

**IATO CONVENTION
THEME:
INDIAN TOURISM - TIME
TO REINVENT
OURSELVES**

**IATO SIGNS MoU
WITH JABALPUR**

**IATO HOLDS EC
MEETING IN
MUMBAI**



GST REVISITED



I deeply acknowledge the wholehearted support and full cooperation of the officials in the ministry of tourism, fellow members and EC core team working on GST applications. We shall keep marching forward and keep our pace and stride firm on the success road with GST

**Dear Members,
Greetings from IATO!**

I am extremely delighted to inform you that our sincere efforts have borne fruit to get tour operators in the lowest slab of GST (Goods and Service) tax rate.

We still had lot of concerns and we took the help of all concerned GST officials to get best possible clarifications. You all have seen a series of meetings we conducted in June and July to keep our members updated on GST implications. We have always updated you all with our circulars. I am grateful to the officials from GST and our secretary tourism for the valuable inputs, practical suggestions and innovative ideas and I deeply acknowledge the wholehearted support and full cooperation of the officials in the ministry of tourism, fellow members and EC core team working on GST applications. We shall keep marching forward and keep our pace and stride firm on the success road with GST. More information about GST and its implications have been covered in subsequent pages. I want all our members to become well-versed with GST norms and realise its objectives and philosophy.

We also made very sound progress on our Annual Convention scheduled for September 2017. Information about hotels, air tickets, post convention tours, etc, has already been circulated. Please register as soon as the registration is declared open. With cooperation from you all, it should be a grand success.

At IATO, we also decided to have our Executive Committee (EC) meetings outside Delhi and have greater interaction with our members. Accordingly, we had the EC meeting in Mumbai (the venue was Karjat) on June 21 which turned out to be a great interactive session. Thanks to regional chapter chairman (western region) N S Rathor and chapter chairman, Maharashtra Himanshu Agashiwala, it was well planned and as EC we got updated on issues in the region. We are committed to providing the very best of our services together as a team. We will also be conducting a meeting with all chapter chairmen in course of the Annual Convention in Bhubaneswar.

We have equally seized other urgent issues like guides, training programmes, settlement of pending MDA cases, global publicity, road shows, our overseas offices be given heads to run them efficiently, handling of MoT sponsored hospitality guests, our website, court case, etc and be assured in each EC, members have taken the responsibility to do the best possible in execution of these activities. Please, continue to give us your suggestions and be pro-active to keep IATO platform as the national platform for resolving all travel and hospitality problems and issues. We can make the difference as a team.

Thanks a lot for your cooperation.

Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO

GST REVISITED

The 'One Nation One Tax' reform has set its course to change the dynamics of India's economy. As the travel and tourism industry enters the execution phase of this new tax regime, this cover story aims to bring you closer to understanding the Goods and Services Tax (GST) by analysing its overall outlook

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has united indirect taxes under one umbrella, and aims to facilitate Indian businesses to be globally competitive. The Indian GST case is structured for efficient tax collection, reduction in corruption, easy inter-state movement of goods, etc. But the real question arises whether a developing market like India which was still recovering from demonetisation effects and facing repeated challenges to ease travel movement needed such a drastic hit. The great tax transition which has received expected hesitation

from the travel industry has become the hotspot of every discussion.

As an association IATO has left no stone unturned to be the intermediary between the government and the tourism industry by regularly submitting their feedback to the GST Council. Multiple meetings and interactive sessions have been held to decode the tax and create better understanding for all kinds of businesses. Many a times government

officials were involved so the industry could enter in a direct dialogue with them and be briefed on the smaller aspects of their business operations.

Taking various issues raised by the industry into consideration, Sungita Sharma, principal commissioner, Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) who represents the tourism and travel industry to the GST Council spoke to the IATO newsletter team. She laid emphasis on understanding the GST law and taking queries to the respective jurisdictional offices.



Throwing light on the efforts of the government, she informed, "The GST Council had constituted eight standing committees and 18 sectoral working groups for smooth roll out of GST. The main job of the standing committee is to provide solutions to the GST Council which are suggested by the respective industries. The 18 electoral groups have been appointed to give an in-depth approach of the industry and how GST would effect its operations. The committee is to create an impact analysis for all segments and flag it to the GST Council."

Sharma who has been part of several meetings with industry stakeholders and associations feels that there has been a gap in interpretation and the officials are trying their best to assist smooth transitioning. She stated, "The tax regime of the country has a new interface but one needs to pay attention to the detail. I have received the feedback from other states and will be presenting them to the GST Council in the next meeting. Soon it will be clear what are the things that fall under the law, need better understanding and what requires change to suit the industry."

