

AITTC Newsletter

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“To my mind, the greatest reward and luxury of travel is to be able to experience everyday things as if for the first time, to be in a position in which almost nothing is so familiar it is taken for granted.” – Bill Bryson

While we are now in summer mode with sprint of the festive season overwhelmingly embracing us, it's that time of the calendar year to look back, say thank you and to prepare the pathway for moving forward.

The year has been fairly exciting for AITTC with several initiatives implemented, building the pillars for the organization to grow into maturity. Both corporate and individual memberships have grown, stakeholder contacts are being regularly maintained, key databases established and websites being regularly updated.

Talks, functions and events were conceived, planned and some executed during the year to inspire bilateral travel between India and Australia. This includes introduction of “Medical Tourism” which is a growing arm of the industry as a part of our long term journey, “Wildlife in India” which is creating a lot of interest among safari lovers and finally a special lecture program on “ Mind , Body & Soul” delivered by guest speaker Master Del Pe from USA. All the events drew appreciation and attention of stakeholders, media and industry partners like tour operators, hotels and airlines. In this context we thanks India Tourism in Sydney for extending their generous support behind these strategic events



Many of AITTC members have significantly contributed to the industry through active participation in seminars, workshop and conferences, worth mentioning is our Medical Tourism Director Hemani Thukral who presented a paper in Melbourne in November at the Medical Tourism Summit which in-

volved academia, medical directors, doctors, insurer and facilitators, from both inbound and outbound medical tourism perspective.

However AITTC journey has only began and it's still a long way to go, though we are confident that with your support the objectives, as stipulated in our strategic plan, will be achieved. This message was shared with our supporters at the "End of the Year" function, held jointly with Travel Industry Curry Club of Australia (TICCA) on 16 December evening at the Colonial Restaurant in Sydney.

A highlight of the year influencing India-Australia relationship has been the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott's visit to India followed by his counterpart Narendra Modi's sensational journey through Brisbane, Sydney Melbourne and Canberra at the end of the G20 conference held in Brisbane in November. During the Indian PM's visit, it's reported that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between two nations on Tourism to promote people- to- people contacts.

We have already started working on the agenda for next year; one of the key ideas in the think tank is to set up an interactive industry wide workshop to identify issues and potential solutions for growth of bilateral tourism. In this context we invite our members and stakeholders to make suggestions on subjects/matters for 2015 agenda that may be beneficial to the industry. Opportunities for sponsoring any of our events are available, so if interested so if interested in contributing, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Our membership numbers are increasing incrementally. We are proud to advise that, Mantra Wild Adventures, Best & Less Travel, Luxe India has joined as corporate members of AITTC while Raka Mitra , a travel photographer as individual member

We request others who are considering joining 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 thanking all for support, cooperation and assistance and wishing safe travel during the holiday season

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



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

Sydney set to sizzle this summer

This summer visitors will love every second of what Sydney has to offer including hot new eateries, bars, accommodation, and a range of events and activities offering something for everyone. Sydney has recently been announced as a 'World Festival and Event City' five years in a row, and with the impressive line-up of world class festivals, exhibitions, concerts, and sporting events coming to Sydney this summer it is easy to see why. For more information on new Sydney experiences and events in summer, visit www.sydney.com



Tourists from India to Australia

There were 14,200 visitors from India during September 2014, bringing the total for the nine months to September to 140,400, an increase of 17.8 per cent relative to the same period previous year.



Australia opens for business Events

Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has launched a new initiative to attract more international business events to Australian shores.

'Attracting Business Events to Australia' sets out a framework for the Australian Government – through Austrade and Tourism Australia – to work with industry during the bidding and event-delivery process.

Under the new framework, Austrade will coordinate ministerial support for an event and will organise onshore and offshore promotion, while Tourism Australia will partner with industry to provide marketing and promotional materials.

Tourism Australia hosts the country's greatest ever dinner party for the food and wine elite

In November a selection of the world's most influential and respected food and wine VIPs came together at Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), for Restaurant Australia's exclusive and highly anticipated 'Invite The World To Dinner' Gala event.

More than 80 international food and wine writers, critics, columnists, reviewers, celebrity chefs, TV personalities, including Heston Blumenthal, Alice Waters, A.A. Gill, Sanjeev Kapoor and Yifan Liu joined the likes of Australian foodies Maggie Beer, Matt Preston and Matt Moran to sample a truly unique and spectacular menu, created by Restaurant Australia Head Chefs Ben Shewry, Peter Gilmore and Neil Perry AM.



