

AITTC Newsletter

Issue No: 10 – Jul- Aug 2014

"If winter comes can spring be far behind" - Shelley

While looking forward to nice and warm spring, we welcome readers to another issue of our bulletin with several inspiring news on the Australia-India Travel & Tourism front.

The Medical Tourism presentation on 8 July was a grand success. We, in partnership with India Tourism organized an event in Sydney on 8 July afternoon to add Medical Tourism as a part of the council's long term agenda and to introduce Dr Hemani Thukral as its Director Medical Tourism. The event was well attended by AITTC members, media and associates of the industries that included tour operators, hoteliers and airlines.



As a medical tourism destination India holds an advantage because of its relatively lower costs, immediate access, choice of state-of-the-art private hospitals and diagnostic facilities, highly experienced and internationally trained doctors, nurses and workforce, centers of excellence in a variety of fields, use of sophisticated, modern medical technology, and a high level of hospitality for a diverse range cultural and personal needs.

"This inspires us to include Medical Tourism as a part of the council's long-term agenda", said our Chairman Sandip Hor, Chairman of Australia India Travel & Tourism Council (AITTC) while welcoming the guests and sharing AITTC views on this. "Direct Air India flights between Sydney and Melbourne to Delhi, availability of a range international brand hotels and English being the medium of communication can offer added benefit to the Australian market", commented Vibhava Tripathi, Assistant Director, India Tourism, Sydney while addressing the gathering.

As regards future AITTC events we invite our members and stakeholders to make suggestions on subjects/matters that may be beneficial to the industry. Opportunities for sponsoring any of our events are available, so if interested to contribute then please do not hesitate contact us.

Our 2014 AGM was held on 6th August at Grace Hotel in Sydney. Secretary Philip Pratley tabled the report stating the clear achievements of AITTC in the last twelve months that includes positioning

AITTC with status among stakeholders and main stream travel media; introducing systems and procedures to the extent possible; form several communication channels; organise successful events like the Festivals of India and Medical Tourism; regularly issue newsletters; update website and social media outlets; inspire new memberships and sustain financial stability. In addition lot of work behind the scene is progressing to move AITTC forward and this includes gaining momentum in India.

The term for executive committee as per constitution being two years, the current team which comprises of Sandip Hor as Chairman, Ian Cameron as Co Chairman, Shankar Dhar, as Vice Chairman, Philip Pratley as Secretary, Phillip Boniface as Treasurer and Malli Iyer, KK Gupta and Michael Osborne as Members ,continues till next AGM in 2015.

Our membership numbers are increasing incrementally. We welcome, Ian Norris, Partner India Travel Specialists as a Corporate Member and Reena Tory, Founder and Director-Mantra Wild Adventures, as an Individual Member.

We request others who are considering to join us to please submit their application forms which can be obtained from our website www.aittc.net.au

Social media is a now a powerful tool for mass communication. So we are in Facebook and Twitter and request our readers to follow us. Links to both of them are

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Australia-India-Travel-and-Tourism-Council/234962370030875?ref=hl> and https://twitter.com/_AITTC

We conclude looking forward to receiving your continued support and cooperation to make our journey forward together.

Finally AITTC express concern with the recent mishaps in the aviation industry, share grief and convey sincere condolence to families of the victims.

Provided below is some more industry news that may be of importance to you:

Tourists from India to Australia

There were 21,700 visitors from India during May 2014, bringing the total for the five months to May to 82,500, an increase of 19.4 per cent relative to the same period previous year.

Another international accolade for Sydney

Sydney has been named the number one city in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific in Travel + Leisure's 2014 World's Best Awards 2014 in USA, beating nearest rivals Melbourne and Queenstown, New Zealand to take out the top spot.



Tourism spending in Australia still short of target

Gradual progress is being made on Tourism Australia's Tourism 2020 total overnight visitor expenditure goals, however the latest projections still show the country falling just short. According to the latest State of the Industry report from Tourism Research Australia, covering the year ending Mar 2014, forecasts show the lower end of the target spend goal will not be reached. The report shows total overnight visitor expenditure sits at \$81.9 billion, which is up 4.8% on the same time last year. Total expenditure, including day visitors, climbed past the \$100 billion mark, closing at \$100.1b, based on a total of 501 million total visitor nights by domestic & international tourists, up 0.9%. Broken down by state, the latest TRA report shows big improvements by both South Australia and Western Australia in terms of visitor expenditure, with both states up 7.2% year-on-year. New South Wales and Victoria also posted gains, while results from Qld and the NT were down. The ACT and Tasmania posted significant drops in expenditure, down 6.7% & 13.4% respectively.