She further suggested that company officials can reach out to the government for help. "The government has set Seva Kendra across cities in order to assist the companies and the information has been listed online. It will be best if companies and individuals reach out to these centres and seek assistance on their issues. Apart from the centres, websites and call centres are also providing hands-on aid to the individuals seeking information regarding the industry."

India's dual GST

Most countries have implemented ideal GST, with all indirect taxes grouped under one. India is going to implement dual GST with separate central and state component, which further complicates the process.

The Malaysian Government released

World Digest

France was the first country to implement GST to reduce tax-evasion. Since then, more than 140 countries have implemented GST with some countries having Dual-GST (e.g. Brazil, Canada, etc.) model. India has chosen the Canadian model of dual GST. A recent report in Economic Times takes you through how GST was implemented in other countries.

Malaysia implemented GST in 2015, after debating for 26 years. Consumer confidence nosedived; inflation went up; anti-GST protests in capital Kuala Lumpur. After initial hiccups things have settled down with 70 per cent respondents reporting business grew in last 12 months.

Australia introduced GST in 2000; implementation smooth, peak GST rate was 10 per cent. It now plans to increase GST rate to 15 per cent

New Zealand introduced GST in 1986 at a rate of 10 per cent. The rates were changed twice – 12.5 per cent in 1989 and 15 per cent in 2010 in a move to mobilise higher revenue while removing distortions in the tax structure

Singapore introduced GST in 1994. Inflation spiked and NGOs, social activist groups opposed GST. Today inflation has eased and GST is the second largest source of government revenue after corporate I-T

Brazil has VAT as the substitute for GST, though levies vary from 17 percent in Sao Paulo to 18 per cent in Rio de Janeiro and rate of inter-state supplies within Brazil vary between four per cent and 25 per cent

Canada introduced GST in 1991. Has dual model like India (state and central GST). But Canada gives options to provinces to go for state or central GST. Three provinces sued the government over GST. GST created price distortions

Among the most recent are Seychelles, Congo, Gambia and Malaysia, all of which have implemented GST in the last five years.

business sector wise guidance papers on tax treatment and transition. It helped organisations to have clarity about future tax practices in their business segment.

In India, ICAI hosts regular webcast discussions to prepare businesses. However, the Indian Government in its website could also publish such guidance to ensure a steady and smooth transition towards GST.

Decoding GST

Sachin Jain, additional commissioner, Central Board of Excise and Customs mentioned that the two very important aspects of understanding GST is to know the place of supplier and place of supply. He has been closely associated with the association, looking into the smallest of queries of the tour operators.

Jain informed that the major concern area for the tour operators has been regarding the registration of their companies. At the IATO meeting held at the Ashok, he clarified, “Multiple registration is not required by a firm which is operating out of a specific area and provides service in another state. The matter lies in the format of how the bill is raised and service provided, which is further determined by the interstate supply or intrastate supply.”

Interstate supply will depend on three aspects - location of the supplier, location of the recipient and location of supply in different states. Whereas intrastate supply is defined when the location of supplier and place of supply are in the same state. And in case the supply is given through an immovable property outside India, the place of supplier shall be considered while generating the bill. All these aspects have been mentioned by the council and can be read online as well.

Two rates have been decided by the council which stand at 5 percent without input tax credit or 18 percent with input tax credit. Many of tour operators suggested that there should be no option





by the government.

Jain stated, “As two options led to confusion among the agents, many members suggested to one rate. But the government has decided to give an option to the agents since everybody functions at a different level. One can pick what best suits their operations. One option might jeopardise the business for many and thus two options by the government will lead to clarity in business.”

Members who are concerned about their CENVAT credit post GST should know that it can be carried forward post GST and availed from the government, mentioned Jain. He added, “Everyone knows that the sectoral group has been formed by the GST Council, which is headed by Sungita Sharma. After sitting with all the associations here in

New Delhi, we have carefully examined their feedback and forwarded it to her for representation. One needs to wait out the response and continue with their business.”

Reiterating the fact mentioned by Sharma, Jain stated that the best option for agents is to seek assistance from the jurisdictional offices in their areas. All commissionaires have designated people helping out the smooth transitioning of GST and shall be the best assistance in this manner. Jain emphasised, “Many a times the chartered accountants might not be able to assist the agents as well as the government officials could. There are certain misconceptions and myths that have been prevalent among the consultants and accountants and

therefore the government has set up Seva Kendras in respective areas.”

Ministry of tourism has also set up a GST cell under the economic advisor so that the genuine concerns of tourism industry can be easily solved. They intend to assist professionals within the trade through smooth transitioning to the GST regime. The tourism secretary also offered everyone to submit their problems, queries and suggestions to the council so the same can be taken up by the revenue department.

The best way is to see how the practical functioning is affected, seek government help and bring the major concern issues to their notice. This will not only enable smooth transitioning but reflect the complexity of the travel industry.

