

**IATO INTERACTIVE
LUNCHEON**

**IATO JOINS TOURISM
MINISTRY
ROADSHOWS IN
ASIAN COUNTRIES**

MONSOON TOURISM

SHOWERS OF OPPORTUNITY



Two major decisions included one about continuing with all arrangements for IATO's 34th Annual Convention in Visakhapatnam as initiated by the previous committee and second on restructuring of the sub-committees and make them more functional and impact oriented

It gives me immense pleasure to have our new IATO elected team who took charge on April 28, 2018 after successful completion of the election process. My special thanks to Akshay Kumar who was the returning officer and who handled the job with transparency and responsibility. Response from the members was overwhelming. Arrangements for conducting the election at the Hotel Ashok was well-appreciated by all, and Rajeev Mehra, vice president deserves special applaud. IATO secretariat worked behind the scenes for a smooth electoral operation. I appreciate the teamwork shown in the whole process.

Soon after taking charge, the new committee met on May 3, 2018 at the IATO office and took several positive decisions which remained pending due to Election Code in operation. Two major decisions included, one about continuing with all arrangements for IATO's 34th Annual Convention in Visakhapatnam as initiated by the previous committee, and second on restructuring of the sub-committees and make them more functional and impact oriented; others included pending membership applications which were examined and approval conveyed; upgrading IATO secretariat with special software and making the IATO website more user friendly; increased training programmes for skill development and global India Travel Mart. The enthusiasm was great and quite a lot of inputs came from newly elected senior vice president, E M Najeeb; honorary secretary, Rajesh Mudgill; honorary treasurer, Ravi Gosain and new EC members Tony Marwah, P Vijayarathy and Deepak Bhatnagar. This augurs well for IATO's work platform to connect with members.

The new EC also called on the hon'ble minister of tourism K J Alphons, secretary tourism Rashmi Verma and senior officials in the ministry, and sought the support of the ministry in IATO efforts, inviting them for 34th Annual Convention in Andhra Pradesh, to resolve old pending MDA cases, ministry website and link with IATO website once the ministry's new website is made operative. Also, future roadshows, pending issues related to IATO handling ministry sponsored hospitality cases, global media campaign and new initiatives of the ministry of tourism to boost tourism and IATO support in all those areas. The interaction was in line with IATO's initiatives of regularly holding interactive sessions with members and keeping them updated. The hon'ble minister extended a warm welcome and valued the feedback given by EC. He mentioned that the valued feedback will be very useful in better coordination between the ministry and all stakeholders. The meeting augurs well for us for the new fiscal.

IATO also partnered with SEPC under the ministry of commerce for Global Service Industry in Mumbai wherein IATO had its own booth and wherein 14 IATO members were present and got the opportunity to interact with overseas buyers. So since the day one, IATO new committee remained busy and we reassure you that the whole team will work hard to fulfil the dreams of the total membership to the best possible.

Thanks.

Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO

MONSOON TOURISM: SHOWERS OF OPPORTUNITY



Turning this lean season into a viable business opportunity, has helped monsoon tourism create its unique niche in the market. There is a segment of travellers who prefer travelling during the rains, hence with the right strategies and implementation, travel tour operators can craft customised monsoon tours and activities to attract tourists from around the world to India. According to reports by several travel agencies and tourism boards in India, domestic tourists have started flooding popular tourism destinations like Kerala, Goa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Meghalaya including many others.

Monsoon tourism getaways

The mainstream destinations which see huge tourist footfall during the monsoon season are Munnar in Kerala, Khandala in Maharashtra, Ooty in Tamil Nadu, Coorg located in Karnataka, Udaipur in Rajasthan, Lonavala in Maharashtra, Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra, Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Goa and the Western Ghats. Some other destinations that are set in beautiful locations are Valley of Flowers in Uttarakhand, Gushaini-Tirthan valley in Himachal Pradesh, Mandu in Madhya Pradesh, Saputara, Dang in Gujarat,

Shillong in Meghalaya, Hampi in Karnataka, Kabini in Karnataka, Lansdowne in Uttarakhand, Dudhsagar Falls in Goa and Chandratul Lake in Manali, Himachal Pradesh.

Industry experts express their notions on top visited monsoon destinations in India. Leh, Spiti, Kheerganga, Jibhi Tirthan and McLeod Triund are top four domestic destinations that the travellers visit during the monsoon season in India. There is a rise in travellers going to these destinations especially in the monsoon season as most of them are operational only in this season. Indians travel to



states like Maharashtra, Kerala, Meghalaya, Karnataka and Uttarakhand during the monsoon season.

Maharashtra attracts hordes of tourists during monsoon. Apart from regular monsoon tourism activities, 'Festival of Fireflies' at Bhandardara in Nashik is a great attraction for tourists during monsoon. During this time, millions of fireflies camp on the trees of Bhandardara just before monsoon starts. This happens because the onset of monsoon marks the beginning of the mating time of fireflies. This natural visage is often called 'Monsoon ki Diwali'. MTDC also has three resorts at Lonavala, Malshej and Chikhaldara which offer magnificent views during the monsoons and serve as an option for perfect monsoon destination to tourists.

