.

Dr Maaqsood Ahmad Khan
CEO
Haj Committee of India

Halal Tourism. The magazine was unveiled by V S Abdul Kareem, Chairman & Managing Director, Creative Holidays Pvt Ltd.

The show has been curated to provide a dedicated B2B platform to the booming Islamic travel industry in India, well-supplied by a 140 million-strong Muslim community. Islamic Travel Mart was scheduled at a strategic time to help top buyers from the Indian Islamic travel fraternity connect with international suppliers across a variety of domains including hotels, DMCs, transport service providers, OTAs and others.

With Saudi Arabia increasing the allowance of Hajj pilgrims from India by 30,000, the time is ripe for the travel stakeholders in India to explore new business opportunities in the field. Islamic Travel Mart bridges the gap between service providers and buyers in India.

Islamic Travel Mart is supported by TAAI, Haj Umrah Private Tour Operators Association, All India Haj Umrah Tour Organisers Association, Federation Haj PTOs of India, TAFI, IAAI, UTEN, GSHZTOA, Gujarat State Haj Ziyarat Tour Operators Association.

Islamic Travel Mart is organised by India’s oldest and largest travel trade show organisers, Fairfest Media Ltd, which has been organising globally acknowledged travel shows like OTM, BLTM and TTF for the last 30 years.

TTF West series gives a strong boost to the travel market in the festive season

Records growth, receives a good response from the travel trade and general visitors

TTF Mumbai concluded on a successful note after three busy business days at the Nehru Centre, Worli from September 13 to 15 with over 2,200 travel trade visitors attending the show, registering an impressive growth over last year. Over 1,700 travel lovers from Mumbai and nearby regions also visited the show, exploring the best deals in travel packages, hotels and much more.

Followed by Mumbai, TTF Pune also came to a successful close for the year with its latest edition held from September 20 to 22 at Laxmi Lawns, Messe Global Pune with over 780 trade visitors and 1,300 travel lovers visiting the show.

The three-day show kick-started in the packed halls of the Nehru Centre on September 13, bagging-off the busy Diwali and winter holidays travel season in India’s largest travel source market-Mumbai.

The show was inaugurated by dignitaries of the Indian travel industry including Jagat Mehta, President, ETAA; Sameer Karnani, Chairman, TAAI; Dharmendra Singh Chauhan, Chairman-Maharashtra Chapter, ADTOI; Himanshu Patil, Vice-President, OTOAI; Rajan Parekh, Treasurer, MTOA; Rajat Bagaria, Joint Secretary, TAFI and Malti Dutta, Assistant Director of Publicity, India Tourism.

TTF Pune was inaugurated in the presence of a host of dignitaries belonging to the travel industry. Bahram P Zadeh, Chairman - Pune Chapter, TAAI; Nilesh Bansali, Director, TAAP; Vishwas Kelkar, President, TAAP; Rajesh Arge, Secretary - Western Region, ETAA, Ajay Sengar, Chairman - Western Region, OTOAI; Sameer Kulkarni, Treasurer - Pune Region, TAFI; Pranod Bidkar, Managing Committee Member
Bureau brought a Southeast Asian flavour to the show, exhibiting as the Feature Country of TTF Pune. Nepal, Thailand and UAE were also represented at the show through private participants selling these destinations.

Indian States had a prominent presence in TTF Pune. Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal were present as the Partner States. Himachal Pradesh exhibited as the Feature State. All of them had come with a good number of co-participants who met with both the local travel trade and end consumers over a three day period.

Other states that were represented at the show included Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

International presence in the show included participating countries such as Germany, Greece, Kenya, Maldives, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand and UAE.

210 exhibitors from 14 Indian States & UTs and 5 Countries were present at TTF Pune this year, showcasing their travel offerings and tourism attractions in colourful pavilions. Taiwan Tourism Bureau brought a Southeast Asian flavour to the show, exhibiting as the Feature Country of TTF Pune. Nepal, Thailand and UAE were also represented at the show through private participants selling these destinations.

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International presence in the show included participating countries such as Germany, Greece, Kenya, Maldives, Nepal, South Africa, Thailand and UAE.

The second session was an interesting study in how much technology has influenced the hospitality industry. Hosted by Shirish Arya, Chairman & Managing Director of Mini Hotels, it discussed the successful implementation of IoT in building smart hotels for efficiency gains.

The third and the last session addressed the pressing concern of child safety in the tourism industry. Helmed by Joyatri Ray, Director of Equitable Tourism Options (Equations) the session was instrumental in spreading awareness about child safety and the active role the travel industry can play in it.

TTF Mumbai and TTF Pune receive support from tourism departments of various states, Tourism Ministry of Government of India, private exhibitors and trade associations.

Towards the end of the third day at both the shows, exhibitors showing promise were honoured with awards for excellence in a variety of categories.

TTF Mumbai is supported by India Tourism, as well as travel industry bodies like TAAI, OTOAI, ADTOI, IATO, IAAI, SKAL INTERNATIONAL, ETAA, TAAP and TAAN. On the other hand, TTF Pune is supported by Incredible India, as well as TAAI, TAFI, UTEN, OTOAI, ADTOI, IATO, IAA, SKAL, INTERNATIONAL, ETAA, TAAP, TAAN.
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Exhibitor Testimonials at Islamic Travel Mart

Dr Yusuf Ahmed Kherada
Founder, Al Khalid Tours & Travels

We are participating for the second consecutive year in Islamic Travel Mart. One of the major reasons why we are exhibiting here is the show is the biggest and first-ever of its kind in the history of India. The show is the best platform for us for branding, exploring and discovering many peers. We are excited to meet all the B2B agents here. We are honoured to be here and look forward to coming next year as well. This is the best platform we’ve gotten. Thank you!

Arfaz
Classic Tours & Travels

We are exhibiting for the first time at Islamic Travel Mart. It has been an amazing experience. We have been able to meet a lot of related travel agencies, associations, hotels and others. The experience has been really overwhelming and we are looking forward to being a part of Islamic Travel Mart in future as well.

Umair Julani
Partnership Management Director, Saudi Telecom Company

We are participating in Islamic Travel Mart for the second time and we are happy to be here again. We are expecting travel operators and specialists in selling Umrah packages to come interact with us. We are hoping to market ourselves in the India market. The show is a great opportunity for both buyers and sellers to explore new opportunities. I would like to thank the organisers for giving us this opportunity. Thank you so much! The experience here has been great.

Mohammed Yusuf
Mawasim Tours & Travel

This is my first time in Mumbai and so far, everything has been good. India being the biggest source market for Hajj and Umrah, we’ve come to Islamic Travel Mart which is the only trusted show dedicated to this travel segment. The show is going well for us.

Nusaif Rahman
Rawabi Emirates

I am very excited and happy to be here at Islamic Travel Mart. I’ve visited a few exhibitors at the show, learned a lot of new things. I think it is a really wonderful show. I request all travel agents in India to come to shows like this one and explore new opportunities.

Santosh Salunke
KeepGoing Holidays

This is my first time in Mumbai and so far, everything has been good. India being the biggest source market for Hajj and Umrah, we’ve come to Islamic Travel Mart which is the only trusted show dedicated to this travel segment. The show is going well for us.

Umair Julani
Partnership Management Director, Saudi Telecom Company

India is a feeder market for Saudi Arabia and of course, we have very good Umrah visitors coming from the country. We cater premium to economy guests coming for the pilgrimage. Islamic Travel Mart is an exciting show for us to explore the market in India. It has started on a good note and we are expecting great footfall over the two show days.

Hussain Rauff
Regional General Manager, Elaf Hotels & Suites

Islamic Travel Mart is a wonderful experience for me. The exhibitors sharing information is excellent. I am now aware of the pilgrimage, how many days it lasts for and much more. The show was very informative. Thanks to the organising team for such a wonderful showcase. Bring in more exhibitors and hoteliers so that the event is more successful. I’d like to request all my travel industry friends to visit this event.

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Loyalty Programmes, the new way to address the business traveller's demands

According to Global Business Traveller’s Association (GBTA), the world’s business travel spend will reach $1.7 trillion by 2022. As the demand for business travel skyrockets, the importance of accommodating the many demands of business travellers becomes paramount. Every sector that caters to corporate travellers, especially aviation and hospitality are increasingly adapting to suit the growing needs of business travellers. Technology remains a big enabler in the scenario, with one factor that remains a constant - loyalty programmes.

Loyalty programmes have been around for a while. Their rise in popularity among business travellers does not pack a surprise. Nielsen’s research report reveals that 60% of consumers consider loyalty programmes and their travelling employees

AI to bridge the gap between businesses and their travelling employees

Global business travel is thriving. At least 1.9 million business trips are taken every day of a workweek in the U.S. alone. With more and more millennial workforce joining the business travel bandwagon, the corporate travel industry is showing no signs of slowing down. As the numbers grow, managing business travel is becoming quite a Herculean task for business travel managers of all operational sizes.

One of the most concerning challenges plaguing business travel today is conceding employee-first travel policies with corporate compliance. How do you grant a travelling employee the autonomy they demand, a personalised experience they love all the while ensuring he is abiding by the company’s corporate travel compliance policies? For travel managers, the task is a double-edged sword. Strict compliance regulations have the potential of offending the new-age business travellers are always on the lookout for hyper-personalised travel experiences, impact their productivity and even retention. Allowing complete flexibility often veers towards zero compliance, over-expenditure, etc. There is no one-size-fits-all policies that can come to the rescue, but Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) can alleviate many roadblocks that dated management processes cannot.

By analysing employee booking habits and company policies, AI can strike the perfect middle ground of compliance and flexibility. Data utilised by AI can be from real-time updates or from repositories containing company information. In both cases, AI can make bespoke recommendations that serve the travelling employee’s preference while at the same time adhering to company expense limits.

As far as expense management is concerned, AI has evolved enough to be able to read and process bills from handwritten receipts. ML can successfully audit expense reports submitted by a business traveller to validate expenditure and check compliance. It can also successfully decipher receipts issued in various foreign languages, thereby reducing a significant amount of work for travel managers.

AI’s its impact in driving traveller safety is also paramount. AI can determine an employee’s whereabouts without being intrusive by analysing timestamps and social footprints. That way, if a travelling employee misses a flight, travel managers will be notified.

American Airlines to expand frequent flyer programme in Hong Kong, driven by demand in business travel

American Airlines has revealed the slump in demand has been far less than estimated during the protest-rife last few months in Hong Kong. The Texan air carrier has attributed the difference to robust demand in business travel to and from Hong Kong and plans to use the destination as its base to expand its outreach in Asian markets.

Shane Hodges, Managing Director of Sales in Asia-Pacific, American Airlines said, “We’re in Asia-Pacific [for the] long term. We will continue to invest in certain parts of the world where things aren’t necessarily going as well as we would like.”

He also added that in spite of the ongoing unrest in Hong Kong, American Airlines has no plans of withdrawing flights or cutting short their operation in the city.

Hong Kong has been rocked by often violent protests for more than four months, sparked by the now-withdrawn extradition bill, which would have allowed for the transfer of fugitives to jurisdictions with which the city has no such agreement, including mainland China. The campaign has since morphed into a wider anti-government movement.
EbizCash's Indian subsidiary Mercury Corporate Travel Division will be taking over Cox & Kings' Indian business clients in the country after the travel giants suffered a major liquidity crunch. EbizCash is an international supplier of on-demand software and e-commerce services to the insurance, financial, healthcare and e-learning industries. All existing corporate clients under Cox & Kings will now be serviced by EbizCash's Mercury Division all over India. The move is an integral part of EbizCash's strategy to double its revenues as compared to the last year, from the corporate travel sector by the end of this Financial Year.

Naveen Kundu, Managing Director, Mercury Division of EbizCash said “We are simply transferring the corporate agreements of Cox and Kings to ensure that the customers continue to be well serviced and looked after. Our vast experience, success record in the corporate travel business will be key in servicing the corporates and they shall benefit from our bouquet of travel and technology products.”