IATO WELCOMES NEW TOURISM SECRETARY

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) recently held a special meeting at The Ashok Hotel in New Delhi to welcome the new secretary of ministry of tourism, Rashmi Verma and bid farewell to Vinod Zutshi, former secretary. Welcoming her, Pronab Sarkar, president IATO, mentioned, "We welcome Rashmi Verma to the ministry and assure her IATO's support in all future efforts. We know that her previous experience with the tourism ministry as the assistant director general will prove as an added advantage for the sector. We also thank Zutshi for his extensive support during his tenure." He further brought up the issues faced by tour operators and travel agents.

The members claimed that majority of international tourism offices lacked senior officials and did not respond well within time. Verma reverted, "The government plans to fill these positions

at the earliest so that the international tourism offices can function to their optimum level. In order to promote India, the ministry will also open new offices in the relevant markets and rework on marketing strategies."

Addressing the grievances of tour operators and travel agents regarding Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) monuments, guide policies and Goods and Services Tax (GST), she mentioned, "The issue of revision of guidelines by ASI has already been taken up with the ministry of culture and soon we shall have a solution for it. As far as GST is concerned, we have set up a GST cell under the economic advisor so that the genuine concerns of the tourism industry can be easily solved. We will assist everyone through smooth transitioning to the GST regime." The new secretary offered

everyone to submit their problems, queries and suggestions to the council so the same can be taken up by the revenue department.

Zutshi thanked the association for their support, he said, "There can be no better successor to me than Verma and I am sure she will make major achievements in the sector."

Some top government officials from the Central Board of Excise & Customs were also present to address the issues of tourism industry regarding GST. Pramod Kumar, additional secretary, gave a small presentation on the impact of GST, emphasising that GST will depend on location of the supplier, location of recipient and location of service. Later G D Lohani, commissioner, answered the members who had doubts regarding interstate tax filings and registration.



IATO INVITES TOP OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS GST

IATO invited Sungita Sharma, principal commissioner, Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) who represents the tourism and travel industry for an interactive session on July 5, 2017 at the Park Hotel in New Delhi. The session received a packed audience with more than 400 tour operators and travel agents gathering to hear the speaker. Pronab Sarkar, president, IATO, welcomed her and thanked her for flying all the way from Mumbai to clarify the doubts of the association.

Later, Rajiv Mehra, vice president, IATO brought forward some crucial points that were not clearly understood, apart from raising some important feedback. Sharma heard out all the queries and responded to them with ease, making note of the industry insights from the key stakeholders in New Delhi.

To read her overall suggestions you can check out our cover story.



IATO HOLDS EC MEETING IN MUMBAI



Setting another trend to understand chapter related issues, IATO hosted an EC meeting in Mumbai along with IATO western region, Maharashtra, on June 21, 2017 at Hotel Radisson Blu, Karjat, Maharashtra. Pronab Sarkar, president; Lally Mathews, hon secretary and other EC members were also present at the event along with 40 other members.

NS Rathore from Garha Tours welcomed all the EC members as Himanshu Agashiwala, chairman, IATO, Maharashtra thanked everyone who took out their time to attend the meeting. Addressing the audience, Mathews informed, "IATO has 160 members from the western region which is only second to Delhi. I urge the allied members to get their DOT and qualify as active members." Sarkar, informed the members about the work done by IATO during demonetisation. He further explained the detailed role of IATO in getting tourism in the lowest slab of GST, which is five per cent, before inviting questions and answers.

Surendran from Lotus Travels raised the issue of shortage of guides in Mumbai and how MTDC has been sleeping on the guides training programme. He further informed that the tickets at ASI monument, Elephanta Caves, is still being sold only

through cash as the credit card system is not operational. The members also suggested that e-visa at Mumbai ports should be swift and tourists should not be wasting time at the biometric systems. While Mumbai needs better toilet facilities for foreign tourists, the high handedness of CISF staff in Mumbai is resulting in delays. Addressing all these issues, Sarkar assured the team that the issues will be looked into, along with special credit card acceptance at ASI monuments.

Some other issues regarding the reimbursement of expenses by MoT and refund of claim under SEIS from DGFT were raised by the members to which the solutions were provided by the EC members. As the meeting ended, the chapter members thanked the EC members for a fruitful interaction.