Kerala is another state which is seeing growing popularity as a monsoon destination. The houseboat rides in Alleppey, Kumarakom and Ashtamudi during monsoon can be packaged as once in a lifetime experiences. Tour operators in hill stations like Wayanad, Athirapally



and Munnar are offering special monsoon adventures and activity packages.

Tourist engagement activities

Since every tourist has a personalised itinerary and demands during monsoon season, hotels, tour operators and

tourism boards look forward to catering to these demands and offer exclusively curated packages and activities for this particular seasonal segment.

Sometimes the tourists usually engage in excursions and trips during the monsoon season. As per an industry report, some of the preferred drives and



road trips along the popular road routes during the monsoon are from Mumbai to Coorg, Ooty to Wayanad, Coimbatore to Valparai, Chennai to Kodaikanal, Kochi to Kovalam via Alappuzha-Varkala-Trivandrum, Bangalore to Calicut, Dehradun to Nainital, Bangalore to Pune, Mumbai to Goa and Goa to Hampi. Online travel platforms help a tourist to select his/her own kind of experience and activity driven by the experiences shared by other travellers.

Activities popular during monsoons are ashram and temple tour, early morning yoga meditation session, nature walk/trekking, white water rafting, cycling, outdoor picnic lunches and camping activities for family and kids.

In Kerala, the major snake boat races happen during the monsoons. The world famous 'Nehru Boat Race' is conducted in Alleppey which is fiercely contested and attracts lakhs of tourists. Each snake boat with more than 119 oarsmen, zooming across the backwaters during this time is a sight to behold. The government is also conducting various monsoon festivals to attract tourists. The monsoon festival called 'Splash' in Wayanad has gained worldwide fame as a monsoon festival. The Splash festival has

special offers for tourists, B2B meets, a lot of monsoon sports events like mud football, mud volleyball etc. The Government is also launching an International Music Festival called 'Monsoon Raga' during this time, inspired by the success of Nishagandhi Dance festival. This is expected to attract thousands of music lovers all across the country. Moreover, the government is also launching the 'Jatayu Para Adventure ropeway' in Kollam district in the monsoon season, which also has the largest bird statue in the world. The state tourism board is also launching a new monsoon campaign called 'Dream season' campaign which will position Kerala as a premier monsoon destination.

Future strategies to boost monsoon tourism

Since monsoon tourism has emerged as a niche segment, tour operators and hotels must adopt the right kind of approach to tap this particular segment and deliver the best of experiential travel and itineraries.

Taking into account the immense potential of digital platforms and technology, these mediums are best for

information dissemination and to further boost tourism in the country.

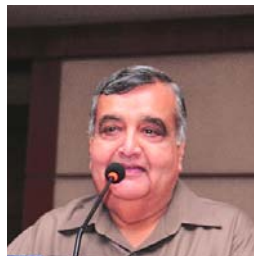
The travel industry feels that India has huge potential in tapping monsoon based tourism activities. Indian monsoons are the most exotic and beautiful rainy seasons in the world. If it is packaged well and made available to tourists, India can become the world leader in the coming years.

The diversity that India offers being a subcontinent is immense. India offers options for mountains, beaches and deserts. However, for this to take place more strongly, the government must lower the tax burden, ease rules and build infrastructure if it wants to ensure 15-20 per cent annual growth in tourism in coming years. Issues pertaining to GST, opening up of the shared economy and facilitating the adoption of new tech could herald the next trillion opportunities for the sector.

Given the activities and plans that the above governments have in place for this monsoon, travel tour operators hope for a smooth implementation which will boost tourism during June-September to a large extent contributing to the overall economy of the country.

IATO INTERACTIVE LUNCHEON MEETING

An interactive luncheon meeting was held on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at The Leela Ambience, Gurgaon. This was first luncheon meeting after the new elected team took over and members felicitated each other and a good flow of camaraderie was visible. Members' response was also overwhelming and interaction with members proved very useful to draw out future work plan based on the feedback given. Synopsis of the points discussed was circulated to all members for updates and seeking more information from members who could not be present. On the same day, there was EC meeting prior to luncheon meeting wherein pending issues related to FAITH were discussed and decision taken.

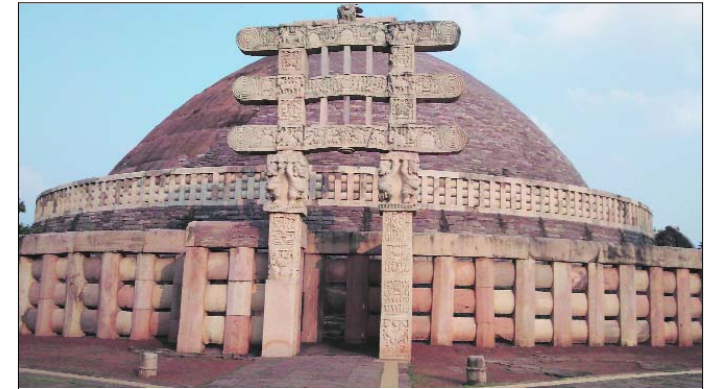


IATO members join roadshows in Asian countries organised by the Ministry of Tourism

For attracting Buddhist tourists from these markets, ministry of tourism, Government of India proposes to hold Incredible India Roadshows in the following cities:

May 07, 2018 (Monday)	Yangoon (Myanmar)
May 08, 2018 (Tuesday)	Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam)
May 09, 2018 (Wednesday)	Bangkok (Thailand)
May 10, 2018 (Thursday)	Phnom Pehn (Cambodia)

Ten IATO members joined the roadshows. The platform provided by the ministry through these roadshows was very useful for connecting with tour operators in those markets who were keenly interested in new products and special packages. The roadshows were a huge success.