The event marked the culmination of Tourism Australia's Restaurant Australia campaign, showcasing to the world the remarkable people, exceptional produce and inspiring places that make Australian food and wine so unique.

Jhappi Time campaign brings record growth to NSW Indian tourism market

Deputy NSW State Premier and Minister for Tourism and Major Events Troy Grant and Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello today hailed the success of the NSW Government's Jhappi Time tourism marketing campaign as visitor arrivals from India to NSW reach record numbers.

Developed by Destination NSW and launched in February this year, Jhappi Time, which translates to 'Hug Time' in Hindi, is the only tourism campaign executed by an Australian state tourism body specifically targeting the visiting friends and relatives market in India.



'India is a key inbound tourism market for NSW, with Sydney the top Australian destination for Indian visitors in the year ended June 2014. Tourism from India is currently worth an estimated \$182 million to the NSW economy,' Mr Grant said.

'The latest ABS data shows arrivals from India to NSW increased by 21.2 per cent for year-end August 2014, and the hugely successful Jhappi Time campaign no doubt contributed to this result.

'The Indian travel industry has also recognised the enormous potential of the campaign, with seven key travel trade partners promoting and selling travel packages and airfare offers to the Indian market.

'Already, the Jhappi Time campaign videos, telling the stories of four Indian families enjoying time with family and friends and holidaying in Sydney and NSW, have achieved more than three million views online – more than double the original target – and we anticipate more interest in the initiative once it is shown in Indian cinemas.

Lisa Ray in Australia promoting Insight Vacations

AITTC corporate member Insight Vacations' first global brand ambassador, celebrity Lisa Ray, was in Australia in November promoting the company's several luxury filled programmes and tours.



Insight Vacations' Signature Year continues with the release of its 2015-16 India, Bhutan & Nepal brochure. The comprehensive collection of luxury escorted journeys includes six Insight Gold journeys that are, for the first-time, all-inclusive and feature an amazing array of Signature Events. Additionally, seven premium Mini Stays have been designed to perfectly complement the longer journeys or booked as stand-alone tours. Last year Insight introduced a range of Signature Experiences to their Indian journeys, these experiences sought out to offer guests that are beyond the standard tourist fare. It's built on the success of their 'Signature Year' and expanded the concept across four categories: Hotels, Dining, Evenings and Experiences. These unforgettable experiences are complemented by Insight Hallmarks that have cemented our reputation as the India specialist: dining at the finest restaurants, opulent accommodation at hotels and palaces, luxurious transportation with business class legroom and smaller group and a professional Tour Director, who acts as a 'personal concierge". See link for more: <http://bit.ly/1vj2BYo>

Cricket strengthen Australia – India ties

The Indian cricket team is currently touring Australia to play four test matches followed by the one day series. Test matches will be played in Adelaide, Brisbane Melbourne and Sydney, pledging to enhance visitor numbers from India. This will be followed by the ICC Cricket World Cup, the centrepiece event of men's One Day International (ODI) cricket and is contested in a 50 over format. 14 nations, including hosts Australia and New Zealand, England, West Indies, Australia and current champions India, will fight it out for the world title. The tournament opens on 14 February with Australia is in group A while India in group B. India will open account playing arch rival Pakistan at the redeveloped Adelaide Oval on 15 February 2015. It's expected that fervent fans from other parts of Australia and even from India and Pakistan and other corners of the world, particularly where the sub-continent diaspora is strong, will be travelling to Adelaide to watch the game live and subsequently boost tourism to South Australia, recognised as the wine capital of Australia



Increased Indian presence in Australia

India has recently overtaken China and Great Britain as the biggest source of migrants to Australia as it focusses on a skilled migrant stream. In 2013-14, 40,051 visas for permanent residence were issued to Indian nationals. Of these, 84 % constituted the skilled migration category, the balance being made up of families, dependants and children. The average age of the migrants is 30 years which is indicative of the long term investment made by Australia in adding to its workforce, in an otherwise aging population. This increase pledge to boost tourism to Australia. Similarly significant investment into Australia in the mining and resources sector by major Indian businesses such as Adani Enterprises, Jindal Steel and Power and GVK Industries also promise to increase bilateral travel. Their investment is expected to double in the next 5 years as bilateral trade is on an upswing.