IATO signs MoU with Jabalpur Smart City

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Indian Association of Tour Operators and Jabalpur Smart City Limited, (Madhya Pradesh Government undertaking). The purpose of the MoU is to promote mutual cooperation in infrastructure development, tourism product development, attraction management, research, education, training and consultancy to establish a framework for promotion of tourism activities and products in and around Jabalpur Smart City. The key areas of operation are stated below:

Key areas of cooperation:

● Industry Monitoring Unit

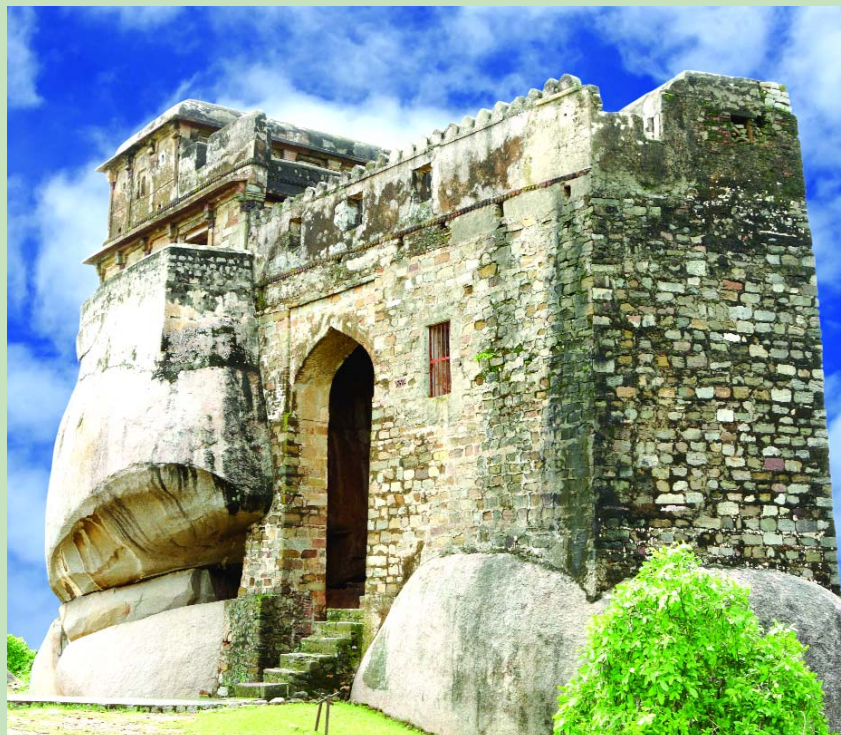
IATO may depute their members/office bearers time-to-time to the Jabalpur Smart City for monitoring/advising/interaction with officials and all the institutions involved to inform them about the latest development taking place in the industry with the intention to develop sustainable tourism products to cater to the needs of the sector.

● Joint Research Programme

Both IATO and Jabalpur Smart City shall work for joint and collaborative research and consultancy in the thrust areas of tourism, travel and related research, especially for the development of Jabalpur as a major tourist destination and develop a Tourist Circuit to cover Jabalpur as part of the same.

● Joint Holding of Workshop & Training

Joint organisation of workshop and training to improve the exchange of knowledge and experience of Jabalpur Municipal Corporation, Jabalpur



Tourism Administration, Hospitality staff members and their working staff. Similarly, for IATO members and their staff to know about the tourism products of Jabalpur:

● Expert Exchange Programme

Both IATO and Jabalpur Smart City shall work for the exchange of experts depending on the requirement and experience for the benefit of the tourism industry.

● FAM trips/Workshop

To encourage the inter-institutional and industrial visit of IATO members and their staff for their wider practical understanding and exposure, and to facilitate short duration FAM trips and workshops (work experience to know the

practical aspects) including other similar initiatives.

● Exchange of Knowledge Resource

Sharing of books, journals and promotional materials including brochures, audio-videos, publications, reports and other teaching aids.

Quarterly review meeting between IATO office bearers and executive committee members and their appointed representative and Jabalpur Smart City members will be conducted either at Jabalpur or at Delhi as per mutually agreed date and timings.

This project will be for three years from the signing date and together a time frame will be made to complete the entire project on timely basis.

CHAPTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

IATO members meet in Maharashtra

A meeting of all active, allied and associate members of the Indian Association of Tour Operators in Maharashtra was held on May 26, 2017 at Hotel Grand Homitel in Mumbai. All the prominent members like N S Rathore, executive committee member & chairman – western region; Himanshu Agashiwala, chairman, IATO - Maharashtra Chapter were present for the meeting.

In total 70 members were present for the meeting which brought forward the major issues of the members. Agashiwala, impressed with the attendance, addressed the gathering and welcomed all the members to the meeting. He further informed the members about the guide issue pertaining the industry. He said, "IATA is aware about the difficulty in the shortage of licensed guides in Maharashtra and the agents are put to ransom by the current guides. But we would like you to know that Maharashtra is having regular talks with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and principal of Tourism Institute to get more and more guides, especially in Mumbai."

He further added, "Since Mumbai city is growing far and wide, more members should come to help IATO for inspection of properties and tour operators, as it is difficult to be regular for the ones who volunteer."