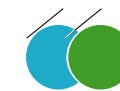


Meetings in the Ministry of Tourism

President IATO Pronab Sarkar attended the meeting chaired by Meenakshi Sharma to discuss about pending issues with the ministry and revising the hospitality case settlement of bills (which needed revision to meet the high cost of hotels since GST introduced, transport regulations, entry fee to monuments, revised guide fees as old rates were applicable since 2014) and members found it difficult to handle guests on old rates. Similarly, pending MDA cases were discussed and specially the guideline norm of five per cent growth to be shown to claim MDA which was a deterrent clause as most of the members faced bad times with business because of GST confusion and package became cost prohibitive.

IATO follows up with various ministries

IATO addressed D.O letters to ministry of tourism, ministry of civil aviation, ministry of railways, expressing the concern of members related to group visas, Nipah virus in Kerala, civil aviation issues and railway concerns based on feedback received from members. Also there were follow up meetings held on all these subjects with senior officials in the ministry of tourism to take up these bottleneck areas with the concerned ministries on top priority so that some solutions are made possible and tourism can maintain a sustainable growth.



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No charges for cancelling flight tickets within 24 hours of booking

The government recently proposed abolishing cancellation charges for domestic flight tickets if the cancellation is made within 24 hours of booking. However, the proposed rule won't apply if the tickets are booked less than 96 hours (four days) before the scheduled departure time of the flight. During this 24-hour 'lock-in period', passengers would be able to make correction in name or amend the travel date free of cost, Jayant Sinha, minister of state for civil aviation told reporters, while unveiling the draft air passengers charter.

"Airline will provide lock-in option for 24 hours after booking ticket where ticket can be cancelled without any charges. This facility will be available for passenger up to 96 hours prior to flight departure," he said. While some airlines already provide this service, some do charge a fee for corrections. The charter, however, will be binding on all airlines in domestic sector.

The charter has been placed in public domain and consultation process will be open for 30 days. The changes could be notified in two months after the consultation process, the government said. The charter proposes that passengers would be compensated '20,000 on missing connecting flights if the delay is over 12 hours, and '10,000 if the delay is between 4-12 hours.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) could look into issues where the airlines are not in agreement with the passenger on the compensation issue, he said. According



According to the charter, the cancellation charges should be printed prominently on ticket and airline and their agents together should not levy cancellation charge more than the basic fare plus fuel surcharge

to the charter, the cancellation charges should be printed prominently on ticket and airline and their agents together should not, under any circumstances, levy cancellation charge more than the basic fare plus fuel surcharge.

Under the existing rules, different airlines charge varying amounts on cancellation. There have been several complaints by passengers about airlines refusing a refund or charging inordinately hefty amount. The charter also proposes that if the passenger is informed about cancellation of flight less than two weeks before and up to 24 hours of the scheduled departure time, the airline must offer an alternative flight allowing the passenger to depart within two hours of the booked scheduled departure time or refund the ticket, as acceptable to the passenger.

WTTC invites transport ministers to partner with tourism sector to implement biometrics

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has invited transport ministers attending the annual International Transport Forum in Leipzig, Germany, to partner with the tourism sector to implement biometrics to make travel more efficient and secure. Speaking to the Open Ministerial Meeting, Gloria Guevara Manzo, president and CEO, WTTC said, "Travel and tourism generates 10.4 per cent of the world's GDP and creates 313 million jobs. Transport – aviation, maritime, road and rail – is fundamental to our sector's success. IATA is forecasting a rise from four billion annual passengers now to 7.8 billion over the next ten years, UNWTO estimates global international arrivals to rise from 1.3 to 1.8 billion by 2030. This growth poses a challenge not only to infrastructure capacity but also how to ensure these travellers can be processed efficiently and securely." She added, "In order for us to achieve this growth and create jobs, we need to work together to find solutions which increase capacity, enhance customer experience and ensure security. Technology is the key and biometrics is a solution which is already being used around the world. I invite ministers of transport to partner with us to speed up the adoption of biometrics, and together we can ensure that more jobs are created."

Muziris to be role model for two more heritage tourism projects at Alappuzha and Thalassery

The Kerala state government's prestigious Muziris Heritage Project will be the role model for two more heritage tourism projects at Alappuzha and Thalassery.

P M Noushad, managing director, Muziris Projects, informed, "The Kerala state government is working on two more heritage tourism projects at Alappuzha and Thalassery. Muziris will be the role model for these new projects. In 2016, the finance minister and chief minister of Kerala wrote to UNESCO for listing the Spice Route Project. The 31 countries which were part of the Spice Route such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal, Oman, the GCC countries among others, have shown keen interest to contribute to the project, both in terms of investment as well as documentation. So this June, ambassadors from at least 15 of these countries along with some of their scholars will converge for a one day discussion in Kochi to study the Muziris and Alappuzha projects. Based on these discussions, we will organise an international conference in January 2019."