He added, “All these corporates were already being serviced by Cox and Kings using EbizCash's technology platform Zillious. That further ensures a seamless experience for all the constituents involved in this transfer. I believe that the strength of our state-of-the-art technology, expanse of our financial exchange, end-to-end enterprise travel functionality, focus on cross selling, along with strong sales leadership; positions us well to grow our travel and forex businesses in conjunction aggressively globally.”

Egencia, the consolidated global travel provider.

Global heat, light and mobility service provider BP has recently revealed that they have chosen Egencia to ‘modernise, simplify and expand’ its global travel program in an effort to improve their business travel worldwide.

Alex Thomson, VP of Global Business Services, Procurement at BP said, “Egencia’s business travel platform is very impressive compared to other offerings in the travel management market. For a business of our size and global scale, having technology and data-driven solution is crucial to ensuring every traveller in our business has the same great experience from planning to travelling and safe return home. We are confident that Egencia will help us deliver that great experience.”

Egencia’s deployment is meant to deliver a simple, seamless and intuitive travel experience to all of BP’s business travelers. Working closely with the company’s Analytics Studio, BP aims to simplify travel compliance management by bringing online, mobile, and offline booking data into one central location.

Commenting on the development, Arnaud Le Mane, Vice President of Worldwide Sales at Egencia said, “We’re proud to have been selected by BP to modernise their global business travel programme. It’s an honour to work with one of the world’s most established companies, and it’s a testament to our ongoing commitment to help customers reimagine their corporate travel. We’re excited that our platform, our continued investment in innovation and our skilled 24/7 local language customer service team will help BP to transform its global travel program and better enable them to care for their travellers on the road.”

Egencia and the Egencia Global Alliance (EGA) partners will support corporate travel across 47 countries in which BP operates. The two companies have signed a multi-year agreement designating Egencia the consolidated global travel provider.
Madhya Pradesh Tourism bags 10 awards in National Tourism Awards 2019

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, one of the most active and creative tourism board of country, was awarded to National Awards in different categories namely Best Adventure State, Excellence in Publishing in Foreign Language – Chinese Brochure, Best Tourism Promotion Publication, Material – Lonely Planet Pocket Guides, Best Maintained & Differently Abled Friendly Monument for Buddhist Monument at Sanchi, Best Wildlife Guide to Manoj Kumar, Panna, Best Heritage City - Orchha, Best Airport – Indore, Swochitha Award, Indore, Best Tourist Transport Operator to Radient Travel.

These awards were presented in National Tourism Awards 2019 organised on September 27 (World Tourism Day) at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi by M Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India in the gracious presence of Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (IC) Prahlad Singh Patel, along with Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Zurab Pololikash. Speaking on the occasion, Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, IAS, Secretary, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board and Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation said, “It’s a great matter of pride for us that Madhya Pradesh Tourism has again received 10 National Awards in different categories, Madhya Pradesh Tourism under the guidance of Minister of Tourism Department and Narmada Valley Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh Surendra Singh Baghel Madhya Pradesh Tourism always tries to excel in every field related to tourism.”

On this special occasion, senior officials of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board quoted, “We highly appreciate the contribution of the tourism industry in various forms and aim to set new national standards in the field of hospitality and services with these awards. In the presence of senior officials from the tourism board, tour operators, destination management companies, stakeholders as well as millions of travellers who have visited Madhya Pradesh over the years, we feel honoured to receive such awards.”

The Government of Odisha announced to revive the plans of developing Shamuka, a beach located along the Bay of Bengal between Puri and Chilika Lake. A Special Tourism Area (STA) spread over an area of 920 acres located in Puri district of Odisha was identified as a joint venture company of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation Limited and Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) on October 31, 2017 for the development of the Shamuka Beach project.

STDC intends to develop Shamuka Beach project, with the objectives of providing new tourism products and unlocking the potential of destination, which would offer the tourists an opportunity to feel and experience the rich culture, indigenous art and craft, customs and traditions of Odisha. The destination would be ideal for tourists looking to relax in the lap of luxury in tranquility and to experience the beautiful biodiversity, rich culture and traditions – the very essence of Odisha.

In order to develop Shamuka into a world-class destination, the State Government has already started the process for the development of support infrastructures like road up to the edge of the site, water source and power.

The site is envisaged to be a global tourist destination in the near future because of its proximity to the pristine beach at Puri and the prominent Jagannath temple. Shamuka also offers other tourist attractions in close vicinity. Raghurajpur (40 km from Puri) is an artisan village which has 123 households having 576 Artists. It is famous for Odisha paintings and other finest art forms. Serene Chandrabhaga beach is an attractive destination wedding location. The Sand Art Festival, Konark Dance Festival and National Surfing Festival are also major attractions. The Mangla River, which separates Puri town from Shamuka Beach, flows on one side of the proposed site. It assumes the form of a bare sandy ridge, which stretches along the seashore for almost 4 km.

Odisha revives tourism project to promote Shamuka as an international tourism hub

Himachal Pradesh to get a ropeway over Saach Pass to boost connectivity and tourism

Himachal Pradesh has planned for a ropeway over Saach Pass in Chamba. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur also informed that the central government has approved the ropeway project with an outlay of 960 crore for Pangi area in Chamba district.

With an aim to help avoid the Saach Pass, the ropeway would be constructed from Bhanoodi to Killar that would ensure round-the-year connectivity to the snow-bound area.

The Chief Minister stated that the project would be a pilot which was sent by the state government for approval in the month of September this year. The 2.4 km long ropeway would be commissioned in five stages by the state-run Ropeway and Rapid Transport System Development Corporation Limited. Located at an altitude of 14,500 ft, the ropeway would be constructed over the Saach Pass, the gateway to the picturesque Pangi Valley.

Presently to reach from Bhanoodi to Killar which is a 61.4 km long journey by road takes around 2.5 hours. The region also remains closed for seven months due to heavy snowfall.

The Saach Pass is the shortest road link between Chamba town, around 450 km from the state capital and the Pangi Valley.

Iconic Taj Hotels honoured in the Condé Nast Traveller 2019 awards

Taj, the iconic brand of Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) has been honoured in the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry, the Condé Nast Traveller Readers’ Choice Awards 2019 – the first edition to combine the annual surveys in the U.S. and the UK into one Global Reader’s Choice List. Seven iconic Taj hotels have featured across five prestigious categories – The Best Hotels in the World, Top 15 Hotels in Asia, The Best Resorts in the World, Top 30 Resorts in the Indian Ocean and Top Hotels in Africa.

In The Best Hotels in the World category, Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur ranked #3, closely followed by Ramghat Palace, Jaipur at #7, the only two Indian hospitality brands to be featured within the top 10. Both hotels also featured in the Top 15 Hotels in India category, with Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur ranking at #1 and Ramghat Palace, Jaipur featured at second place. Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai came in at #9, followed by Unnati Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur at #11 and Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur at #12.

Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives was awarded #24 and #3 in The Best Resorts in the World and Top 30 Resorts in the Indian Ocean categories, respectively. Taj Cape Town was also awarded #25 in the Top Hotels in Africa category.

In the first-ever year as one global brand, Condé Nast Traveller combined the annual readers’ surveys in the U.S. and UK into one Global Readers’ Choice Awards List. A record-breaking 600,000 readers and more from across the globe submitted ratings and comments, selecting their favourite travel destinations and brands. Questionnaires were posted on CNTravellex.com, with readers voting for the best that the travel world has to offer – from hotels and spas to airlines and cruise lines, rating their choices according to criteria such as service and design. Results are then collated and analysed.
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SOTC unveils the India Holiday Report 2019

In this digital age, social sharing, the increase of disposable income and the braggable rights of travel is power - driving the entire holiday ecosystem – whether our respondents are tourists. The Indian traveller’s come of age and travel is no longer a luxury, but rather a non-negotiable necessity. The SOTC India Holiday Report was first introduced in 2005 with the aim of tracking the evolution of the Indian traveller over the years. SOTC Travel’s recently released India Holiday Report 2019 reveals insightful data to deep dive into the Indian leisure traveller psyche, their preferences and travel behaviours. The SOTC India Holiday Report 2019 was conducted with over 1,100 respondents belonging to four distinct age groups: 25 years and below, 26-35 years, 36-55 years and 56 years and above.

The findings of SOTC India Holiday Report 2019 are classified into three key categories: Holiday Preferences; Holiday Research and Booking; and, Holiday Finance.

Holiday Preferences: Indians are increasingly opting for multiple short breaks rather than the traditional single long annual vacation. While in 2015, more than 75% of respondents had taken a holiday for 7-10 days as compared to 3-6 days, in 2019, this indicates a trend of higher frequency and shorter duration holidays. The exception is the 56-year segment that prefers longer vacations of 7-15 days. International holidays are a mandatory inclusion in their annual travel plans. All age groups looking at least one international holiday a year.

Domestic holidays show a marked growth with 92% of respondents taking a domestic holiday compared to 80% in 2015. Leisure combined with spiritual journeys is witnessing an interesting trend. Destinations such as Madurai, Rameshwaram, Dwarka, Shirdi, Pushkar, Mathura, Ujjain and Varanasi featured on SOTC’s Darshans have seen significant growth in 2019. 68% of all respondents chose relaxation as a top reason to take a holiday. 73% of India’s work warriors Gen Y: Millennials opted for travel escapes as a great way to unwind.

Family Bonding is a key driver for holidays with 64% of respondents across all the age groups choosing ‘Spending time with friends and family’.

59% Gen Z are adrenaline junkies/adventure-seekers who holiday to fulfill their passion for adventure e.g. Thrill rides in Malaysia, Kite Sailing in the Philippines, White Water Rafting in the Himalayas.

Local Cuisine is a top holiday enhancement preference with 57% of respondents selecting a destination basis its local food. Destinations like Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Italy and France are trending for cuisine and wine journeys.

Indians are increasingly on-the-go and impatient. With internet penetration on the rise, social sharing and easy access to digital travelogues, a majority of the respondents use Credit or Debit Card for travel booking and on-ground expenses. The discounts and cashback being a key driver. Irrespective of age groups, most respondents dip into their savings for their holiday travels (92% for less than 25 years; 92% for 26-35 years; 90% for 36-55 years; 69% for 56+). Spends on holidays seem directly proportional to age groups, which is very likely a reflection of the increase in income and savings; 59% respondents in under 25 years spend less than one lakh per annum on holiday travel and over 50% of the respondents in age groups less than 25-55 years spend only up to one lakh per annum. In a marked change, Indian travellers have also begun viewing EMI and loans as an option to fund their holidays with an average of 4% of respondents across all age groups availing of these to enjoy a vacation.

Vishal Suri, Managing Director, SOTC Travel said, “I am proud to launch the 3rd edition of the SOTC Holiday Report 2019, that keeps a finger on the pulse of India’s rapidly evolving, digital native demographic. This is the first time we have undertaken a completely online survey for our report. The findings reinforce the undeniable fact that everyone aspires to travel and that travel has become a non-negotiable element in the Indian traveller calendar. Whether it is bespoke adventures, solo or escorted tours, Indians are travelling far more than they have ever before and while they will continue to be quintessential value seekers, their passions like adventure or cuisine play a critical factor. The digital divide is almost non-existent with technology being a great enabler across age groups. As against the single annual vacation, Indians are displaying an increasing appetite for multiple short holiday breaks.”

He concluded with, “At SOTC, in our quest for customer excellence, the report plays a key role, giving us valuable insights for product and service to better serve the next generation of Indian travellers.”

The India Holiday Report 2019 has also identified the primary archetypes of travellers that stood out in India over the last five years.

The Budget-friendly Traveller: They usually take at least one international vacation every year, and travel with the spouse, or with family and kids. They look for a meticulously planned tour to cover as many sites as possible within the available time and budget.

The Convenience-seeker: This traveller wants everything to be planned and simple, valuing convenience, ease and transparency, above all, in travel planning. They are even willing to outsource decision-making to a trusted party to avoid having to go through extensive research themselves.

The Family Memory Builder: They aim to build family memories and strengthen the bonds between their members, seeking a combination of both sightseeing and flexibility. This segment largely comprises couples aged 35-45 years, with young children less than 18 years of age, and potentially senior citizens.