Later speaking about national issues, Rathore, shared information about member participation in various trade shows and fairs. He further wanted all the members to take part in such shows in order to increase their representation and meet new members. Rathore added, "I have personally spoken to the principal of Tourism Institute of Gwalior to take initiative for exams of new guides for MTDC, and I



assure we shall soon have positive results. I also met with the Mumbai Port Trust and there will be e-visa services starting September 2017." This gathered huge applause from the audience as the facility will bring in more tourists.

Informing the members about the convention in Bhubaneswar, Rathore invited all the members to secure their participation and post tours.



Manish Gadia, Chartered Accountant & Partners of GMJ & Co was invited to speak on GST and make the members more aware. Gadia spoke for more than an hour and gave a full presentation on 'Impact of GST on tour operators'. The presentation included everyone from domestic, inbound, outbound, railway ticketing and briefly airline agents.

CONVENTION UPDATE

For the 33rd IATO Annual Convention being held in Bhubaneswar from September 7 - 10, 2017 logistics are being finalised. The theme of the convention is "Indian Tourism - Time to reinvent ourselves". Rajeev Mehra is the

convention chairman and Lally Mathews is co-chairman of this year's Convention. IATO reviewed the GST applicability on hotels who are participating as partners in IATO convention this year, in order to have a seamless event. A team will be visiting

Bhubaneswar by end of July to co-ordinate the matter with concerned hotels and also call on government officials for further facilitation. Registration form for the convention will be sent to you soon.

Odisha has been highly active on the tourism front in the last few years, focusing on its other aspects of tourism than its famous religious spots. As the IATO team compiles the best mix of industry related knowledge sessions here, is a small sneak peak of what awaits you in Odisha.

Discovering the land of myriad marvels

Odisha is known to be the land of myriad marvels as the state boasts more than 20,000 temples with a historic culture. While the state has previously been known for religious tourism, it is now promoting its eco tourist spots, natural wildlife, Buddhist spots, tribal culture among other major attractions. Bhubaneswar, the capital city, is also dotted with temples that speak of the city's historic



IATO at Odisha Tourism Conclave

Pronab Sarkar, president, IATO represented the association at the Odisha Tourism Conclave. The second edition of Odisha Tourism Conclave held in Bhubaneswar on June 17, 2017 highlighted how tourism can be the driving force of India's future economy. Initiated by the Hotels and Restaurants Association of Odisha (HRAO), the conclave witnessed participation from government officials and major tourism stakeholders of Odisha.

Sarkar was invited to speak at various panels and share his views on how tourism can be the driving force of the future economy of Odisha. At one of the panels, Sarkar clearly stated that Odisha needs better infrastructural

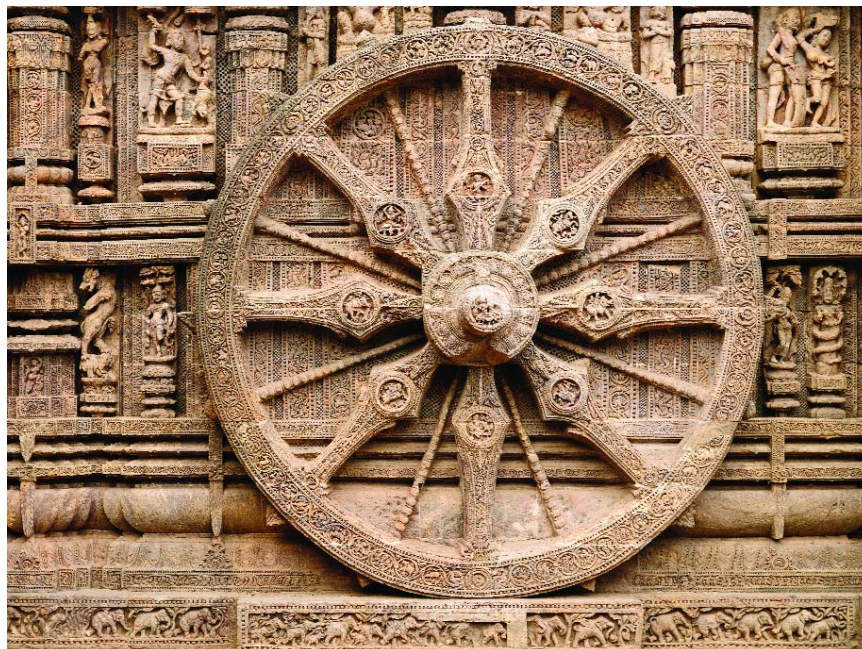
facilities and active marketing strategy so people get to know more about the state. He feels that the state has not brought itself forward on domestic and international platforms to spread much awareness about what it has to offer.