Muziris Projects is fully owned by the Government of India to spearhead Kerala's greenfield project in heritage tourism. The project timeline is 10 years. Commenting on the investment so far in India's largest heritage tourism project, Noushad stated, "The ₹ 42.5 crore allocation by Government of India has been fully used and state government has made an additional investment of ₹ 100 crore. The project hopes to break even by 2022/23. The revenue sources include the 12 boat jetties, the restaurants and the international convention centre at Kodungallur – Muziris International



The state government has allocated ₹ 40 crore for heritage projects this financial year and a major share of this will go towards the Spice Route and Muziris Projects. We have acquired land near Pattanam for a Maritime Museum which will be of international standards and the 31 countries along the Spice Route have shown interest in contributing to the project both in investment and in data collection

Research and Convention Centre – which can accommodate 1200 pax and has state-of-the-art facilities. From January to April this year we have already earned ₹ 26 lakh (₹ 12 lakh from the convention centre)."

When complete, there will be a total of 29 museums and heritage sites in the Muziris project. Presently, six museums and three heritage sites have been opened to the public. After the first phase was opened to the public, there was a delay in completing the second phase. Denying this, Noushad said, "There has been no delay as such. Being a government project some delays are expected. The second phase has already opened."

Commenting on how the project has benefited the local community and the trickle down effect of Muziris, he added, "We employ a lot of local labour so there is direct employment. The local community is also benefited from tourism infrastructure development like

roads, street lights, toilet blocks, boat jetties (which locals can also use for their daily commutes), etc. At present we own 11 air conditioned boats and the charges are very nominal. There has been a lot of tourist footfall. Every month since January this year, around 650 foreign tourists have visited the synagogues in the area (six out of the three main synagogues are part of the Muziris Project).

Outlining the future roadmap for the Muziris Project, Noushad informed, "We have acquired land near Pattanam for a Maritime Museum which will be of international standards and the 31 countries along the Spice Route have shown interest in contributing to the project both in investment and in data collection. The state government has allocated ₹ 40 crore for heritage projects this financial year and a major share of this will go towards the Spice Route and Muziris Projects."

Foreigners can now travel to Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur unrestricted: Home ministry

Foreign tourists, except those from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, would now be allowed to visit some of the most pristine locations of the country which, so far, were out of bounds for them without a special permit, officials said today.

The home ministry has decided to relax the six-decade-old Protected Area Permit regime from Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur for five years with effect from April 1, a ministry official said. Under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between the Inner line and the International Border of some states were declared as protected areas. The protected areas currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Some parts of Sikkim fall under the protected area regime while others under the restricted area.

“A review is underway to lift the PAP from other areas too,” another official said. Citizens from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, however, continue to be banned from all PAP areas, including Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. As per a December 30, 2010 circular of the ministry, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland were excluded from the protected area regime initially for a period of one year from January 1, 2011, subject to some conditions. As per the guidelines, a foreign national is not normally allowed to visit a protected or restricted area unless the government is satisfied that there are extraordinary reasons to justify his or her visit.

Every foreigner, except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a protected or restricted area, is required to obtain a special permit from a competent authority having the power to issue such permits. In cases, where the power to issue such permits has not been delegated to a subordinate authority by the Union government, the application for the special permit has to be referred to the home ministry for prior approval, at least eight weeks before the date of the expected visit. With an aim to promote tourism, the government, time to time by notification, exempts some of such restricted or protected areas from the need of special permission for foreigners to visit them.

Necessary powers have been delegated to various authorities to issue such special permits without the prior approval of the home ministry to facilitate foreign tourists



subject to the certain exceptions. In cases of foreign diplomats, including the members of the United Nations and international organisations holding diplomatic or official passports, the special permits to visit such protected or restricted areas are issued by the ministry of external affairs. In cases of the citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin, no permit, however, can be issued without the prior approval of the Union home ministry.

India's first Bollywood theme park opens in Maharashtra

Spending over three and a half decades in the film industry, Nitin Desai planned to expand his love for Bollywood to the entire world. MTDC supported his idea and thus was born ND's Film World, India's first Bollywood theme park creating a novel tourism market altogether.

Nitin Desai, today is a household name when it comes to art direction and production design. “Before when I started out as a production designer, we had to create sets in 2D format. Chanakya was my first project and extensive research went into making the set. Research is a very key factor when it comes to taking the audience back to an era that no longer exists, is just alive maybe through pictures,” says Desai.

Recreating periods from then on became Desai's thing. Set on a journey to discovery India, he also unfolded the past of Indian history. Whether it was the 1942 Love Story or Jungle Book or the TV show KBC, Desai didn't shy away from venturing into subjects completely different from each other. To keep all these memories safe and linger on them once in a while, he has specially maintained a historical library that fulfills that wish too. Given all this, it should come as no surprise that he is the face behind creating India's first Bollywood theme park. To support his idea and give it further impetus, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) associated with his studios, named ND Studios and thus was born ND'S Film World. MTDC terms this idea as Mahabhraman. This term encourages an entirely novel concept of tourism. Set in the beautiful landscape of Karjat, the studios has something special for the tourism industry.