Mellow Vacationer: This segment predominantly comprises couples in the age range of 25-35 or 45-60. They choose to go on vacation without children, looking to unwind, relax, and enjoy the journey as well as the destination. Their expectations consist of low-key experiences at a relaxing pace and disliking itineraries, with no desire to attempt anything unusual or new.

Senior Citizen: These travellers are generally older, retired couples aged 55 years and above, with above-average income. With considerably more free time on their hands, they are quite eager to travel, with an ideal vacation entailing relaxing at a serene location with the opportunity to enjoy the company of others, and spend time with their loved ones.

Travel Designer Group recognised as the ‘Dream Employer of the Year’

The World HRD Congress honoured Travel Designer Group as the ‘Dream Employer of the Year’ award in the 14th Best Employer Brand Awards, 2019 which was held recently at Radisson Blu Hotel, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Vishal Suri, Managing Director, SOTC Travel said, “Winning this award is a tribute to the culture of the TDG family is working together happily,” he added.
Singapore Tourism Board unveils over 60 lifestyle experiences to entice Indian business groups to Singapore

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has launched a new version of the ‘In Singapore Incentives & Rewards’ (INSPIRE), an incentive programme to attract more visitors, particularly business groups to Singapore. INSPIRE aims to develop and showcase specially-customised Singapore experiences, tours, and incentive packages. Through INSPIRE groups that qualify for support could pre-select tourism experiences to be included in their itineraries, which in turn enabled STB to influence the travel decisions of these MICE destinations. Some experiences included visits to Sentosa, Mount Faber, Gardens by the Bay, Wildlife Reserves Singapore, the Singapore Flyer, and a variety of unique experiences such as dragon boat team-building.

The new Global INSPIRE incentive programme serves up a wider range of specially designed experiences for MICE groups, catering to small and mid-size groups from all parts of the world. Specially created by passionate experts and mavens in various fields, these experiences are designed to delight and thrill visitors to Singapore. Global INSPIRE offers 63 unique experiences under four broad categories, namely: Singapore’s dining, entertainment and nightlife, thematic tours and learning experiences, tailored attraction-based experiences and distinctive team building activities.

“India is one of Singapore’s key source markets for MICE tourism. INSPIRE programme worked well in India as a marketing tool to convince corporates and travel agents to choose Singapore for their incentive trips. We continue to be creative and keep abreast of the needs of MICE groups in order to stay competitive. The new Global INSPIRE has a diverse selection of group experiences tailored to the MICE visitors’ profile in mind. We are confident that this will enable us to further secure a good pipeline of incentive groups from India,” said G B Srithar, STB’s Regional Director for India, Middle East and Americas.

India was Singapore’s third-largest source market of visitors in 2018. The city-state received 1.4 million visitor arrivals (33% year-on-year growth) from India. India was also Singapore’s top cruise market in 2018, bringing in 56,000 passengers, marking a 26% increase from 2017.

“Responding to the popular demand for incentive trips on-board cruises, the Global INSPIRE programme will benefit groups who wish to stay-over in Singapore before or after their cruising itinerary. This new feature of the INSPIRE programme will help to strengthen our package deals. With the support of our travel trade partners, we seek to reach out to a wider corporate audience and help entice their incentive group travels to Singapore,” added Srithar.

Singapore’s BTMICE performance continues to shine

The global launch of INSPIRE comes on the back of a strong performance by BTMICE visitors to Singapore. In 2018, Singapore welcomed over 2.9 million BTMICE visitors, a growth of 12.1% from 2017. Tourism receipts rose 7.2% to reach S$4.65 billion in 2018, compared to the same period in 2017.

Singapore’s BTMICE landscape continues to grow from strength to strength, with the city-state set to host notable events and meetings such as Vidcon Asia, Home Delivery Asia, Dektite All Hands Meeting and Bentley Systems Year in Infrastructure Conference in 2019. Vidcon is the largest event for the global community of online content creators and will host the inaugural Asia edition of the show in Singapore.

Applications for INSPIRE

MICE groups that are travelling to Singapore between September 10, 2019 and December 31, 2021 can apply for the Global INSPIRE programme. These groups should have a minimum of 20 foreign attendees and stay for at least three days. For groups on board cruises, the foreign attendees must stay for at least two days. Interested groups should register their interest by March 31, 2021.

Macao Government Tourism Office engages actress Fatima Sana Shaikh to showcase art, food and fashion

Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) has recently initiated a social media led influencer campaign with Indian Actress and Influencer Fatima Sana Shaikh titled ‘Fun, Food & Fashion with Fatima’. The campaign aims to attract the independent and young women travellers of India to explore the vibrant destination renowned for its unique east-meets-west charm. The influencer campaign focuses on bringing alive the unique aspects of the destination and secure a good pipeline of incentive groups from India,” said G B Srithar, STB’s Regional Director for India, Middle East and Americas.

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Fatima was amazed and mesmerised by the performance of the artists while watching the show ‘The House of Dancing Water’, Macao’s award-winning water-based extravaganza written and directed by Franco Dragone. The actress also indulged in some rejuvenation during her holiday and pampered herself with a spa session at MGM Cotai’s TRIA spa. She also enjoyed her shopping spree at various boutique shops and branded stores located at various places in the city along with a leisurely gondola ride at The Venetian Macao. Moreover, showcasing her daredevil side, the Dangal movie star bravely attempted the AJ Hackett Skywalk at a height of 300 feet atop the Macau Tower.

In recent times, Macao has also seen an increase of women travellers and this encouraged the tourism office to engage in a social media influencer campaign focused on reaching out to Indian women travellers.
Thailand Tourism along with Go Air organised FAM trip to Phuket for Tier II and III cities

The Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi (TAT), in collaboration with Go Air, hosted travel agents from Tier II and Tier III cities on a Trade FAM trip recently.

The focus was on a specific customer segment – Phuket as a family destination. The purpose of this trip was to acquaint the agents with services and offerings of Go Air and experience new and existing products of Phuket as a family destination and also meet the sellers of Phuket directly through a B2B networking event.

TAT Phuket welcomed all the FAM participants and 30 buyers from Phuket to a networking event and showcased high-end hotels and resorts as well as luxury products and offerings in Amazing Thailand.

Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways organise luxury agents FAM trip

Tourism Authority of Thailand, New Delhi (TAT), along with airline partner Thai Airways hosted a Luxury FAM trip for eight agents, to the Rose of the North Chiang Mai and capital city of Bangkok from September 19 to 23.

Six travel agents from Delhi and two from Kolkata, focusing on luxury travel, were invited for this FAM trip.

The purpose of this was to promote Thailand as the ideal luxury holiday destination for Indian travellers and to showcase high-end hotels and resorts as well as luxury products and offerings in Amazing Thailand.

During the four-day trip, the agents visited luxury hotels and boutique resorts in Chiang Mai and Bangkok and gathered more information on the high-end holiday experiences and activities that they can offer to their clients. They also enjoyed activities like luxury Oasis Thai spa, learning the art of umbrella painting at Borsang Umbrella Village, experiencing a traditional KhanToke dinner with cultural show and visiting famous attractions like Doi Suthep temple in Chiang Mai.

In Bangkok, they visited the new attraction - ICON SIAM (Thailand’s biggest and fanciest shopping Mall with the indoor floating market, museums and 1000+ stores) which they can promote to their clients.

Apart from this, the agents got an opportunity to meet and discuss business with representatives of luxury hotels, resorts, DMCs, tour operators and products in Chiang Mai through a networking session organised by TAT.

From the renowned hotel brands to world-class spa resorts, from high-end shopping to luxury cruises Thailand has a lot to offer for the discerning travellers looking to pamper themselves with the best and most exclusive holiday experiences.

Nepal witness sustained growth in tourist arrivals

The tourism sector of Nepal enjoyed sustained growth in international tourist arrivals to Nepal in the first eight months of 2019. The arrival figures for the first eight months (January-August) 2019 reached 742,600, a cumulative increase of 9% over the same period in 2018. According to the Department of Immigration, 619,765 international visitors came by air and 122,835 came onboard.

Tourist arrivals from India in the first eight months of 2019 increased by 61% in comparison to the figures for 2018 and reached 142,266. The overall arrivals from SAARC countries registered a growth of 6.2% over the same period last year with 204,92 total tourist arrivals.

The European arrivals have also surged with sustained growth from the key markets with 136,98 total arrivals in the first eight months of 2019. Arrivals from the United Kingdom, Germany and France were 36,973, 20,362 and 16,342 respectively.

Likewise, 106,650 Chinese tourists visited Nepal in the first eight months of 2019, which is 9.8% more than the arrivals in the same period of 2018. Similarly, the visitors from Thailand and Japan have also increased significantly by 38.9% and 12.8% respectively in comparison to the figures for 2018.

The total number of U.S. visitors to Nepal in the first eight months of 2019 was 56,021, an increase of 6% over the figures for last year. Likewise, the number of Australians visitors to Nepal in eight months of 2019 was 20,819, which is 8.1% more than in the same period of 2018.

Deeprak Raj Joshi, CEO of Nepal Tourism Board remarked that the growth of international visitor arrival is possible only because of the synergy in our efforts along with active participation of the private sector and media.

“However, suspended of Jet Airways and TIA closure for few hours for rehabilitation process has somehow affected the expected growth rate of international arrivals number,” he added.

Scoot removes payment processing fees globally

Aligning with its vision since inception of making travel attainable for all, Scoot recently announced the removal of payment processing fees globally for all bookings made on its direct channels, offering customers even greater value with immediate effect.

To provide customers with greater convenience and seamless booking experience, Scoot currently offers a comprehensive range of payment options across its network of 67 cities in 17 countries and territories. This includes global payment methods such as Apple Pay, Credit Card (American Express, JCB, MasterCard, UnionPay, Visa), Google Pay and PayPal, and local payment methods such as AXS and PayNow for Singapore customers; POLi for Australia customers; WeChat Pay and Alipay for Chinese customers; DragonPay for Philippines customers; Konbini for Japan customers and Momo for Vietnamese customers.

The evolution of payment systems over the years, driven by technological improvements, has helped to significantly defray the associated costs required to support and maintain the payment infrastructure. From March 2018, Scoot has progressively removed payment processing fees, in selected markets, beginning with Europe. More recently, in August 2019, the fees for selected local payment methods, including AXS (for customers in Singapore) and Konbini (for customers in Japan), were removed. Momo, an e-wallet and mobile payment app launched in end August 2019 for customers in Vietnam, also has zero payment processing fees.

Lee Lik Hsin, Scoot’s Chief Executive Officer said, “When Scoot first started, we offered a limited range of payment methods at a higher implementation and maintenance cost. As we expanded globally and heard our customers’ feedback, we took advantage of advances in payment technology to implement many more payment methods to improve our customers’ experience. In order to pass on the savings to our customers as our costs came down, we have since March 2018 progressively removed payment processing fees in selected markets. Now, we are ready to do away with it globally. We hope this gives our customers better value and more reasons to escape the ordinary with us.”
Cinnamon to spearhead destination marketing in Sri Lanka

In just four months following the horrifying terror attacks that threatened to derail the fast flourishing tourism industry of Sri Lanka, a strong recovery strategy implemented by key industry players such as Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts, a renowned and globally respected hotel chain, has managed to effectively address and avert an emergent crisis. Spearheading this revival, the hospitality chain has initiated a number of campaigns, an encouraging marketing campaign with VIP guests who have graced Cinnamon over the past few years, internationally renowned celebrity destination ambassadors such as former Miss Sri Lanka, Jacqueline Fernandez and Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar, an innovative destination campaign ‘Bring a Friend Home’ to engage all Sri Lankans in the revival of the industry, the Future of Tourism (FOT) Summit featuring famed CNN correspondent Richard Quest and the first-ever Cinnamon Wellness Retreat.

While strategically driving forth these multiple campaigns, promotions and initiatives within a short period of time, Cinnamon yet again placed Sri Lanka on the world map by bagging a coveted PATA Gold Award this year, ensuring the country remains well-positioned in the minds of tourists at a destination with wonderfully diverse experiential offerings and most importantly, as a safe place to travel.