Showing IATO's full support to the state and talking about the upcoming convention, he added, "IATO believes that Odisha has a lot to offer and we will bring in the travel agents here so they can see for themselves and decide how they can best package this beautiful place. However, I will request the government to improve infrastructural facilities in the area and add more tourism products which can bring in more tourism numbers."

roots. One of the best introductions to the city of Bhubaneswar is given by Ekamra walks, an initiative by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Odisha Tourism and Bhubaneswar Development Authority through Detour Odisha. The weekly walk which is conducted every Sunday in the old town area takes you through 14 different landmarks which includes the historic temples, Bindusagar Lake, an old Hindu monastery and a herbal garden. The guide takes you through each detail and temple describing its significance. The walk has been conceptualised in a way that one gets a complete picture of the city's history and ends with a Odissi dance performance.

Another major tourist attraction is the Chilika Lake where people have also witnessed the famous dolphins. It is Asia's largest brackish water lagoon which is separated from the Bay of Bengal by 60 km narrow strip of marshy islands and sand flats. It is home to a variety of birds and which creates a special viewing season for the tourists. Another famous spot is the Kali Jai Temple in the middle of the lake which is visited by thousands of locals and travellers.

The Sun Temple at Konark is one of the most visited spots in the state.



Popularly known as the Black Pagoda, it earned its name due to its massive structure and blackish stone look. It was located right at the sea at the time it was built and served as a navigational point for the ships. It is believed that majority of the complex was destroyed and only the remains can be seen now. The temple was built in the shape of a gigantic chariot which was elaborately carved out of stone

that was brought from the nearby lands.

Odisha has always been known for its religious tourism due to the Jagannath Puri Temple which is the most visited temple. The temple is dedicated to Lord Jagannath, a form of Vishnu and has four major entrances. The main temple is also surrounded by smaller temples dedicated to other deities. The most important festival of the temple - The Rath Yatra or the Chariot Festival is held in June which is attended by millions of devotees from across the world.

Some other famous spots to be explored around Bhubaneswar are the Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves, the Nandan Kanan Zoological Park, the rock edicts of Asoka and many more small dead temples like Raja Rani etc. While the caves showcase a glimpse of how people lived 2500 years ago, the sanctuary becomes an ideal spot for family outings.

Odisha has a lot more to offer, starting from the Puri beaches to wildlife sanctuaries like Bhitarkanika National Park which is known for its crocodile population. It serves as an ideal destination for explorations and family vacations.



Announcements

IATO continues to assess the impact of GST and plead for redressal of double taxation which negatively hit business operations

A meeting was called by the ministry of tourism, Government of India wherein all stake holders were invited at the Transport Bhavan on July 12, 2017. The meeting was chaired by secretary tourism. IATO reiterated the issues which they had earlier raised with GST Council members and with principal commissioner CBEC on July 5, 2017 at The Park Hotel, New Delhi for which response is awaited. In the meeting called by our ministry, our president also met Yogendra Garg, additional director general, Centre of Excellence NACIN and took up all the issues and later sent a letter to him.

Inbound tourism concerns on applicability of GST were also raised by our president. It was informed to Garg that members are unable to raise the invoices due to lack of clarity in the matter. This fact was noted down by him and he assured to take up this matter in the next GST Council meeting for clarifications. We are awaiting the clarifications, which we expect to get soon.

This was followed by a meeting called by FAITH to put up consolidated proposal to the government to consider the suggestions given by them to ease GST issues and members get ready for compliance.

Appointment of Chapter Chairmen

North East States

Nirmalya Choudhury, executive director
Jungle Travels India Pvt. Ltd.
3B, Dirang Arcade, M.R.D Road
Chandmari, Guwahati, 781003, Assam

Haryana and Chandigarh

Umesh Kapur, director
Grand Travel Planners Pvt. Ltd.
117-119, first floor, Sector- 17- C, Chandigarh- 160017

Himachal Pradesh

Narender Bhardwaj, chief executive officer
Colors of India Pvt. Ltd.
Dev Bhavan Khalini, Shimla- 171002
Himachal Pradesh

IATO president, EC members represented in the meeting called by ministry of tourism to discuss the media release in domestic market, follow up on settlement of pending MDA cases, digital use in tourism business operations and niche tourism (medical and golf tourism).

Air India commences daily operations connecting four state capitals

Air India has commenced daily operations on Jaipur-Lucknow- Jaipur, Lucknow - Dehradun-Lucknow, and Lucknow - Bhopal - Lucknow. These routes have been effective from July 5, 2017 with ATR -72. This will not only increase connectivity to the state capitals but also help boost movement to the Tier II and Tier III cities.



Jet Airways expands domestic connectivity

Jet Airways has announced the expansion of its domestic network during this monsoon by introducing 14 new direct, non-stop domestic flights to emerging cities, due to rising demand for aviation services between these cities, reflecting their economic progress. The airline has been witnessing steady growth in guest traffic, primarily in northern India, especially between cities such as Jaipur, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Udaipur and Indore.