Free guide to help grow NSW tourism

A guide to grow tourism to Sydney and NSW in domestic and international markets was launched in July by the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW. Chief Executive Officer, Sandra Chipchase said the Partner Opportunities with Destination NSW Prospectus July 2014 – June 2015 sets out the opportunity for the NSW tourism industry to work together with the agency to ensure Sydney and Regional NSW continues to be a global tourism and events destination. To download a copy you can access the Prospectus at - www.destinationnsw.com.au/partneropportunities

Air India joins Star Alliance



Air India joined Star Alliance on 11 July Star Alliance being the first ever Indian airline to join a global airline alliance. Air India will add a total of 400 daily flights and 35 new destinations in India to the Star Alliance network with the biggest growth coming from its home market, currently served by 13 Star Alliance members flying to ten destinations and holding a 13 per cent market share. As well as adding more airports to the Star Alliance network, it will also increase its market share in India to 30 per cent,

while passengers will further benefit from a wider choice on routes connecting North America, Europe, Asia and Australia via the Indian Subcontinent

New Sales & Marketing Manager for Air India in Australia

Marie Anderson has been named as the new sales & marketing manager for Air India. Her aviation industry career includes roles with TMS Asia-Pacific, BA, Malaysia Airlines and more.

India is now the world's 10th largest business travel market.

Indian business travel spending is expected to jump 7.6% in 2015

In its first BTI Outlook for India, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) revealed that India's business travel sector has grown considerably in the last 15 years, propelling the country from 24th in the global rankings in 2000 to 10th in 2013.

And the GBTA expects that India will continue to move up the rankings in future, and should overtake Italy to become the ninth largest global market in the next five years.

The GBTA report said India's business travel sector is being driven by the domestic market, which accounts for 90% of total business travel spend in the country. Domestic spending is expected to increase 2.2% in 2014, before surging 7.7% next year.

International business travel spending has been "extremely volatile" in recent years, according to the GBTA, and is only expected to gain 1.1% in 2014. But again, this is likely to recover strongly in 2015, with the GBTA predicting a 7% rise "due to renewed strength among India's major trading partners including China, Europe and the United States"

India elected to UNESCO for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage

India has been elected for the second time to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) tasked with safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. India won the election for the 2014-2018 terms with 135 votes against 142 from member states at the headquarters in Paris. The UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has 24 members serving on a four-year term.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India grow by 9.7% in May

FTAs in India have grown 9.7 per cent in May 2014 over the same month last year. The Ministry of Tourism says that FTAs for May 2014 were at 421,000 compared to 384,000 in May 2013. In May 2012, the figure was 374,000. FTAs during the period January-May 2014 were 3.05 million, which is 6.6 per cent higher than 2.8 million arrivals in the corresponding period in 2013, the statement added. Foreign exchange earnings, on the other hand, grew 21.5 per cent from Rs. 60.92 billion in May 2013 to Rs 74.03 billion in May 2014.



WTTCII presents two-pronged strategy for boosting India Tourism

WTTC, India Initiative (WTTCII) has urged the new Government to take proactive steps to unleash India's Tourism potential in a report titled 'Tourism Action Plan – Unleashing India's Potential'. "The report outlines the key initiatives the new Government and the Ministry of Tourism must implement for a better Tourism environment in India: eVisas, Safety and Security, Connectivity – Air, Rail and Roads, Convergence – both at the Central and the State Level, the launch of Incredible India 2.0, Skill Development and Domestic Tourism. This report also summaries and timelines priority action plans for above initiatives as Short Term (1- 6 Months), Medium Term (6-12 Months) and Long Term (12-24 Months)," said Dipak Deva, Chairman, WTTCII. The first copy of the report was presented to Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge).

VoA to be implemented by year-end

The India government's Visa on Arrival (VoA) scheme for all countries of the world, except the few countries mentioned before, is very much on track and will soon be implemented. All that is left is the hiring of personnel to facilitate smooth operation and once that's done and the infrastructure is in place the VoA scheme may be implemented by the end of this year itself.

President of India for creation of 50 themed tourist circuits

In his address to the Joint Session of Parliament House in New Delhi, on June 9, 2014, Pranab Mukherjee, President of India, emphasised the importance of tourism in India's progress. He further added that the government will start a mission mode project to create 50 themed tourist circuits. He also said that a National Mission will be launched to encourage pilgrimage tourism to the country and that the Mission will focus on beautifying and improving the infrastructure and facilities for the pilgrim sites.

Experience the living cultures of India



Ian Norris, a lifelong veteran of the travel industry in Australia has put together a unique tour of India that takes travellers not only to the classic sights of this ancient nation but also to places where they will experience living cultures often hidden from tourists. The 20-day tour, departing 5th February 2015 will take guests through and beyond the iconic “Golden Triangle” of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur to also experience village life, wildlife, dining with nobility – and even a stay in the unique Jamba-Dera Sand Dune Retreat. This retreat in the vast expanse of the Thar desert, far off the beaten tourist track is one of the few luxury resorts in the world situated on top of nearly 100 foot sand dune. A wonderful base from which to interact with the living cultures of India. For more information visit www.indiatravelsspecialists.com.au

Nine Indian airports to accept e-visa facilities by December 2014



Nine Indian airports are reported to get e-visa facilities in the next six months to attract more tourists. Arun Jaitley, Finance Minister, said while presenting the first national Budget 2014-5. He said that tourism helped in job creation and e-visas would encourage more tourists to visit India. He also announced that new airports to be developed through PPP funds in tier-II and tier-III cities.