“First and foremost, the support and love Sri Lanka received soon after the attacks from across the globe were truly reassuring and promising,” stated Jit Gunaratne President Leisure Sector at Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts. “We received sector uplifting messages from celebrity guests that Cinnamon hosted throughout the years, urging and encouraging us to show the world our true Sri Lanka.”

To first project a positive image of the country, Cinnamon proceeded to create a video featuring comment by these international celebrities hosted by the hotel chain, calling on the world to visit Sri Lanka. The heart-warming video produced by Cinnamon in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tourism Board as part of the ‘Love Sri Lanka’ campaign saw celebrities such as like chefs Nigella Lawson and George Calombaris, world-famous musicians such as Shaggy and Joaquin Quino McWhinney of Big Mountain who shared their love and support through a video that went viral.

The feedback, engagement and response to the marketing campaign ‘Spirit of Vesak at BIA’ which featured celebrities as destination ambassadors to promote Sri Lanka, among them Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar, and former Miss Sri Lanka and famed Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, was overwhelming.

“Our top source market over the past decade has been India and our main objective through strategic partnerships with destination ambassadors was to further penetrate our key Indian demographic. The Cinnamon celebrity program was architected to reassure tourists that Sri Lanka is once again a safe destination for travel. Celebrity content also sheds light on the wide array of attractions in Sri Lanka that can be experienced and explored,” Dileep Mudadeniya, Vice President John Keells Group, Head of Brand Marketing Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts and CEO Cinnamon Life Ltd elaborated.

The continued progress enabled Cinnamon to host the third edition of the ‘Future of Tourism Summit’ (FOT) 2019 in September, under the timely theme ‘Challenges and Growth in the Face of a Crisis’.

As a result of such continued efforts during the past four months, Cinnamon was proud to announce the first-ever Cinnamon Wellness Retreat played planned for November this year. The immersive 10-day programme will be launched at Cinnamon Lodge Habarana, reassured of a stabilising industry and promise to reconnect with Sri Lanka’s world-renowned experiential tourism vertical.

Mudadeniya further added, “We as industry leaders have understood the responsibility of Cinnamon in the most perplexing of times and stepped up to the challenge. Our teams were working full days, seven-day weeks to ensure that our industry and not just our properties were getting back on track. Our main objective over the last four months and in the coming months will be to propel forward and continue on our campaigns to recover Sri Lanka’s tourism industry and support all stakeholders and communities that are still dependent on it for their livelihoods. I’m humbled by the amazing response and steadily increasing tourist numbers. The world is definitely falling in love with Sri Lanka all over again, and Cinnamon is proud to be part of the revival.

SriLankan Airlines’ efforts to rebuild the country’s tourism recognised at APEX awards

SriLankan Airlines’ intensive efforts to drive the recovery of the island’s tourism industry in the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attack were honoured with a global accolade - the ‘Best Marketing Innovation’ award from the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). The airline also managed to secure Four-Star rating in the major ‘Innovation’ award from the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). The airline also

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The campaign, which centred on the Buddhist festival of Vesak to showcase the unity and spirit of tolerance among Sri Lanka’s many ethnic and religious communities, reached an audience of 7.6 million people with 1.2 million engagements via live streaming on YouTube and Facebook that specifically targeted major tourism markets worldwide.

The campaign involved a range of events at SriLankan’s hub at Colombo’s Bandaranaike International Airport that emphasised the message of peace through spiritual songs, intricate decorations, offering refreshments catered by none other than the airline’s catering arm SriLankan Catering to travellers at the airport, thanking people for visiting Sri Lanka and much more. A special choir of airline employees ranging from pilots to cabin crew, aircraft engineers, administrative staff, auditors and aircraft interior cleaning crews were trained by some of the country’s top musicians to entertain travellers.

Sri Lanka Tourism celebrated World Tourism Day with foreign guests at Bandaranaike International Airport

Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau made arrangements to celebrate World Tourism Day at the Bandaranaike International Airport on September 27 with the foreign guests visiting Sri Lanka.

A special ceremony was organised in front of Sri Lanka Tourism Travel Information Counter right throughout the day with cultural performance to promote forward and continue on our campaigns to recover Sri Lanka’s tourism industry and support all stakeholders and communities that are still dependent on it for their livelihoods. I’m humbled by the amazing response and steadily increasing tourist numbers. The world is definitely falling in love with Sri Lanka all over again, and Cinnamon is proud to be part of the revival.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization declared World Tourism Day on September 27 since 1980. The purpose of celebrating World Tourism Day is to raise awareness about the role of tourism around the world and to promote social, cultural, political and economic values. This year the theme of World Tourism Day was ‘Tourism and jobs: a better future for all.’

SriLankan’s marketing effort was chosen as the winning entry by Qantas Airways and Virgin Atlantic that were also shortlisted nominees in this category. APEX (www.apex.aero) is the world’s only non-profit membership trade association, a network of the airline industry’s leading airlines, airline suppliers and related companies that are dedicated to improving the entire airline passenger experience. The awards ceremony coincided with the APEX Expo annual industry convention at the Los Angeles Convention Centre from September 9-12. Joshua Bustos, the airline’s Chief Commercial Officer, received the award on behalf of SriLankan at the glittering ceremony in Los Angeles on 9th September.

Saminda Perera, Senior Manager Marketing said, “We are delighted to receive this award for our video led Cinnamon to further engage with popular celebrities in our campaign, the cultural aspects of a national festival which portrays unity among communities, teamwork and of course the sense of generosity which has connotations to the doctrine of the Buddha. We have always endeavoured to ensure the timeliness and universal appeal of our marketing campaigns and this award reaffirms the success of our efforts.”

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Wildlife Reserve Singapore celebrates 25th anniversary, reveals new plans

Wildlife Reserve Singapore (WRS), in association with Singapore Tourism Board (STB) celebrated its 25th anniversary in India by revealing its plans for upcoming years. Helmed by Sridhar, Regional Director of India, Middle East and Southeast Asia, Singapore Tourism Board, the celebrations were co-chaired by Isabel Cheng, CEO, Wildlife Reserves Singapore along with a string of other dignitaries.

Interacting with Indian travel trade and media, the Regional Director revealed that India continues to be a consistent source market for Singapore, ranking third in overall tourist arrivals and first in terms of cruise tourism. He said that even Singapore is considered a family-friendly destination for Indian travellers, it is not restricted to families and caters to all kinds of tourists. He also explained that India continues to be among the top three contributors to a host of Singapore’s tourist attractions including the Wildlife Reserve, Sentosa and others.

Exploring the tourist interest in mind, Singapore is constantly upgrading itself, adding new tourist attractions every two years to keep itself relevant to the tourists. Innovating and refreshing its tourism offerings is one of the main areas of focus for the Tourism Board, he added.

The newest addition to Singapore’s repository of attractions is the Jewel Changi Airport, located just outside Terminal 1, easily accessible from all the other terminals either through walkways or buses. The new facility boasts of the world’s largest indoor waterfall and also has a canopy walk for adventure seekers. Two hundred and eighty food and entertainment options can also be found inside Jewel Changi.

After the brief introduction, Isabel Cheng, CEO, Wildlife Reserve Singapore took over the presentation, providing insights into WRS’s plans for the future. She stressed that all new developments were in sync with Singapore’s ideology of promoting sustainable tourism. Wildlife Reserve’s mission is wildlife conservation and preserving biodiversity. She said, “Being a world’s first, Night Safari is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Singapore, and local residents play a huge role in contributing to its popularity. We know that many Singaporeans take their foreign friends to visit us, and we sincerely thank everyone for the support.”

She explained that WRS in collaboration with STB plans to convert the region of Mandai into an integrated nature park comprising a new bird park, the Singapore Zoo, the river safari and night safari. The newest inclusion in the upcoming years would be a rainforest canopy walk, an indoor discovery centre focused on nature and wildlife along with a range of eco-accommodation options. Treehouses, camps and hotels will all be situated inside the eco-reserve area of Mandai.

Cheng also discussed the Rainforest Lumina event in detail, explaining the upgrades in the immersive multimedia walk in the forest’s second run.

Myanmar to extend visa relaxation on Indian tourists for one more year

Visa-on-arrival scheme for Indian and Chinese tourists will be extended by the Myanmar government, as informed by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. According to sources, to attract more tourists to the country, recently the Ministry also revealed that the visa exemption schemes for visitors from Japan and South Korea will be extended for another year till September 30, 2020.

Visa-on-arrival granted for Indian tourists for one year from December 1, 2018, will be extended to November 30, 2020. Initially, visa exemption was allowed for visitors from Japan and South Korea and visa-on-arrival for those from China from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

According to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, in order to boost tourism, Myanmar authorities had planned to grant visa-on-arrival to visitors from six more countries starting on October 1 as further relaxation of visa restrictions on foreign visitors in addition to Asian ones.

By 2020, Myanmar aims to attract over seven million visitors. Due to the visa relaxation on Asian travellers, the tourist arrivals in Myanmar saw an increase in the first six months of 2019 with 2.14 million up 20% compared with the same period of 2018 when 1.72 million tourists entered the country.

4th International Film Festival & Awards - Macao to commence in December

The 4th International Film Festival & Awards - Macao (referred to as ‘IFFAM’ or the ‘Film Festival’) will be staged from December 5 to 10 this year. As an annual international event in Macao, the Film Festival will continue to push forward the development of Macao’s film, cultural and creative industries, enhance exchange opportunities with international movies as well as unveil a wider landscape for the development of cultural and artistic platforms, tourism and other fields.

Following the announcement of featuring best actress in Chinese cinema, Carina Lau, as the first Talent Ambassador of this year’s IFFAM earlier, the IFFAM organising committee announced recently the appointment of Karan Johar (KJo), an Indian film director, producer, screenwriter, costume designer, actor and television personality, as Festival Ambassador along with Kim Jun-myeon (Suho), leader of the popular Korean boy band EXO, as Talent Ambassador.

The International Film Festival & Awards - Macao celebrates the extraordinary contributions of filmmakers to the Asian film world and pays special tribute to classic film works while enhancing the experience Macao has to offer as an international city and showing to the world the city’s diverse new dynamic of the cultural and creative development.

In this edition of IFFAM, Hong Kong Director Peter Chan will be Jury President of the Competition; acclaimed best actress of Chinese films, Carina Lau, and famous Korean star Suho will be Talent Ambassadors; Wang Xiaoshuai (China), Kim Yong-Hwa (Korea) and Karan Johar (India) will be Festival Ambassadors.

In addition, the Film Festival will feature a new competition ‘Shorts’ this year, whereas five new accolades including Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor and Best Actress will be conferred to commend prominent filmmakers of Chinese films in ‘New Chinese Cinema’.

Organised by Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) and the Macau Films & Television Productions and Culture Association (MFTPA), the Film Festival is committed to become a major gathering for international filmmakers to enhance cultural exchange, while putting forward Asian film talent and film works onto the global stage.
Azerbaijan tourism witnesses 80% growth in Indian tourists; conducts three-city roadshow in India

Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) recently held a three-city roadshow from September 9 to 13 in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai. The event brought together key travel industry leaders in the region to build valuable connections between the countries.

Ashraf Shikhaliyev, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to India, officials from the Azerbaijan Tourism Board, led by CEO, Florian Sengstschmid and Nazim Samadov, Deputy Director Executive of Azerbaijan Airlines/Buta Airways Director attended the roadshow. The roadshow gave the Indian trade partners and travel agents an opportunity to learn about the diverse experiences that Azerbaijan has to offer. Similar setups took place in Mumbai and Bengaluru, with delegates interacting with over 900 Indian retail partners including tour operators, travel agents, MICE professionals, wedding planners and MICE representatives.

With a direct flight from Delhi and a simplified electronic visa procedure for Indian passport holders, tourism from India to Azerbaijan increased by 80% in 2019. The new initiatives are expected to improve Azerbaijan’s ranking among countries with a high tourism contribution towards national GDP, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council 2019 Impact Report. It is forecast to be at 6% per annum over the course of the next 10 years ranking it amongst the world’s top 20 high potential countries.