In an industry first, Jet Airways has introduced direct, return non-stop flights from Indore to Ahmedabad and Jaipur. Likewise, the airline has also commenced new, direct non-stop flights between Delhi and Indore, Lucknow, Jaipur as well as connecting Jaipur with Udaipur and Lucknow. The airline has also introduced 11 direct, one-stop through flights between Delhi and Silchar, Dehradun and Jaipur, Chandigarh and Dehradun, Chandigarh and Lucknow, and between Indore and Lucknow, in yet another maiden initiative.

Jet Airways has increased capacity on key routes via additional frequencies, that include a second flight between Bengaluru and Guwahati, a third frequency between Delhi and Indore, a seventh daily frequency

Announcements



between Delhi and Lucknow, as well as, Delhi and Jaipur, together with a second daily flight between Delhi and Udaipur.

UNESCO declares Ahmedabad as World Heritage City

Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani and BJP president Amit Shah have hailed the declaration of Ahmedabad as World Heritage City by UNESCO. "Just inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Site: historic city of Ahmedabad #India," UNESCO said in a tweet. Expressing delight at the announcement, Rupani said in a tweet, "Thrilled to learn that Ahmedabad has been recognised as UNESCO World Heritage City, first of its kind in India."

"Delighted to know that UNESCO has declared Ahmedabad as World Heritage City. Proud moment for every Indian," the BJP national president said in a tweet. Ahmedabad was in the race for the prestigious title along with Delhi and Mumbai. The walled city of Ahmedabad,



believed to be founded by Ahmed Shah, some six hundred years ago, has 26 ASI-protected structures, hundreds of 'pols' that capture the essence of community living and numerous sites associated with Mahatma Gandhi who lived here from 1915 to 1930.

In 1984, the first study for conserving heritage structures was carried out in the city. A heritage cell was also set up by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC). The city had featured in UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage Cities on March 31, 2011.

Emirates, flydubai announce extensive partnership

Emirates and flydubai have unveiled an extensive partnership agreement. Both airlines will continue to be managed independently, but will leverage each other's network to scale up their operations and accelerate growth. The partnership goes beyond code-sharing and includes integrated network collaboration with co-ordinated scheduling. The new model will give flydubai customers connectivity to Emirates' worldwide destinations spanning six continents. For Emirates' customers, it opens up flydubai's regional network. The two airlines will also further develop their hub at Dubai International.

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and chief executive, Emirates Group and chairman, flydubai, said, "This is an exciting and significant development for Emirates, flydubai, and Dubai aviation. Both airlines have grown independently and successfully over the years, and this new partnership will unlock the immense value that the complementary models of both companies can bring to consumers, each airline, and to Dubai."

The partnership is working to optimise the networks and schedules of both airlines, to open up new city-pair connections. By 2022, the combined network of Emirates and flydubai is expected to reach 240 destinations, served by a combined fleet of 380 aircraft. The Emirates and flydubai teams are working together on a number of initiatives spanning commercial, network planning, airport operations, customer journey, and frequent flyer programmes alignment. The partnership will be rolled out over the coming months, with the first enhanced code-sharing arrangements starting in the last quarter of 2017.

Fully owned by the Investment Corporation of Dubai (ICD), both Emirates and flydubai are operated independently and under separate management teams.

Tourism Statistics – June 2017

22.5 per cent Growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals in June, 2017 over June 2016

81.7 per cent Growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals on e-Tourist Visa in June 2017 over June 2016

Ministry of tourism compiles monthly estimates of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) & FTAs on e-Tourist Visa on the basis of nationality-wise, port-wise data received from Bureau of Immigration (BOI). The following are the important highlights regarding FTAs & also FTAs on e-Tourist Visa from tourism during the month of June 2017.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs)

- The number of FTAs in June 2017 were 6.70 lakh as compared to FTAs of 5.47 lakh in June 2016 and 5.12 lakh in June 2015.
- The growth rate in FTAs in June 2017 over June 2016 is 22.5 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent in June 2016 over June 2015.
- FTAs during the period January - June 2017 were 48.85 lakh with a growth of 17.2 per cent, as compared to the FTAs of 41.69 lakh with a growth of 8.4 per cent in January - June 2016 over January - June 2015.
- The percentage share of FTAs in India during June 2017 among the top 15 source countries was highest from Bangladesh (29.23 per cent) followed by USA (19.70 per cent), UK (6.14 per cent), Malaysia (3.82 per cent), Australia (2.56 per cent), China (2.52 per cent), Singapore (2.31 per cent), Sri Lanka (2.24 per cent), Japan (2.21 per cent), Canada (2.19 per cent), France (1.96 per cent), Germany (1.92 per cent), Nepal (1.84 per cent), Republic of Korea (1.50 per cent) and Afghanistan (0.98 per cent).
The percentage share of FTAs in