Bollywood star Lisa Ray is Insight Vacations global brand ambassador



Internationally acclaimed Bollywood film actress, TV host, entrepreneur and humanitarian, Lisa Ray is Insight Vacations new Global Brand Ambassador for the Exotics and Gold Collections. Link to the following presents Lisa's travel in India -<http://youtu.be/bVHdc8msgbc>.

Emirates A380s land in India

THE first scheduled Emirates Airbus A380 flight landed in India on Tue, with Mumbai becoming EK's 29th superjumbo port. The daily service operates from Dubai to Chhatrapati Shivaji Int'l Airport, with Emirates the second airline to offer A380 services to the hub after Singapore Airlines.



The Dubai-based airline has introduced new menus on flights to all 10 of its destinations in India, which it says will "reflect regional tastes and customer preferences".

For example, customers on the Kolkata route will now be offered the local mustard fish curry, sarson maach, while passengers flying to and from Ahmedabad will be served turiya vatana muthia – a dumpling made from ridge gourd and green peas. Those flying to Kerala will be offered meen mulaku curry, while dhabe da gosht will be available on Delhi flights.

Other new additions to the airline's Indian menus include a range of chutneys and pickles, more vegetarian options and individually-packed flat breads.

As well as the new meal options, Emirates' Indian passengers will be able to watch more than 100 movies in eight Indian languages, as well as dedicated Indian TV channels for Bollywood pop videos, comedy and drama, and audio channels featuring Indian music.

Vikas Chef

Award-winning Michelin Starred Indian chef, restaurateur, and cookbook writer Vikas Khanna - who is also the host of TV show MasterChef India - visited Melbourne as a guest judge on MasterChef Australia's series six, currently showing on Channel 10. Vikas sat down with Gary Mehigan, renowned chef, restaurateur and judge on MasterChef Australia, after filming wrapped for the day. Gary probed Vikas on his impressions of his home town, Melbourne, and the city's rising reputation as a foodie destination. The two discussed Melbourne's rich, multi-cultural heritage, the availability of amazing produce and the appeal of the gourmet regions surrounding the city for Indian visitors. "I think it's a fantastic city, it's so multi-cultural yet it has this calmness and history, very much like Europe," said Vikas

Threads of Rajasthan

Classic Safari Company is offering Threads of Rajasthan - an enriching, inspiring and unforgettable 15 day journey offering an intensely personal encounter with India and its marvellous textiles. Christina Sumner OAM, former principal curator at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney where she worked with the decorative arts and design collections for 28 years, will escort this fascinating journey from 7-21 February 2015, sharing her knowledge and passion for traditional Indian textiles.



After visiting vibrant Mumbai and the superb ancient cave complexes of Ajanta and Ellora, journey continues to the ancient Rajput centres of Jodhpur, Jaipur and Jaisalmer, and by the lake in magical Udaipur, everywhere staying in sumptuous heritage hotels, palaces and havelis. Supporting social enterprise partner Artisans of Fashion, visits to the workshops and showrooms of carefully selected textile artists and experts is a part of the itinerary. For more information please check www.classicsafaricompany.com.au.

Brahmaputra River Cruises

It is after all the first natural history adventure cruise of India which CNN rates as being amongst Top 10 Adventure Cruise in the world and The Times of UK listed as being amongst the Top 50 Adventures on earth! Other accolades are being featured in the Dream Cruises program of the National Geographic Channel, being mentioned by The Times of UK as being in the Top 50 Adventure Holidays on Earth and by CNN mentioning the river being in the Top 10 Adventure Cruises in the World. The voyage was covered with a feature on the Australian Weekender in Australia and Outlook Traveller in India. Ending with winning the CNBC Travel Award and the National Tourism Award by the Indian government!



Kerala Tourism to start hop-on hop-off boat service

Kerala government's new tourism initiative of hop-on hop-off boat service as well as water taxi service at Kochi and Muziris heritage site is expected to start in August 2014, AP Anilkumar, State Tourism Minister said. Initially, it was planned to start with three 25-seater AC boats for hop-on hop-off services at Kochi heritage site, Anilkumar revealed.

The sites in Kochi and Muziris also would be linked with the service. "This is the first time hop-on hop-off service being introduced in the country", he said, adding that the basic idea was to provide a circular service at regular intervals. The hop-on hop-off services will cover places like High Court Jetty, Marine Drive, Bolgatty Palace, Vypeen, Fort Kochi and Mattancherry, he added.

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News items has been sourced from various media releases