India appoints new tourism and yoga ministers

The Indian government has appointed Dr Mahesh Sharma as its new Minister of State for Tourism & Culture. The move follows a major reshuffle of Narendra Modi's cabinet, with former tourism minister Shripad Yesso Naik being named as the country's first ever Minister of Yoga. Dr Sharma will now be given the formidable task of boosting India's tourism arrivals and revenues, which have, for many years, failed to reflect India's size and importance. India welcomed approximately seven million international visitors in 2013 – fewer than Singapore. According to the Ministry of Tourism, new minister's priorities will include "improving safety and security for international tourists and promoting domestic tourism among youth".

"One of the important action points will be to explore tourism potential of new areas like medical tourism and also promote domestic tourism among the youth," Dr Sharma said. He also expressed concerns over the country's tourism infrastructure, security and use of technology, the improvement of which will be key areas of focus over the next three months. The minister added that he plans to "fast-track" the repatriation of Indian heritage artefacts currently located overseas.



Meanwhile, the new role of Yoga Minister Shripad Yesso Naik has been tasked with promoting traditional medicines and practices of Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy and homeopathy. If tied in well with the tourism industry, the enhanced focus on sector could see India welcome a global centre for wellness and medical tourism.

Tourist visa to India

AITTC is happy to inform that Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) facility enabled by Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) to India for 43 countries including Australia has been rolled out recently. This was announced by Mr Sunjay Sudhir to the media at a press conference held at the India Tourism office on 4 December. This new initiative will allow entry to India within 30 days from the date of approval of the ETA and will remain valid for 30 days stay from the date of arrival. The ETA facility can be used only 2 times a year for entry through one of the international airports in the country namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Goa. For more information please check <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa>. This is a major outcome from the Indian PM's visit to down under.



Know India Seminar – A grand India Tourism event

Wednesday 10th the December evening was the time for the industry to know more about India from a tourism point of view when India Tourism invited more than 100 guests that included tour operators, travel agents, travel writers, media and host of dignitaries for a grand evening of learning and stylish entertainment while cruising Sydney Harbour on board cruise ship Harbour Ball Room. Mr Sunjay Sudhir, Consul General of India in Sydney was the Guest of Honour. The highlight of the evening was an informative, well sequenced and entertaining presentation on India by energetic Mr Vibhava Tripathi, Assistant Director of India Tourism in Sydney. After outlining the new visa arrangements, he pro-

vided information on various options on how to get there and around in India, where to stay, what to see and how to fill in suitcases as shopping opportunities are endless. His staging was supplemented further by presentations on Air India by their Australia Head, Mr Madhu Mathen and on Taj Hotels by Ms Thushara Liyanarachchi their Regional Director Sales in Australia



India plans 1,750km bullet train corridor

India is planning to create a 1,750km high-speed rail corridor, connecting New Delhi in the north with Chennai in the south. The line, which would be the second longest in the world after the 2,298km Beijing-Guangzhou line, would cost approximately US\$32.6 billion to construct and would cut the overland travelling time between the two cities down to about eight hours. The Press Trust of India (PTI) reports that a high-level team of Indian rail executives has travelled to Beijing for meetings with Chinese high-speed rail companies, with a view to developing the line. The Delhi-Chennai route forms part of the proposed 'Diamond Quadrilateral' project, which aims to develop high-speed railways between Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai.

Indian airlines continues to soar



Demand for domestic flights in India surged again in October, continuing the sharp upswing in performance seen in recent months. According to the latest monthly data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), India's domestic passenger traffic, measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPK), surged 16.3% during the month of October. This made India the strongest performer of all the 'BRIC' countries during October, outpacing the impressive growth rates in China (+10.0%), Brazil (+8.0%) and Russia (+6.1%). The monthly global average for domestic traffic growth was +5.8%. And India's growth was even more remarkable as it far exceeded Indian airlines' capacity growth. Just 3.4% more domestic seats were made available in India in October 2014, which boosted airlines' average cabin load factors to a healthy 77.4%. This remains slightly lower however, than the global domestic average of 81.1%. The October result follows on from the +26.4% growth experienced by Indian airlines

in September, and IATA said this continued double-digit growth “reflects market stimulation by local carriers”.

Jet Airways rolls out in India



As part of a Board approved business plan announced in August for the airline’s return to profitability, India’s premier airline Jet Airways has now commenced the roll out of a full service product on all flights across its domestic network. Jet Airways’ will offer guests a two class, full service product with a complimentary dining experience onboard all domestic flights. Along with enhanced service quality levels, the airline will offer convenient connections on its domestic network to over 51 destinations across India. Guests will also be able to access 22 international destinations on Jet Airways network and will also offer connectivity to over 135 international destinations across the world with its partner Etihad Airways.

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News items and images has been sourced from various media releases