Speaking further on this project, Desai excitedly says, “Sometimes it would take me months to build a particular set as



massive research, material and technology go into recreating eras that the director dreams of having in his films. But what used to pain my heart the most is when after the film was done, the set was dismantled and shattered into pieces. I couldn't grasp this because when I went abroad, many of the studios preserve the sets and keep it as it is. This is very important as sometimes these sets become timeless and the next generation should be able to go visit them.”

After understanding and speaking to various experts, Desai decided that India was not going to be behind in this field especially given how sets bring movie scenes to life connecting the audience to the film's story, making them feel a part of it. Working on this chain of thoughts, Desai has set up a theme park spread over 45 acres in Karjat. Several hit films and television shows like Prem Ratan Dhan Payo, Mangal Pandey, Jodha Akbar, Kick, Dabbang, and Indu Sarkaar, Raja Shiva Chattapati, Bajirao Mastani, Big Boss were

shot here. Other major attractions include Sheesh Mahal, village set-up, Mumbai's Town Square and iconic locations such as Fashion Street, Wax Museum, Ghost House, Jail Restaurant, Chor Bazaar and Food Bazaar (Khau Galli).

“But what will attract tourists the most, especially domestic tourists is the fact that they can be one with these sets. If they choose to, we have fashion designers and hair and makeup artists that will dress them up and from Madhubala to Julie to Jodha, you can be anything you want. Just recently on the occasion of International Women's Day, we partnered with Veena World and to our amazement, over 8000 women came to fulfil their Bollywood dreams over four days at the theme park,” adds Desai.

Tour and travel operators can add ND's Film World in their itinerary not just when it comes to visiting Maharashtra but also when it comes to visiting India in particular as foreign tourists have long been fascinated with Bollywood.

Air passenger count goes up more than 10 crore in India

Union Minister Jayant Sinha recently said the number of air passengers in the country has gone up to more than 10 crore, which is higher than railway passengers travelling in AC coaches.

The union minister of state for civil aviation said the number of air passengers would increase further as the government intends to set up more airports in the country including in Jharkhand to improve air connectivity. Prime minister Narendra Modi had recently laid foundation of an international airport in Deoghar, which would help attract tourists thus giving boost to tourism sector of the state, he told reporters here. The government also has plan to set up airports in Hazaribag, Bokaro, Dhanbad and Dumka to improve air connectivity, Sinha said. Birsa Munda airport in Ranchi has been developed as one of the best airports in small cities, while the Deoghar airport would be modern airport of the state with all necessary facilities for fliers as well as for operation of air traffic, he said.



Flights in India to have Wi-Fi connections soon

The Telecom Commission recently approved a proposal which will benefit air passengers. With respect to this proposal, air passengers can soon have access to WiFi connections onboard aircraft.

“Exciting times ahead in Indian skies as Telecom Commission approved data and voice services in flights over Indian airspace,” Civil Aviation minister Suresh Prabhu said, announcing the Telecom Commission’s decision. The minister said that he will ensure ‘earliest



implementation’ of the proposal. The government wants to remain committed

to improving services of air passengers and also making their travel delightful and hassle-free.

According to sources, the pricing of providing the services would be left to respective airlines. The Home Ministry has already given its nod to the proposal. Last year, the Department of Telecom had asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India to give its recommendations on licensing terms and modalities for providing in-flight data and voice services.

Indian Railways launches Rail MADAD for real-time complaint redressal

Have a complaint while travelling on an Indian Railways train? Do you want to track the status of grievance redressal? Indian Railways has launched a new ‘Rail MADAD’ app for the very purpose of speedy redressal of passengers complaints. Railway minister Piyush Goyal has launched the ‘Rail MADAD’ (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel) App that aims to expedite and streamline passenger grievance redressal. The Railway Passenger Grievance Redressal and Management System (RPGRAMS) has been developed by the Delhi Division of Northern Railway and has many features. The ‘Rail MADAD’ app allows passengers to register complaints through mobile phone or web. Under this feature, all the complaints received from multiple modes will be integrated through RPGRAMS on a single platform. Then the complaints will be analysed and reports will be generated, which will entitle the top management to continuously monitor the pace of grievance redressal and to assess the performance of trains, railway stations, field units on various parameters including cleanliness, catering, amenities etc. Here are five facts every Indian Railways passenger should know about the ‘Rail MADAD’ grievance redressal system:

1) Passengers, through this App, can lodge complaints with minimum inputs. Also, the app has an option to upload a photo. Once the passenger registers his/her complaint, he/she will get an instant ID through SMS followed by a customized SMS communicating the action taken thereon by Indian Railways. Also, the ‘Rail MADAD’ App relays real-time feedback to passengers on the status of redressal of their complaints.

2) The ‘Rail MADAD’ App also displays various helpline numbers such as child



The ‘Rail MADAD’ app allows passengers to register complaints through mobile phone and all the complaints received from multiple modes will be integrated through RPGRAMS on a single platform

helpline number, security number etc. Additionally, the ‘Rail MADAD’ App also provides the facility of direct calling for immediate assistance in one easy step.

3) Now, under this new feature, all

modes of filing complaints including offline and online modes (at present, there are 14 offline and online modes) will be integrated on a single platform which will allow the management to present a holistic picture of weak or deficient areas and which will also enable concerned officials to take focused corrective action.