In an ongoing effort to further develop and expand the superlative adventure tourism portfolio, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTD) announced the official launch of the latest adventure tourism product on Jebel Jais, the 'Jebel Jais Zipline Tour', in partnership with ToroVerde, which will join and complement the existing attractions including the Jebel Jais Via Ferrata (mountain climbing) and the Jebel Jais Flight: The World's Longest Zipline, that has already welcomed more than 35,000 flyers since its launch.

The 'Jebel Jais Zipline Tour' features seven ziplines flying over the grand cliffs and canyons of Jebel Jais which are connected by nine platforms; the cluster of seven ziplines cover a total distance of 5 km (ranging from 357m to 6km in length) with an average speed of 60kmph. During the tour, flyers will navigate their way through the air to reach the 5m long sky bridge, the highest in the UAE at 270m above the sea level and 300m above ground, which they will have to cross to finish the remaining part of the zipline tour journey.

Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority said, “As Jebel Jais remains core to our overall tourism proposition in making Ras Al Khaimah a global destination, we recognise the importance of constantly evolving our outdoor offerings. We are incredibly excited to announce the launch of our latest adventure attraction on the UAE’s highest mountain peak, the ‘Jebel Jais Zipline Tour’. As Ras Al Khaimah is widely considered the region’s nature-adventure hub, we strongly believe that the introduction of new, innovative products is essential to meet the demands of its rising visitor numbers, particularly amongst active adventurers and sports enthusiasts. We’re confident that the Jebel Jais Zipline Tour will draw and fascinate nature-adventure lovers of all ages from around the country and beyond.”

Ricardo Lizano, COO of ToroVerde commented, “We are excited to launch yet another product on Jebel Jais, especially after the successful, record-level launch of Jebel Jais Flight: The World’s Longest Zipline over a year ago that continues to receive tremendous response from around the globe. This time, adventure enthusiasts visiting Jebel Jais will have yet another reason to come and will find nothing short of an exhilarating experience with the Jebel Jais Zipline Tour.”

New adventure tourism products in the pipeline include ‘Bull Maze’ in Q4 2019, which comprises a field of 45 challenging obstacles suspended in the air, distributed on three levels of a 20 m height structure that will encourage each participant to face their limits. The next adventure attraction to launch in Q1 2020 will be a controlled bungee at a height of 1.50m above the sea (53 m above ground). Participants will have a free fall of 0.8m and a controlled fall of 15 m.

A new welcome centre is now open for visitors - boasting panoramic views of the surrounding Hajar Mountains. Registrations, safety gear kitting and pre-briefing for Jebel Jais Zipline Tour and Jebel Jais Flight are managed at the new welcome centre.

Jebel Jais Zipline Tour tickets can be booked on jebeljaisae.ae. The rates are AED 295 per person on Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday, and AED 345 per person on Friday and Saturday.

Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority launches latest adventure attraction – Jebel Jais Zipline Tour

Qatar wins bid to Host World Symposium of Choral Music in 2023

Following a successful bid by Qatar National Choral Association, supported by Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC), Qatar has won the rights to host the World Symposium of Choral Music (WSCM) in 2023. Held once every three years, the International Federation of Choral Music’s (IFCM) flagship event is considered the most prestigious non-competitive choral event in the world, expected to attract 2,000-4,000 international delegates to the country, reinforcing its position as a hub for cultural events.

H.E. Akbar Al Baker, Secretary-General of Qatar National Tourism Council and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive commented, “We are delighted to add the World Choral Symposium to the growing list of events coming to Qatar and are thrilled to host this event which showcases our own traditions and cultural offerings. We continue to work towards attracting large-scale events in the MICE space, as we continue to diversify and grow our tourism industry.”

In a statement, the IFCM said, “The international choral community through the IFCM congratulates Qatar on their winning bid and wishes them every success and support in their preparations for this unique event in 2023. We are looking forward to an exciting exploration of the musical treasures of the Middle East and Central Asia. The Symposium in Qatar provides IFCM and the hosts with the opportunity to create a new network and enhance exchange and cooperation within and beyond this area.”

Every three years since 1987, the World Symposium on Choral Music has brought the finest choirs, conductors, presenters, composers and choristers from around the globe together to share in a celebration of fine choral singing. The WSCM has been hosted in cities around the globe including Barcelona, Puerto Madryn, Seoul, Copenhagen, Kyoto, Minneapolis, Rotterdam, Sydney, Vancouver, Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, Vienna and Auckland.
Tourism Office of Spain, Mumbai appoints Elisa Robles-Fraga as new Director

With effect from September 1, 2019, the Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai, India, has a new Director, Elisa Robles-Fraga. She joined operation in this office on the said date and has commenced her position as the Tourism Counsellor and Director of Tourism Office of Spain in Mumbai.

Throughout her professional experience, Elisa Robles-Fraga has been mainly working at the Spanish General Administration both at national and international levels, including European Union related matters. In a previous position as Director-General of the CDTI (Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Industrial – Center for Industrial Technological Development), the Spanish Innovation Agency of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, Government of Spain, she has had the opportunity to bilaterally work with India for several of her projects during her tenure at CDTI.

Her roles and responsibilities will remain the same as the previous directors of the said office.

Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture reveals its core programme for the year

Developed through more than 100 partnerships with 33 different countries represented, Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture (Galway 2020) has unveiled its core programme for the year, with the themes of landscape, language and migration.

Galway 2020 will open with a free week-long festival of fire starting on February 1, 2020, moving through six towns and villages across Galway culminating in a spectacular opening ceremony in Galway City on February 8, 2020.

February 1 was traditionally known as Imbolc, an ancient Pagan festival dedicated to women and fertility, and marked the first day of spring in the Celtic calendar. Reflecting the entwined roots of Ireland’s cultural history in Pagan and Gaelic traditions, it is sometimes known as St. Brigid’s Day, after Ireland’s most important female saint. Imbolc has been chosen as the official start of Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture, launching a programme that will run over four seasons until January 2021.

The programme over the course of the year will range across music, theatre, literature, visual arts, dance, film, architecture, heritage, sport, food, with the majority of projects being free to audiences. Each of the four seasons will open with a spectacular fire festival, referring to the Irish tradition of marking the new season with fire. Each fiery celebration will be created by a different artist or creative organisation.

Helen Marriage, Creative Director of Galway 2020 said, “Galway, with its ancient landscapes and histories, its different peoples and its many languages is an extraordinary place, where artists have always led the way. It is a privilege for us at Artichoke to play a part in shaping this unique celebration of the culture of Ireland, reflecting on its importance in a European and global context. Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture is built on the efforts of those creative people who have chosen to live and work here over the last 40 years. This programme introduces what I hope will be a year of radical thinking. In these challenging times, when Ireland has been thrust centre-stage into the debate about what it means to be European, Galway 2020 invites a community of artists – those prophets of the future – to hold up a mirror and help us make sense of our world.”

The Filmmuseum in Frankfurt holds a unique digital exhibition

Travel through the Digital Time Machine and explore the past 50 years of international digital history at the Filmmuseum in Frankfurt. The developments in games, movies, music videos, computers, phones and many other media that have become part of our lives can be experienced in this exhibit. The digital revolution has redefined art, communication and perception. Here, at the Digital Revolution exhibit, one can play, touch and experience the digital world.

The exhibition features both early digital technology – be it the Apple 2 8-bit computer (1977-1993) or pioneering examples of electronic music devices such as the Fairlight CMI (1979) – as well as an artistic exploration of the future. One can discover various interactive online games and marvel at the installation Escape III, where used cell phones have been transformed into bird sculptures. A large part of the exhibited objects is interactive so that the guests can experience the effect and aesthetics.

Films have been strongly influenced by digital technologies since the 1970s: the way of telling stories, the image design and the democratisation of production processes are the highlights of the exhibition.

Guests can also enjoy the best cake in the city in the film café. With a changing menu of hot food and a great selection of cakes and coffee, the café in the foyer of the museum is a popular lunchtime destination.

The digital revolution exhibition is open until November 10 from 10 am – 8 pm at the Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, Frankfurt.

Linkin Reps bags the PR and Marketing mandate for Sochi Tourism in India

Linkin Reps recently bagged the PR marketing and media representation account for Sochi Tourism in India. A leading travel representation company in India, through this association, Linkin Reps, through a well-thought strategy and year-long plan will work towards highlighting Sochi as a destination for Indian travellers and create awareness about the destination in India market.

Sochi is often called the unofficial ‘Summer Capital’ of Russia, or the Black Sea Pearl. This is the country’s biggest and busiest summer sea resort, attracting more than four million visitors annually with its amazing mountainous coastline, endless shingle beaches, warm sunny days and bustling nightlife. From May to September Sochi’s population at least doubles with tourists, including celebrities and the political elite of the country.

The average temperature in Sochi ranges between +10°C in winter to +30°C in summer. The subtropical climate, never freezing sea, natural diversity of mountain landscape of the Main Caucasian mountain range makes Sochi the ideal tourist destination. It is one of the three cities included in official Gaming Zones in Russia. Soon direct flight from Delhi-Sochi-Delhi will be operated by Russian carrier called Ural Airlines.

Flight duration will only be five hours one way, with two frequencies per week.

Speaking after the announcement, Timur Rasulev, Culture & Tourism Counsellor, Sochi Tourism Office in India said, “Sochi is a beautiful seaside town and is very popular amongst domestic tourists. However, despite the winter Olympics being held in 2014, Sochi hasn’t received its due share of visibility from global travellers and international tourists. The International tourist arrival to Sochi is very less despite it being an idyllic tourist destination. Our partnership with Linkin Reps is to ensure that we have visibility in the India market and have Indian travellers visit Sochi to experience its rich culture and beauty.”

Commenting on the appointment, Komal Seth, Director, Linkin Reps Pvt Ltd said, “We are elated to have entered into the partnership with Sochi Tourism. Sochi is an unexplored destination for Indian travellers and we aim to derive greater awareness and engagement for the destination through PR partnerships and working closely with the media as well as Travel Trade in India. With a series of campaigns planned, we will push the outbound tourism and create impactful visibility for the destination in India.”

She further added, “Sochi is an ideal place for welcoming MICE groups. Up-to-the-minute technology, original catering offers, adapted and flexible workspaces, uncompromising comfort are all in place for successful conventions. Sochi also has plenty of vegan and vegetarian-friendly restaurants with many Indian restaurants coming up. Sochi has a rich nightlife with bars, nightclubs, parties, live music and shows. So there is something for everyone.”
Michelin Starred Chef Marcel Ravin curates Monaco Organic Food Festival for India

Monaco Government Tourist Bureau - India along with Monte-Carlo Société des Bains de Mer (SBM) in association with Vetro, The Oberoi, Mumbai, recently organised the Monaco Organic Food Festival by Michelin Starred Chef Marcel Ravin in Mumbai.

The special culinary showcase, ‘From Monaco with love’ at Vetro, entailed Chef Marcel Ravin’s tasting menus, all inspired by the travels of his native land and infused with fragrant flavours of his signature dishes: Organic Egg with Truffle, Cassava and Maracuja juice (passion fruit in Creole) and his signature dessert: Chocolate and Passion Fruit Partition with Cocoa Bean and Passion Fruit Sauce.

The recently concluded 4-day Monaco Organic Food Festival, kick-started with exclusive gourmet tables for celebrity influencers, industry socialites, top-notch corporates, renowned media personalities, travel trade fraternity and a senior delegation from top-notch corporates, renowned media personalities, travel trade fraternity and a senior delegation from top-notch corporates, renowned media personalities.

Speaking at the exclusive press lunch, Corinne Nangia, India Director, Monaco Government Tourist Bureau expressed, “Food is an integral part of travel and we are delighted to highlight the cuisine curated by Chef Marcel Ravin at Vetro, The Oberoi. The entire activity was designed to bring culinary art of Monaco to India. We are sure that Indian high-end travellers now have another very good reason to travel and celebrate in the Principality.

The Principality is a destination of choice for the discerning palate and promises an unforgettable culinary journey. In Monaco, gastronomy, local and season are linked! From urban gardens to organic restaurants, through the reasoned choice of products and the fight against food waste, the environmental approach is deeply rooted in the principles of the Monegasque restaurants. With Green is the New Glam, we aim to make the Principality carbon neutral by 2050. Less transport, more taste, discover and savour the culinary creations of our Chefs in the Principality of Monaco.”