India during June 2017 among the top 15 ports was highest at Delhi Airport (22.16 per cent) followed by Haridaspur Land Check Post (17.06 per cent), Mumbai Airport (14.98 per cent), Chennai Airport (9.06 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (6.72 per cent), Kolkata Airport (4.82 per cent), Hyderabad Airport (4.37 per cent), Cochin Airport (3.57 per cent), Gede Rail Land Check Post (3.09 per cent), Ghojadanga Land Check Post (2.08 per cent), Tiruchirapalli Airport (1.93 per cent), Ahmedabad Airport (1.60 per cent), Thiruvananthapuram Airport (1.35 per cent), Hilli Land Check Post (0.94 per cent) and Changrabandha Land Check Post (0.86 per cent).

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) on e-Tourist Visa

- During the month of June, 2017 total of 0.67 lakh tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 0.37 lakh during the month of June 2016 registering a growth of 81.7 per cent.
- During January-June 2017, a total of 7.17 lakh tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 4.72 lakh during January-June 2016, registering a growth of 52.0 per cent.
- The percentage shares of top 15 source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facilities during June, 2017 were as follows: USA (17.7 per cent), UK (10.8 per cent), China (6.8 per cent), Australia (5.2 per cent), Singapore (5.1 per cent), Republic of Korea (4.5 per cent), France (4.3 per cent), Germany (3.9 per cent), Canada (3.4 per cent),



During the month of June, 2017 total of 0.67 lakh tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 0.37 lakh during the month of June 2016, registering a growth of 81.7 per cent

Malaysia (2.6 per cent), Spain (2.2 per cent), South Africa (1.7 per cent), Thailand (1.6 per cent), Netherlands (1.5 per cent) and Italy (1.4 per cent).

The percentage shares of top 15 ports in tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa during June, 2017 were as follows: New Delhi Airport (42.4 per cent), Mumbai Airport (20.6 per cent), Chennai Airport (10.0 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (9.2 per cent), Kochi Airport (3.7 per cent), Hyderabad Airport (3.3 per cent), Kolkata Airport (2.8 per cent), Trichy Airport (1.8 per cent), Ahmedabad Airport (1.4 per cent), Thiruvananthapuram Airport (1.3 per cent), Amritsar Airport (0.9 per cent), Cochin Seaport (0.7 per cent), Dabolim (Goa) Airport (0.5 per cent), Pune Airport (0.3 per cent) and Jaipur Airport (0.3 per cent).

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UID to be mandatory for paperless travel experience

For a paperless and seamless travel experience, air travellers will have to provide a digital identification number at the time of booking a ticket. However, no specific timeline has been fixed for implementing the technology-enabled seamless passenger facilities across airports in the country, Minister of state for civil aviation Jayant Sinha said in a written reply. The civil aviation ministry had last month announced that it would be mandatory for passengers to provide a unique identification (UID), like an Aadhar card, passport or PAN so as to avail the paperless and seamless travel experience.

According to the proposal, paperless travel will enable passengers to zip through the airport in 10-15 minutes.



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As you stroll through the temples, each and every sculpture, pillar, motif has a story to tell; and did you know, the Cholas had envisioned the temples not only as places of worship but also as centres of economic activity; some of the most sophisticated buildings of medieval India. Gangaikonda Cholapuram erected as the capital of the Cholas is a fine example.



In Thanjavur, the world's first complete "granite" temple, Brihadeeswarar Temple is beyond anything that you can imagine. The central attraction is the great Vimana built over the sanctum is 216 feet high and has 14 storeys of intricate sculpting with pilasters and niches, and images of God. The descriptive nature of these sculptures tell a thousand tales.

Darasuram Temple

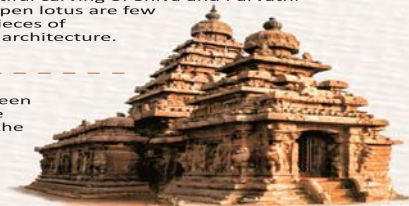


The Darasuram Temple in Kumbakonam is a paradise for the lovers of art and architecture. The main mantapa is called Raja Gambira where an elephant draws the chariot and the ceiling has a beautiful carving of Shiva and Parvathi inside an open lotus are few stunning pieces of yesteryear architecture.



Under Pallavas, some of the finest temples had been created at Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram. The Shore Temple, a structural temple complex, was the culmination of the architectural creations in mid 7th century starting with the Cave temples and the monolithic Rathas.

A trip to these temples is like time travel to the golden ages. Come and be mesmerized.



Mamallapuram Shore Temple

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