4) Also, trends on various performance parameters of a selected train or a railway station will be generated on the basis of the data, analysed by RPGRAMS like cleanliness, amenities etc. Therefore, it will make the managerial decision more precise as well as effective.

5) Interestingly, hierarchy-based reports will be made available for management across all railway divisions/zones as well as railway board. In addition to this, every week, the reports will be sent through auto email to every concerned officer.

Announcements

Cox & Kings launches Self-Drive 365 for road trip enthusiasts across India

Cox & Kings has always been famous for constantly innovating and releasing new products in the market that can cater to all kinds of travellers in the Indian market. For the women travellers, it introduced Getaway Goddesses and just last year, the company came out with a new segment called Enabled Travellers for the disabled people.

For the year 2018, Cox & Kings launched a segment called Self-Drive 365. Karan Anand, head of relationships, Cox & Kings said, “The travel market has been changing constantly and our company has always believed in keeping up with the latest trends and innovating products that satisfy all kinds of travellers. From group tours to family tours and then couple travels to now the solo traveller, the market has seen a constant change. We noticed a rise in self-drive trips and to serve that market, launching this new segment is necessary.”

The new segment aims to encourage travellers to discover and be a one-stop road trip planner while offering a range of road trips within Indian and across the globe.

Debolin Sen, business head, Self-Drive 365 added, “We have personally gone on these trips and made a list of destinations and activities that the consumer can do while on a self-drive trip. After intensive consumer research, we have made a list of top 10 domestic and international trips one can take. From customised itineraries to travel assistance and insurance, Cox & Kings will take care of everything.”

Jet Airways commences operations under the Regional Connectivity Scheme

Jet Airways, the Indian full-service international carrier, recently announced the launch of operations under the 'Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik' (UDAN) scheme.

The airline has been awarded four routes under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) and will launch operations on three new routes out of the four routes awarded, and will subsequently launch Lucknow-Bareilly-Delhi-Bareilly-Lucknow.

On the occasion, Gaurang Shetty, whole time director, Jet Airways said, “Jet Airways started off with the aim of introducing India to a world class travel experience and connectivity embodied in the 'joy of flying'. Having pioneered the operations of the ATR aircraft in India, the launch of these

new flights mainly onboard ATR aircraft, will allow Jet Airways to embark on a journey to ensure that unserved regions and underserved airports are maximised to their full potential. The UDAN scheme is a great initiative which facilitates in realising the benefits of the aviation sector; reach the vast expanse of India and its various geographies. It is our constant endeavour to provide connectivity with a view to providing a fillip to the development of trade and tourism within all parts of India.”

Starting from June 14, Jet Airways will fly three times a week on the Lucknow-Allahabad-Patna sector. Commencing from June 15, Jet Airways will fly three times a week between New Delhi and Nashik. Effective June 16, Jet Airways will commence operations three times a week on the Nagpur-Allahabad-Indore sector.

With the introduction of the new flights, guests can now travel to a host of other cities both on Jet Airways' domestic and international network via convenient connections on offer.

Tourism ministry, Google Arts and Culture bring Incredible India campaign to VR

From a Goa beach, to a teeming bazaar of Delhi, to a close view of the Guru Granth Sahib in Amritsar's Golden Temple, Google Arts and Culture brings India's heritage, festivity, spirituality and adventure to users in form of a new 360-degree video.

Created in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism for its international tourism campaign 'Incredible India', the video takes viewers on a journey to some of the most iconic destinations in India like Hampi's Vitthala Temples and Qutub Minar in Delhi.

Speaking about India as a destination of diverse experiences, Union tourism minister K J Alphons said, “India is an iconic destination that offers unique experiences of climate, geography, culture, art, literature, and food. We want to give people in India and across the world an opportunity to immerse in our country's rich heritage. Through our partnership with Google, we want to engage new and global audiences and offer them immersive content in a never-before-seen manner.”

The Google teams visited Hampi, Delhi, Goa and Amritsar over 12 days to capture 'stunning slices of life that typify each place' using the best of 360-degree video capture technology, including Google's Yi Halo camera. “After 12 days in India, and over 40 hours of travel, we had transversed India. The music is inspired by the rhythms and melodies of the regions depicted in the video,” the company said in a blog post.

Announcements

Maharashtra to get new airport at Sindhudurg this year

Maharashtra will get a new airport at ParuleChipi in Sindhudurg district in 2018. Work on the project is expected to be completed in June this year, before the onset of monsoon and the Ganesh Festival, which will begin in September this year.

The airport is being constructed by IRB Sindhudurg Airport on a design-build-finance-operate-transfer (DBFOT) basis for the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). Sindhudurg airport will have a 2500-meter runway which has provision for future development. The airport will be built at an approximate cost of ₹520 crore. Sindhudurg airport will have the capacity to handle 200 departing and 200 passengers arriving during peak hours with expansion facilities to serve up to 400 departing and 400 arriving passengers without additional construction. Although the airport will be serving domestic travellers it will be equipped with facilities to serve international charter flights.

The ministry of civil aviation has given in-principle approval and environmental clearance has also been granted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest. An airport in Sindhudurg was necessary in order to provide better connectivity to the Konkan region of Maharashtra, parts of Goa, North Karnataka and Western Maharashtra.