LOT launches new Dreamliner service from Delhi to San Francisco

LOT Polish Airlines continues to grow its U.S. network. Effective August 5, 2020, the airline will launch a new direct flight from its Star Alliance hub Warsaw to San Francisco. It will be the seventh destination of the Polish flag carrier as we met very interesting media and influencers and we are sure that we share the same values for sustainability. Our guests seem to appreciate and enjoy Monaco flavours in Chef Marcel Ravin’s passionately curated recipes. We look forward to welcoming them so they can experience these tastes for real in the Principality of Monaco.”

Delighted to present his tasty themes for the first time in India, Michelin Starred Chef Marcel Ravin, added, “I have been waiting for so long to come to India, this is a dream that has come true for me. It was such an experience in the Oberoi kitchen to share our knowledge with the Indian Chefs. In fact, it was easy because we share the same passion. Cooking is all about love and sharing when you cook you put your soul in your recipes. I am very inspired and intend to create new dishes fusing the flavour of Indian spices I brought back from Mumbai. It will be called, De retour d’Inde meaning coming back from India.

Enthralled with the food association, Rajeev Nangia, India Director, Monaco Government Tourist Bureau expressed, “Food is an integral part of travel and we are delighted to highlight the cuisine curated by Chef Marcel Ravin at Vetro, The Oberoi. The entire activity was designed to bring culinary art of Monaco to India. We are sure that Indian high-end travellers now have another very good reason to travel and celebrate in the Principality.

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San Francisco will become LOT Polish Airlines’ seventh North American destination served from Warsaw. Already existing services to the United States and Canada include New York-JFK, New York-Newark, Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto as well as Miami.

“San Francisco has been on our list of new destinations for some time already and we are glad that we can now announce this new exciting service. The city is an important destination for tourists and due to its close location to Silicon Valley also for business travellers,” said Rafał Milczarski, CEO of LOT Polish Airlines.

“LOT Polish Airlines has a long and successful history in flying to the United States from its home hub in Warsaw. We are very pleased that effective August 2020 we can add San Francisco to our network, offering our guests from India a fast and convenient way to fly to the biggest metropolis in Northern California,” added Amit Ray, Regional Director India of LOT Polish Airlines.

The tickets for Delhi-Warsaw-San Francisco flights are now available for sale in India through all sales channels.
Nijhawan Group now represents Tropical Escape Resort Homes in India

Nijhawan Group has been appointed as the representative of Tropical Escape Resort Homes in India to reach the right target audience and broaden trade and media initiatives. Nijhawan Group will be responsible for developing core Sales and Marketing strategy for the India market and strengthen relationships with trade partners and key stakeholders.

Matthew Daniel, CEO, Tropical Escape Resort Homes said, “India market is becoming a huge source market for Florida as the numbers of visitor arrivals are exponentially increasing. We are excited at the opportunity of presenting unique luxury vacation homestays to our key Indian visitors. We would be focusing our offerings to small and large family groups from India.”

He further added, “We are pleased to partner with a highly reputed organisation like Nijhawan Group that has one of the strongest sales networks across India. Owing to their reputation and past track record, we are confident that their support will help us increase our reach and visibility in this market.”

Priyanka Nijhawan, Director - Representations, Nijhawan Group said, “We are delighted to represent Tropical Escape Resort Homes and drive Indian traffic to the luxury vacation homes. Our strategy would be to strengthen sales channels and tap the growing outbound traffic from small and large families. With our excellent track record and experience in handling luxury hospitality clients, this representation further establishes our strength and proficiency in the travel domain.”

Located in Central Florida, Tropical Escape Resort Homes offers luxurious vacation homes in the Orlando area. All homes feature a fully equipped kitchen, a private pool in the backyard, and spacious bedrooms and living spaces.

NYC & Company spotlights NYC as leading convention and meetings destination

NYC & Company, the official destination marketing organization and convention and visitors bureau for the five boroughs of New York City, spotlights destination news, strategic convention development plans and product updates.

“Meetings generate incredible value for businesses and communities while contributing meaningfully to the U.S. economy,” said NYC & Company President and CEO Fred Dixon. “In my new role as Meetings Mean Business co-chair in 2020, I’m pleased to elevate the importance of this crucial industry segment while also spotlighting New York City’s prowess as one of the leading U.S. destinations for meetings and conventions.

“NYC & Company is pleased to promote the unique value proposition of convening in New York City. When a planner chooses to ‘Make it NYC,’ the results will exceed expectation and inspire imagination,” said Jerry Cito, executive vice president, Convention Development, at NYC & Company.

Recent destination developments include the May openings of the Statue of Liberty Museum, Empire Outlets — the first outlet shopping centre in the five boroughs, set on the Staten Island waterfront — and the long-anticipated 522-room TWA Hotel at JFK International Airport. Jointly, the three represent enthralling new attractions for delegates and a convenient, glamorous new Queens conference hotel, accessible via JFK’s terminal. This October the Museum of Modern Art reopens after a 40,000 sqft expansion of its gallery space.

On Manhattan’s west side at the brand-new Hudson Yards neighbourhood (the largest private real estate development in the history of the U.S.), delegates can enjoy retail and dining at The Shops and Restaurants; arts and culture at The Shed; a climbable public sculpture and Instagram-magnet, Vessel; and the flagship Equinox Hotel, Hudson Yards, NYC. The Edge observation deck will debut on the 100th Floor of 30 Hudson Yards in early 2020, and events space on the 101st Floor will offer unmatched views, all within walking distance of the nation’s busiest convention centre, Javits.

NYC & Company also promotes sporting events and LGBTQ+ conferences throughout the city. In June 2019, New York City hosted five million attendees for WorldPride, a testament to the City’s unmatched reputation for hosting major events on the world’s stage. In addition, NYC welcomed the IGLTA Global Convention and PROUD Experiences, returning to New York City next year, hosted in both Manhattan and Brooklyn.

In 2018, NYC welcomed approximately 65 million visitors including 13.3 million business travellers (2.9% increase from 2017) and 6.2 million delegates generating more than $46.4 billion in direct spending. An estimated 69.8 million visitors are expected to visit New York City this year.
Ethiopian Airlines currently operates direct flights between Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from Delhi and Mumbai. It will expand its service in India adding Bengaluru in its network. It will start passenger flights to Bengaluru, India as of October 27. The capital of the Indian state of Karnataka, Bengaluru is dubbed ‘Silicon Valley of India’ and serves as the centre of technology and innovation.

Ethiopian Airlines operates 11 flights Ex-Delhi and 14 flights Ex-Mumbai each week. Ex-Delhi it operates Boeing 767 and Ex-Mumbai it operates Airbus 350. It will start operating four weekly flights Ex-Bengaluru and from Ex-Delhi it will start operating Dreamliner.

The four weekly direct flights from Bengaluru to Addis Ababa will operate on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday from Addis Ababa and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday from Bengaluru.

The main destinations on Ethiopian Airlines Ex-India includes Lagos (Nigeria), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Johannesburg (South Africa), Abuja (Nigeria), São Paulo (Brazil), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Lusaka (Zambia), Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Toronto (Canada).

Operating at the forefront of technology, the airline has also become one of Ethiopia’s major industries and a veritable institution in Africa. It commands a lion’s share of the pan African network including the daily and double daily east-west flight across the continent. Ethiopian currently serves 100 international and 21 domestic destinations operating the newest and youngest fleet.

Ethiopian Airlines (Ethiopian) is the flag carrier of Ethiopia. It is the largest aviation group in Africa. It is a SKYTRAX Certified 4 Star Global Airline. During the past 70+ years, Ethiopian Airlines has become one of the continent’s leading carriers, unrivalled in Africa for efficiency and operational success, turning profits for almost all the years of its existence.
The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism appoints new media agency to drive tourism marketing strategy

Following a competitive procurement process, the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism (CIDOT) announced Kelly Scott Madison (KSM) as its new U.S. agency of record for media planning and placement, which is effective starting October 2019.

Based in Chicago, IL, KSM is a media and marketing agency built to drive change that has worked with numerous travel, tourism and destination-based organisations, and will prove to be an invaluable asset to the Department of Tourism in meeting and exceeding the Cayman Islands’ marketing and media objectives in the years to come. As the destination’s main source market for visitation, continued growth in arrivals and awareness in the U.S. leisure and business travel markets remains a key strategic priority for the CIDOT.

“The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism is tasked by the government to distinguish our beautiful destination. Awareness in the U.S. leisure and business travel market for visitation, continued growth in arrivals and the Cayman Islands’ marketing and media objectives to the Department of Tourism in meeting and exceeding numerous travel, tourism and destination-based agency built to drive change that has worked with travel and international hospitality industries, François Baltus-Languedoc appointed as the new CEO of Martinique Tourism Authority

Baltus-Languedoc has many assets to succeed in this new challenge: Expertise in tour-ism strategy; Experience in business tourism; A global vision of the high-end and mid-level hotel sector; In-depth knowledge of the prospecting markets (North America and Europe) and potential markets (Latin America, South East Asia) of the Martinique Tourism Authority.

Karine Mousseau, Tourism Commissioner of Martinique commented, “With his skills and international experience, I am convinced, that along with the teams of the Martinique Tourism Authority and both the public and private sector professionals, Baltus-Languedoc will be able to fashion an innovative and imaginative strategy to advance Martinique’s travel industry.”

Saint Lucia launches new winter campaign

Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA) launched the ‘Winter in Saint Lucia’ campaign, where the UK holidaymakers this winter can take advantage of this new month-long promotion. Running until the end of October, sun-seekers can book a holiday in Saint Lucia and enjoy some winter sun or book ahead for their summer holiday, saving up to 70%. There are 12 tour operators taking part, including Blue Bay Travel; Simply St Lucia; Trailfinders; Best At Travel; Classic Collection; Tropical Sky; Sackville Travel; Dial-a-Flight; ITC; Kenwood Travel; Caribtourus and LetsGo2 providing a range of holidays on offer to suit all budgets and tastes.

The ‘Winter in Saint Lucia’ campaign has a dedicated offer landing page www.stlucia.org/offers on the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority’s website featuring the 12 tour operators as the call to action.

Patricia Charley-Leon, Director of Saint Lucia Tourism Authority - UK said, “Every year we are able to offer fantastic savings at this time of year through our tour operator partners. Saint Lucia is perfect for a relaxing or active holiday which suits all taste from families to honeymooners.”

The deals are supported by an extended consumer and trade advertising campaign from SLTA with press ads in The Times, Telegraph, Metro and Evening Standard alongside digital takeovers in The Times and Telegraph. Lifestyle magazines are also part of the buy with the increasingly important niche media including wedding, diving, birding, yachting and Diaspora media. Other activations include outdoor billboards, radio and digital ads, consumer e-newsletters and social media postings.

Saint Lucia records best August ever

The latest performance report for Saint Lucia is in and the record-breaking streak in visitor arrivals to the acclaimed destination continues. According to the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority (SLTA), the island can now boast that seven out of every ten visitors to the island are U.S. with 9%.

Y ear to date, two key markets are trending upwards, led by the UK market with an 11% growth in arrivals and the U.S. with 9%.

Fedee added, “As we commence the 2019 winter season and more and more of those initiatives continue to bear fruit, we have no doubt the robust growth will continue.”

Year to date, two key markets are trending upwards, led by the UK market with an 11% growth in arrivals and the U.S. with 9%.
World Tourism Day 2019 celebrated with the theme of ‘Tourism and Jobs: A Better Future For All’

Tourism’s potential to build a ‘better future for all’ was the central theme of this year’s World Tourism Day, which was officially celebrated at a high-level summit in New Delhi. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu was joined by World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili to mark the global observation day aimed at raising awareness of the tourism sector’s social, cultural and economic value and its unique contribution to the Sustainable Development Agenda.