SpiceJet to launch flight services in Chennai-Mangaluru sector

Budget carrier SpiceJet recently said it will connect Chennai to Mangaluru starting this June. Apart from this, the carrier also plans to enhance frequencies on some of its existing routes in south India.

Services on the Hyderabad-Rajahmundry are being enhanced with an additional evening flight from May 25, while



Chennai-Kozhikode and Bengaluru-Kozhikode would have an additional evening flight and Chennai-Hyderabad a third flight, starting June 16, the airline said.

The 10 new flights and additional frequencies are aimed at strengthening the airline's southern India network. It will be operated with the regional Bombardier Q-400 regional jets, SpiceJet said in a release.

“SpiceJet is on the path of a major fleet expansion which means new routes and destinations for our customers. We have introduced evening flights on key sectors which will operate in addition to the existing morning flights and help business travellers conveniently plan same day trips,” said Shilpa Bhatia, chief sales and revenue officer, SpiceJet. The carrier currently operates 412 average daily flights to 55 destinations, including 48 domestic and seven international ones, with a fleet of 37 Boeing 737NG and 22 Bombardier Q-400s.

Direct flight services to commence between Singapore and Amaravati

Direct flight services between Singapore and Amaravati, the capital city of Andhra Pradesh, will commence within 30 days, chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu said recently.

Singapore Airlines has come forward to operate direct flights between the two cities, he said. “We are giving all necessary clearances required for that,” he told a press conference. Singapore minister for Information and Communication S Iswaran was also present. The decision to operate direct flights between Amaravati and Singapore was taken at the third meeting of the Joint Implementation Steering Committee recently, Naidu said.

The idea was to have direct flights between these destinations ahead of the World Cities Summit scheduled to be held in Singapore from July 8, he added. Also, with Singapore companies actively involved in the development of Amaravati city, the need for flights was even more, the chief minister said.

“International flights are essential for the development of any city. Direct flights to Singapore will also connect us to the world,” Naidu said. Meanwhile, over 63,425 citizens favoured introduction of flights between Amaravati (Vijayawada airport) and Singapore, a survey conducted by the Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation has revealed. The survey was conducted on its website and WhatsApp seeking public opinion on starting flights between these destinations. International status was accorded to the Vijayawada airport last year.

Tourism Statistics: April 2018

Over seven lakhs Foreign Tourist Arrivals in April 2018, registering a growth of 4.4 per cent over April 2017 37.2 per cent growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals on e-Tourist Visa in April 2018 over April 2017

Ministry of Tourism compiles monthly Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) & FTAs on e-Tourist Visa on the basis of information received from Bureau of Immigration (BOI). The following are the important highlights regarding FTAs and FTAs one-Tourist Visa during the month of April, 2018:

Airport (2.64 per cent), Gede Rail Land Check Post (2.63 per cent), Goa Airport (2.30 per cent), Ghoadanga Land Check Post (1.63 per cent), Ahmedabad Airport (1.28 per cent), Thiruvananthapuram Airport (1.21 per cent), Amritsar Airport (1.06 per cent) and Chitpur Railway Station (0.99 per cent).

Kochi Seaport (4.4 per cent), Kochi Airport (3.4 per cent), Hyderabad Airport (2.5 per cent), Kolkata Airport (2.4 per cent), Amritsar Airport (1.3 per cent), Thiruvananthapuram Airport (1.1 per cent), Jaipur Airport (1.0 per cent), Ahmedabad Airport (1.0 per cent), Trichy Airport (0.5 per cent) and Calicut Airport (0.4 per cent).

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs):

- FTAs in April 2018 were 7,49,477 as compared to 7,17,899 in April 2017 registering a growth of 4.4 per cent.
- FTAs during the period January-April 2018 were 38,76,021 as compared to 34,98,969 in January-April 2017 registering a growth of 10.8 per cent.
- The percentage share of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India during April 2018 among the top 15 source countries was highest from Bangladesh (24.32 per cent) followed by USA (11.21 per cent), UK (9.14 per cent), Sri Lanka (3.48 per cent), Australia (3.33 per cent), Malaysia (3.06 per cent), China (2.62 per cent), Canada (2.53 per cent), Germany (2.48 per cent), France (2.33 per cent), Japan (2.22 per cent), Russian Federation (2.07 per cent), Thailand (1.70 per cent), Afghanistan (1.65 per cent) and Nepal (1.64 per cent).
- The percentage share of Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India during April 2018 among the top 15 ports was highest at Delhi Airport (28.75 per cent) followed by Mumbai Airport (14.46 per cent), Haridaspur Land Check Post (11.40 per cent), Chennai Airport (7.44 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (5.81 per cent), Kolkata Airport (5.58 per cent), Kochi Airport (4.21 per cent), Hyderabad

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) on e-Tourist Visa:

- During the month of April, 2018 a total of 1,57,094 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 1,14,469 during the month of April, 2017 registering a growth of 37.2 per cent.
- During January-April 2018, a total of 9,18,792 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 5,81,783 during January-April 2017, registering a growth of 57.9 per cent.
- The percentage shares of top 15 source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facilities during April, 2018 were highest from UK (16.3 per cent) followed by USA (11.0 per cent), China (5.8 per cent), Australia (5.5 per cent), France (5.3 per cent), Thailand (4.3 per cent), Germany (4.0 per cent), Canada (3.5 per cent), Oman (3.2 per cent), Russian Federation (3.0 per cent), Malaysia (2.2 per cent), Italy (2.1 per cent), South Africa (1.8 per cent), Spain (1.8 per cent) and Republic of Korea (1.7 per cent).
- The percentage shares of top 15 ports in tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa during April 2018 were highest from New Delhi Airport (46.2 per cent), Mumbai Airport (17.4 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (6.8 per cent), Chennai Airport (6.1 per cent), Dabolim (Goa) Airport (4.5 per cent),

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through tourism (in Rs. terms)

- FEEs during the month of April 2018 were ₹15,713 crore as compared to ₹14,260 crore in April 2017.
- The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms in April 2018 over April 2017 was 10.2 per cent.
- FEEs during the period January- April 2018 were ₹68,629 crore with a growth of 14.2 per cent, as compared to the FEE of ₹60,079 crore in January-April 2017.

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through tourism (in US \$ terms)

- FEEs in US\$ terms during the month of April 2018 were US\$ 2.393 billion as compared to FEEs of US\$ 2.211 billion during the month of April 2017.
- The growth rate in FEEs in US\$ terms in April 2018 over April 2017 was 8.2 per cent.
- FEEs during the period January-April 2018 were US\$ 10.621 billion with a growth of 17.4 per cent as compared to the FEE of US\$ 9.044 billion in January-April 2017 with a growth of 17.5 per cent over January- April 2016.

Indian demand for new aircraft forecasted at 1,750 over 20 years



India will require 1,750 new passenger and cargo aircraft over the next 20 years to meet an exponential rise in both passenger and freight traffic, according to Airbus' latest India Market Forecast. To help meet this growth, India will need 1,320 new single-aisle aircraft and 430 widebody aircraft valued at US\$255 billion.

While much of the air traffic growth is expected to be driven by the fast expanding economy, rising wealth and urbanisation, ambitious government-backed regional connectivity programmes are also set to enhance demand for air travel. By 2036, Indians will take four times as many flights as

they do today. As a result, traffic serving the Indian market is forecast to grow 8.1 per cent per year over the next 20 years, almost twice as fast as the world average of 4.4 per cent.

Domestic Indian traffic is expected to grow five-and-half times over the next 20 years (2017-2036) reaching the same level as U.S. domestic traffic today, making it one of the world's fastest growing markets, according to the report.

"Make in India is at the heart of our strategy. Airbus has the largest footprint in India of any international aircraft manufacturer, nationwide across all aircraft programmes. Our sourcing volume has grown 16 times over the past 10 years and it is currently at more than

US\$550 million annually," said Srinivasan Dwarakanath, president, Airbus Commercial Aircraft in India.

India is set to become the world's third-largest aviation market by 2019/2020 and Airbus is well positioned to partner its growth with backlog orders of over 530 aircraft to date.

The complete Airbus product line comprises the best-selling A320 Family in the single aisle market, the popular A330 and A330neo, the A350 XWB in the mid-size widebody category and the flagship A380 in the very large aircraft segment. In the freight market, Airbus currently offers the new-build A330-200F and the Passenger-to-Freighter (A330P2F) programme.

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Email: nareshsharma1@gmail.com

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Monument mitras short listed for developing tourist friendly amenities at 95 monuments



for adoption include not only public and private industry, but also schools and individuals. So far, 31 prospective monument mitras have been shortlisted by the Oversight & Vision committee for developing tourist friendly amenities at 95 monuments, heritage and other tourist sites including major heritage sites like Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Hampi, Sun Temple, Ajanta Caves, Char Minar, Kaziranga National Park. Rashmi Verma, secretary (tourism), Satyajeet Rajan, DG (tourism), Meenakshi Sharma (ADG tourism) and other officials were present for the event.

The 3rd Award Ceremony of Adopt a Heritage Project was conducted by Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments in New Delhi recently for awarding the Letters of Intent to the shortlisted agencies under Phase IV of the project.

Awarding the Letters of Intent to nine agencies for 22 monuments of Phase-IV, Union Minister for Tourism (IC) K J.Alphons asked the stakeholders to 'protect, preserve and market' the heritage of India. The minister also emphasised on creation of awareness amongst the corporates and citizens to adopt heritage sites under the project for creation, operation and maintenance of basic and advanced amenities at tourist destinations. The event had a

discussion session with the stakeholders in which the concerns and suggestions were made to the minister and ministry officials.

The scheme 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan' was originally launched on September 27, 2017 to preserve the rich cultural and natural heritage and to promote tourism across the length and breadth of our country. The project began with selected ASI ticketed monuments and the scope has now been expanded to include other natural and cultural sites across the country. It was strongly emphasised that tourist experience is the prime parameter to evaluate performance in the sector.

As on date, the project has received an encouraging response with over 195 registrations as per the project website. Various agencies that have come forward



Indian Association of Tour Operators
(National Apex Body of Tour Operators)
310, Padma Tower II, 22 Rajendra Place
New Delhi - 110008
Tel : 91-11-25750034, 25738803
Fax : 91-1125750028
e-mail : iato@airtelmail.in
For latest updates please visit IATO
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