Held as UNWTO recognises 2019 as its year of ‘Employment, Skills and Jobs’, representatives of more than 100 countries came together in New Delhi to recognise and celebrate the sector’s ability to create more and better jobs, including for women, youth and minorities. At present, tourism accounts for 10% of global GDP and provides around one in 10 jobs worldwide. Given this, India, one of the world’s fastest-growing economies, was identified as the ideal host for World Tourism Day 2019 and the presence of Vice President highlighted the country’s commitment to UNWTO’s mandate to guide the sector’s growth in a sustainable and responsible manner.

Opening the event, Pololikashvili said, “The true potential of tourism, both as a creator of jobs and as a driver of equality and sustainable development, is only just being realised. Providing decent work opportunities and contributing to developing professional skills are at the heart of this and so on World Tourism Day 2019, we call on nations and public and private sector stakeholders around the world to ensure the many benefits that come with rising tourist arrivals are shared as widely as possible.”

V K Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, added, “This is a great opportunity to emphasise the growth and potential of the tourism sector and to raise awareness of the sector’s enormous impact.”

The prominent event for the day was an address by UNWTO Secretary General on the international tourism industry and its contribution to the economy and society. The event also saw the presentation of the World Tourism Day Plenary award of ‘Maximising Tourism’s Potential to Create More and Better Jobs’, which was presented to Vice President Venkaiah Naidu of India for his efforts to promote tourism and jobs in the country.

Gold Medal expands into India

Gold Medal, the largest travel consolidator in the Middle East, has expanded its operations into India. Travel agents in the country can now benefit from the company’s extensive sales, marketing and operational expertise, advanced booking and reporting system and excellent customer service.

GTN India held the launch event of Gold Medal in India on October 4 in New Delhi.

Gold Medal will initially provide its Indian customers with access to flight bookings, offering over 100 airline partners’ services at competitive rates. The company is planning to launch its full product portfolio, including hotels, car hire, insurance services and visas, in the following months in India.

Preetham Kiron, Managing Director for Gold Medal, said, “We are thrilled to launch our offering in India, a rapidly growing market, where we see excellent business opportunities and strong demand for our quality services.”

Our broad partnership network and innovative solutions enable travel agents to efficiently manage and grow their business while providing the best possible services to their customers. Our dedicated team will ensure that our Indian partners can make the most out of our offering... We continue to invest in our operations to further improve our services and expand our footprint in India and beyond.”

Gold Medal is committed to engaging the travel trade community across India and will launch its offering in the country’s largest cities, such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad, as well as in other strategic locations, including Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Shimla, Ambala, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Indore, Bhopal, Surat, Baroda and Mangalore.

Gold Medal is one of the leading providers of air and non-air products to the travel trade. The company offers a sophisticated online booking tool to help travel agents cater to their customers’ needs. Gold Medal has been supplying scheduled flights, hotels, holidays, car hire, tours and excursions to independent travel agents for over 25 years.
V Resorts bags the prestigious UNWTO Award for Sustainable Tourism

V Resorts, a boutique Indian leisure travel and hospitality brand, bagged the prestigious World Tourism Award (UNWTO) 2018-19 held at St. Petersburg, Russia. Recently, V Resorts has been felicitated by the coveted award in the Enterprises category, for its ‘Community Impact by V Resorts’, an initiative of the brand under the aegis of Bliss Inns Ltd India.

V Resorts competed with global enterprises from Canada, Colombia, India, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the Philippines. The list of finalists for the 2019 UNWTO Awards ranged from community-based tourism development and innovation-driven nature conservation to heritage tourism and promotion of accessible tourism. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Awards recognize inspirational projects that make an invaluable contribution towards advancing sustainable tourism.

Elated on the felicitation, Aditi Balbir, Founder and CEO, V Resorts said, “I would like to thank UNWTO for this prestigious award and for recognizing our efforts for community-friendly initiatives at V Resorts. We have been identified for contributing to the advancement of the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a proud moment for an Indian company in the tourism sector. With our properties employing 80% local staff, ensuring 100% local procurement and assimilating local culture, we have been continuously working towards achieving the 12 goals identified by UNWTO and UNEP for the development of circular and inclusive economies. We want to create inroads for local community upliftment and revamp tourism globally through our asset-light and sustainable business model.”

Balbir further added, “Also, I would like to convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to our entire V resorts family, our esteemed customers, my family and friends without whom it would not possible to receive this prestigious award.”

Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives and Cinnamon Bey Beruwala secure Green Globe recertification

In recognition of their adherence to top eco-friendly strategies and global sustainability practices, Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives and Cinnamon Bey Beruwala have once again received certifications from the prestigious Green Globe Initiative. Showcasing how the padlocks of eco-friendly luxury is the future of the hospitality industry, Cinnamon Bey Beruwala received its certification for the fifth consecutive year and has been awarded the highly acclaimed ‘Gold’ status by Green Globe. Whilst all of the hotels in the Cinnamon portfolio have received Green Globe certifications at least once, Cinnamon Bey Beruwala is the only Cinnamon property to have achieved ‘Gold’ status, marking a key milestone for the brand in its ongoing quest to run an environmentally-friendly operation that conserves energy, minimises waste and promotes sustainability at every touchpoint.

The Green Globe initiative recognises and awards corporate in the travel and tourism industry that demonstrate extraordinary eco-friendly approaches, attitudes and practices that help steer their companies and businesses towards a green, pollution-free era. Both Cinnamon Bey Beruwala and Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives demonstrated their exemplary ability to manage energy consumption, reduce their carbon footprint and achieve sustainable growth that aligns well with national and regional environmental goals. The rigorous certification process required an in-depth review of each hotel’s green practices and after a thorough evaluation, only top-performing properties were granted their certification.

Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts embodies the essence of inspired living and represents a vibrant and contemporary take on hospitality. The brand has always been an industry trendsetter and has continuously strived to deliver immersive, engaging and meaningful guest experiences, whilst managing its impact on its areas of operation and the communities that live within close proximity to each property.

Commenting on this achievement, Hishan Singhawansa, Sector Head, Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, stated, “We are proud to have achieved Gold status from the Green Globe initiative. This is a meaningful milestone for our brand and it reiterates our commitment to maintaining world-class standards in sustainability. It is our obligation as a responsible industry partner to not only implement environmentally-friendly practices but to also endorse them persistently to influence those around us. Our people play a significant role towards achieving these milestones ensuring that progressive steps are taken every day to meet daily, weekly, monthly goals towards strengthening our green initiatives and in doing so, securing global recognition for our properties.”

Chaliyar River Paddle 2019 successfully concludes with a message to go plastic negative

Over 100 water sports enthusiasts participated in the Chaliyar River Paddle 2019, organised by Jellyfish Watersports in association with Kerala Tourism. In three days, the participants covered over 68 km and paddled all the way till Jellyfish Watersports Chervuvannur Kozhikode. Naval commander Abhilash Tomy and Asian Games gold medalist Shweta Shervegar were joined by a few environmentalists like Aakash Ramison, a stand paddling group and tourists from different parts of the country and abroad.

It was a plastic negative event, as the paddlers went plastic-free for three days and moreover helped clean the river while they paddled. The whole idea was to promote water sports like kayaking, Stand up Paddle (SUPing) and sailing as it helps build the connection with the water bodies, turning more and more youngsters and tourists into evangelists of clean waters. Clearing up plastic and garbage from the river is just one thing, but what makes the real difference is rejecting plastic altogether. So, the participants were urged to stop using single-use plastic, right from the time they leave home and the next was to urge them to leave one single-use plastic from their daily lives.

“This three days Leave-No-Trace paddling event was an eye-opener for the paddlers. On one hand, it was beautiful to paddle on the gorgeous Chaliyar, but on the other it was disheartening to zoom in and see an infinite number of trees covered in blue, white, yellow plastic, looking like monsters. The plastic problem is real, and we humans need to accept what we are doing to the planet. And all the participants have taken home this realisation,” said Kaushiq Kothithodika, Founder, Jellyfish Watersports.

For those on the water for the first time, kayak lessons were offered on the first day to prepare them for the adventure. It was amazing to watch people from all age groups and different walks of life paddle together joining the Global Climate Strike, by spending three days in the water, cleaning up the river and raising their voice against plastic pollution and climate change. Apart from the exciting journey on the water, the campsite was the perfect place to unwind and bond with fellow paddlers. Also, the participants got a peek into the culture through authentic Kerala delicacies and local tribal music.
**India's first premium cruise ship Karnika returns to Mumbai for new and maiden cruise destinations**

Karnika, India's first premium cruise ship by Jalesh Cruises has arrived back in Mumbai on September 19 to sail to new and unexplored Indian cruise destinations – Ganpatipule in Maharashtra and Diu; Jalesh Cruises, India’s first multi-destination cruise line is celebrating the homoecoming of the ship with a 15% discount to guests for Diwali, Christmas and New Year vacations. Guests are likely to enjoy and for others to follow.

Karnika, meaning a ‘celestial nymph’ was transferred to the water in a gala ceremony held earlier this year in Mumbai and during its four-month sail in the Middle East.

Karnika undertook its maiden sail from Mumbai to Goa on April 17. In keeping with the maritime tradition, Karnika, meaning a celestial nymph, was transferred to the water in a gala ceremony held earlier this year on April 19.

Onboard the ship, passengers have a variety of cuisines, entertainment, adventure and relaxation to choose from. Additionally, the cruise offers land-based excursions at different ports for passengers.

The ship offers features that make it convenient and easy for senior citizens and differently-abled passengers to enjoy the cruise.

Karnika is also the first Indian ship to provide therapeutic relaxation facilities on the high seas. The onboard Spa offers a host of aromatic and natural techniques for relaxation. A state-of-the-art fitness studio and multi-purpose salon facilities are also available to passengers.

Karnika is also equipped with a state-of-the-art venue, modern technology and 24x7 Wi-Fi access, which coupled with exotic cuisine and international hospitality will offer the best corporate parties, off-sites as well as family celebrations.

**TIRUN's cruise roadshow continues, travels to Delhi to announce new cruises to Singapore**

TIRUN Travel Marketing, the exclusive India representative of Royal Caribbean International, has initiated a massive pan-India roadshow to spread the word about Royal Caribbean International’s cruises to Singapore in 2019-2020. As a part of this journey, the roadshow recently held at Junkyard Café Delhi, to apprise trade partners about the upcoming Singapore sailings onboard two of Royal Caribbean International’s best ships, Voyager of the Seas and Quantum of the Seas. The two feature-laden ships have been anchored at the Singapore bay to offer guests ultimate vacation experience aboard the Voyager of the Seas. TIRUN recently organised roadshows in Pune, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Kochi and Bengaluru and also plans to host similar events across Indore, Raipur, Agra, Chandigarh, Nagpur, Ludhiana, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Jaipur.

Commenting on the roadshow, Varun Chadha, CEO, TIRUN Travel Marketing said, “Singapore is a popular destination for Indians and for the upcoming season, the cruise offers land-based experiences as well as family celebrations. Hospitality will offer the best corporate parties, off-sites as well as family celebrations.

Commenting on the roadshow, Varun Chadha, CEO, TIRUN Travel Marketing said, “Singapore is a popular destination for Indians and for the upcoming season, the dedicated ships from Royal Caribbean International will ensure guests have the perfect cruising experience for our guests throughout the year. The ships themselves epitomize the highest standards of comfort, service quality and are packed with many first experiences on the high seas. We are excited to share these experiences with many more Indian in the coming months.”

**Jalesh Cruises announces appointment of Devesh Khanna as Chief Commercial Officer**

Jalesh Cruises has appointed Devesh Khanna as its Chief Commercial Officer. He will be responsible for spearheading the sales and marketing and the commercial aspects of Karnika, the flagship vessel of the cruise liner. His role will also focus on building a network across the country to promote the cruise liner in the Indian travel and trade community along with corporate partners.

Commenting on his new role, Devesh Khanna, Chief Commercial Officer, Jalesh Cruises said, “I am excited to be associated with the first premium cruise liner in the country. I believe that it is important to meet the ever-evolving needs of new-age customers with apt and tailored offerings. It only through understanding the psyche and the needs of the customers, that we will be able to drive the sales in the desired direction.”

Among the new sailings, onboard Celebrity Apex are three 10 and 11-night Eastern Mediterranean sailings and a new 11-night Western Mediterranean sailing. The two 11-night Greece, Malta and Turkey sailings will depart from Rome, Italy, visiting Istanbul, Ephesus (Kusadasi), Santorini, Mykonos, Athens, Valletta and Barcelona. On the 10-night Greece, Malta and Turkey cruise, guests will be immersed in eight beautiful ports, including Barcelona, Crete, Santorini, Mykonos, Bodrum, Turkey, Athens, Naples and Rome. The one-of-a-kind 11-night Spain, France and Italian Riviera expedition will sail round-trip out of Barcelona, calling Provence (Marseille), Monte Carlo, Nice, Santa Margherita, Naples, Palma De Mallorca and Valencia.

**TIRUN announces the launch of Celebrity Apex from Celebrity Cruises**

TIRUN, the exclusive India representative of Celebrity Cruises, recently launched the newest ship in Celebrity Cruises’ innovative Edge series, Celebrity Apex. The latest ship follows the legacy established by its iconic sister ship Celebrity Edge, which was just named amongst 2019 TIME Magazine’s World’s Greatest Places. Celebrity Apex features an innovative outward-facing design and transformational accommodations that offer guests the best experience to experience the vastness of the ocean to the fullest.

Among the new sailings, on-board Celebrity Apex are three 10 and 11-night Eastern Mediterranean sailings and a new 11-night Western Mediterranean sailing. The two 11-night Greece, Malta and Turkey sailings will depart from Rome, Italy, visiting Istanbul, Ephesus (Kusadasi), Santorini, Mykonos, Athens, Valletta and Barcelona. On the 10-night Greece, Malta and Turkey cruise, guests will be immersed in eight beautiful ports, including Barcelona, Crete, Santorini, Mykonos, Bodrum, Turkey, Athens, Naples and Rome. The one-of-a-kind 11-night Spain, France and Italian Riviera expedition will sail round-trip out of Barcelona, calling Provence (Marseille), Monte Carlo, Nice, Santa Margherita, Naples, Palma De Mallorca and Valencia.

After Celebrity Apex's Northern Europe mini-season, she'll spend the rest of her inaugural summer sailing 7 to 12-night itineraries in the Mediterranean, with visits to bucket-list destinations such as Lisbon, Portugal; Istanbul; Monte Carlo; Cannes, France and more.

Commenting on the introduction of Celebrity Apex, Varun Chadha, Chief Executive Officer, TIRUN Travel Marketing said, “With Celebrity Apex, Celebrity Cruises has launched another ship that transforms the way cruises were thought of. Through its unique aesthetics, top-of-the-line engineering and itineraries featuring more than 90 destinations and 48 overnight visits, European sailings aboard Celebrity Cruises’ ships give an opportunity for guests to explore the ‘Cradle of Modern Civilization’ like never before.”
Cleartrip launches a transformative solution ‘Cleartrip for Work’

Cleartrip has recently launched ‘Cleartrip for Work’, a transformative travel product for the individual traveller. Through ‘Cleartrip for Work’, travellers with a GSTIN number can access unlimited corporate fares on flights with benefits that include unlimited cashback, complimentary in-flight meals, zero trip modification charges, reduced cancellation fee and reduced seat selection fee through a simple sign-in process. Travellers can avail benefits across flights and hotels for domestic and international travel.

Cleartrip has worked with all major airlines and hotels to unlock these benefits that were previously available only to organisations affiliated with corporate travel programmes, directly to the traveller.

The corporate travel booking experience has not kept pace with the evolution of personal travel. Today, organisations and travellers are becoming more discerning and demand convenience and cost-effective travel. ‘Cleartrip for Work’ is the transformative solution that unlocks booking convenience with special fare and cashbacks.

With ‘Cleartrip for Work’, travellers who reimburse their travel like entrepreneurs, consultants, employees of companies of all sizes including SMEs and travel admins can book travel and conveniently tap into corporate fares that bundle-in a host of premium perks. In addition to the corporate fare benefits, Cleartrip is offering a 4% cashback on flights and 10% on hotels bookings. These cashbacks can be accumulated and used for booking personal vacations later. ‘Cleartrip for Work’ also enables access to in-built travel activity reports for consolidated reimbursements making the entire process smooth and transparent.

Speaking on the launch, Stuart Crighton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Cleartrip, said “Cleartrip’s relentless focus on making travel simple is now extending into the millions of underserved corporate customers throughout the region. The corporate travel experience is fragmented and ineffective for today’s tech-savvy customer. ‘Cleartrip for Work’ is a breakthrough product that introduces high levels of innovation, strong features and world-class UI present in our consumer product to corporate and SME customers. Along with this customers will also have access to corporate fares with special inclusions and GST invoices for input tax credits and reimbursement.”

Speaking on the launch, Bahu Ramachandran, Sr. Vice President, Cleartrip, said, “Cleartrip has partnered with all major airlines and hotels in India to transform travel for work by enabling access to special fares directly to the traveller. Typically, such fares are accessible only when the organisation signs-up for Cleartrip’s business offering but ‘Cleartrip for Work’ is accessible to individual travellers, as well as for travel admins who have the ability to add multiple travellers to the account through a simple self sign-in process.”

Travellers booking on the platform will need to complete a short registration process and input their GSTIN to access work fares. Once signed in, users can search their desired destination and find both retail fare and corporate fare options available on the page with the specific benefits applicable.

TripAdvisor introduces TripAdvisor Connect to reach beyond its website and app

TripAdvisor recently announced that TripAdvisor Connect, previously in beta testing, has officially launched on Facebook and Instagram. This off-platform media solution is guided by traveller and diner data, enabling advertisers to reach custom audiences beyond TripAdvisor’s website and app.

TripAdvisor Connect helps advertisers leverage the power of the TripAdvisor brand on social media channels like Facebook or Instagram to gain exposure to targeted and highly engaged audiences. TripAdvisor’s new and growing media solutions team aims to further expand TripAdvisor Connect to other media channels in the near future where the company is engaged with consumers.

“We continue to innovate new ways for advertisers to leverage TripAdvisor’s global data and trusted brand through new creative formats that deliver audience at scale – either on their own website or app or to their TripAdvisor business listing,” said Christine Maguire, Vice President, Advertising Revenue, TripAdvisor, Inc. “Fuelled by deep consumer insights, we can help advertising partners reach, engage and activate new and large high-intent audiences beyond the TripAdvisor website and app. For 10 million highly engaged followers of our brand on sites like Facebook and Instagram, TripAdvisor is a trusted resource and influential part of their decision-making process.”

Advertisers benefit from TripAdvisor’s traveller data that drives the creation of custom-built audiences that can be reached off the company’s platform. By leveraging the TripAdvisor brand on channels like Facebook or Instagram, advertisers can utilise a variety of multi-media creative solutions to more effectively build awareness and consideration with consumers that have a predisposition for their goods or services, all beyond the TripAdvisor platform.

Yatra.com wins National Tourism Award for the fourth time

Yatra.com has been awarded the prestigious National Tourism Award for the year 2017-2018 under two categories – ‘Best Domestic Tour Operator-Rest of India’ and ‘Best Inbound Tour Operator in Indi’. The Ministry of Tourism in recognition of Yatra’s remarkable achievements in providing a complete hassle-free travel solution to travellers thereby creating newer standards with its extensive and innovative offerings across B2C and corporate segment.

Commenting on the same Dhruv Shringi, Co-founder & CEO, Yatra.com said, “It is a tremendous honour for Yatra.com to be recognised by the Ministry of Tourism as the ‘Best Inbound Tour Operator’ and the ‘Best Inbound Tour Operator’ for the fourth time. This industry-wide recognition reinstates our travel expertise, and most importantly, our commitment to meeting the needs of all our customers. We will continue to work diligently to provide exceptional value to travellers across segments.”

Yatra.com today is much more than a booking site for flights, hotels and packages. It has become a travel marketplace which stands for a seamless travel experience. The business model caters to all types of travellers keeping in mind the change in behaviour and evolving needs of the consumers with the widest range of products and services. The company stands for integrity and trust as it combines continuous innovation, teamwork and great user experience maintaining strong brand loyalty in the competitive OTA landscape.

Singapore Airlines leverages Sabre to propel NDC offering to travel agents

Sabre Corporation announced a collaboration with Singapore Airlines for the expansion of its NDC programme, the KrisConnect programme. Effective November 2019, this venture will provide select Sabre connected agents in Singapore with the ability to access and book unique NDC content from Singapore Airlines. As the programme continues to roll-out across the region, all Sabre connected agents will have the ability to leverage KrisConnect.

As a member of Sabre’s innovative Beyond NDC programme since 2016, Singapore Airlines’ commitment to NDC is well established. The new KrisConnect programme, which will expand digital distribution capabilities and enrich the customer experience, further establishes collaboration between two industry leaders, which will be essential to the success of the programme.

Under the KrisConnect programme, Sabre will provide travel agents with scalable, NDC-enabled offerings from Singapore Airlines and enable end-to-end workflows with rich, integrated content. With this launch, Sabre agencies will have access to a broader array of fares and a more tailored shopping experience via the Sabre agency point-of-sale, in addition to having access to new, KrisConnect-exclusive content categories, ancillary bundles and third-party content.

“Saber is pleased to support Singapore Airlines in their fast-tracked NDC journey. With our scalable platform, we can transform the way air products are retailed, fuel product differentiation and optimise time-to-market to generate incremental revenue for the carrier,” said Rakesh Narayanan, Vice President, South Asia and Pacific, Sabre Travel Solutions Airline Sales. “Together, with our long-term customer Singapore Airlines, Sabre is committed to making NDC become an everyday reality for travellers, carriers, agencies, corporations and more,” he added.
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WTM London, Senior Director, Simon Press

What is the theme for WTM London 2019?
Ideas Arrive Here is going to be a recurring theme from 2018. For WTM London 2019, we’re expanding our notion of this concept through Innovative Perspectives, New Possibilities and Inspiring Fresh Thinking.

The event is known for being a key hub for creation in the travel industry, in addition to the business deals and ideas that fuel the industry.

What is new for WTM London 2019?
This year WTM London 2019 is extending its reach throughout the travel industry our newest launches.

- Travel Week will be the seven day travel celebration over the week of WTM London. This is going to allow travel professionals and enthusiasts to come together to raise awareness on how big the travel sector really is.

- We aim to show the impact of travel VIPs coming to London for the first week of November, due to them coming for WTM London. We want to extend our hand to the industry, without taking full ownership. More information about Travel Week is due to be launched shortly, so watch this space!

- BorderlessLive is the brand-new event where content where creative thinkers, worldwide brands and destinations from across the globe will come together for a festival style exhibition and conference.

On Friday 6 and Saturday 7 September, WTM London will be launching this one-of-a-kind event, in partnership with influencer-marketing agency Traverse, where we will be presenting how the nature of the industry has changed and where it will be moving to next.

On the first day of the show (Monday 4th), we will be increasing networking opportunities at senior level by introducing an invitation only Leaders Lunch.

What else can we look forward to at WTM London 2019?
The year ahead will see the return of the International Travel & Tourism Awards, Travel Forward and the dedicated regional Inspiration Zones.

The International Travel & Tourism Awards celebrate the success of national, regional and city tourist boards and recognise outstanding private sector companies and individuals. Showcasing the best in class of the global travel & tourism industry at the new London venue, Magazine London on Tuesday 5 November 2019. There are still some sponsorship opportunities available for our awards so do get in touch with the team if you’re interested.

Travel Forward is the travel technology event co-located with WTM London and will take place on 4–6 November 2019 at ExCeL London. The second Travel Forward conference, exhibition and buyer programme is due to once again inspire the travel and hospitality sectors with next-generation technology.

The Inspiration Zones within each region will continue to connect exhibitors through engaging new ideas whilst focusing on current and future concepts. We are continuing to reshape our conference programme to incorporate the expansion of the Ideas Arrive Here theme.

Show dates and location
**Monday 4 November 2019:**
10:00 - 19:00 (invite only)
**Tuesday 5 November 2019:**
10:00 - 18:00
**Wednesday 6 November 2019:**
10:00 - 18:00
ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL

Visit london.wtm.com
WTM London
Senior Director, Simon Press

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