



SUBHASH GOYAL
WINS THE POST OF HONORARY SECRETARY,
FAITH, IN AN UNOPPOSED ELECTION

THE POWER OF IATO

REINVENTING
TOURISM
POTENTIAL

A DAY OF
EDUCATION
AND
EMPOWERMENT

33RD IATO ANNUAL CONVENTION



INDIAN ASSOCIATION
OF TOUR OPERATORS





There were eminent speakers who spoke on emergent issues and I could see palpable excitement amongst members on what could be the best platform to get clarifications from experts

**Dear Members,
Greetings from IATO!**

On successful completion of IATO's 33rd Annual Convention in Bhubaneswar (Odisha) recently, I would like to express my grateful thanks to you all for registering in big numbers and making this convention successful. We crossed over 1200 participants this year. We had union tourism minister Alphons Kannanthanam; Naveen Patnaik, hon'ble chief minister of Odisha; Dr. Mona Sharma, principal secretary tourism and culture, Govt of Odisha; Rashmi Verma, secretary tourism, ministry of tourism, Govt. of India who all added immense value to our inaugural event on September 7, 2017. This shows how IATO convention holds its reputation as the most important event in the travel and tourism industry. Earlier, on September 6, 2017 morning, we had a press meet at Mayfair Lagoon Resort Bhubaneswar with large attendance of electronic and print media which gave wide publicity to our 33rd convention in local TV and press. The same day in the evening we had chapter chairman meet and on September 7 morning the active members' meet wherein we focused on areas where we need to work out our future strategies. IATO Run for Responsible Tourism, which came as a great opportunity for members to participate in an activity with a cause, was also a very successful event. Continuing his support to the association, Ashok Chandra Panda, hon'ble minister of state (IC) tourism and culture, Government of Odisha flagged off the run.

This time we had strong partnership from state tourism boards of Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kerala, and many private parties who took booth along with these states governments at the travel mart.

There were eminent speakers who spoke on emergent issues and I could see palpable excitement amongst members on what could be the best platform to get clarifications from experts on new trade policy and incentives to tour operators/hoteliers, on GST, e-tourist visa and how it can be made more tourist friendly with multiple entry, long duration visa, how taxes can be rationalised for better business possibilities for tourism sector with tourism given export status, increased budget for tourism for global marketing, skill development, etc. All these issues were discussed at the convention this year.

We achieved success in getting the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme revised as per our recommendations and our members should take the benefit of new incentives given for aggressive business promotions. Copy of the Policy was made available through our circular and also added in our website. Over 90 pending cases for reimbursement of claims have been settled while more are in the process of final settlement. Please give the details as per request made by OM Division i.e. Mandate Form should be duly completed with the cancelled cheque copy for transferring the dues to respective members account.

The season appears to be very competitive and our members are likely to handle far more complex tasks in times to come. The ministry has started Incredible India Campaign 2.0 aggressively. Now it is upon us on how we take advantage of the changed tourism scene by greater participation of India Tourism in global tourism exhibitions, pro-active approach of Ministry of Tourism to showcase India in China, Japan, South Korea in the Gulf and Latin America markets. We have to gear up ourselves and do our part to the best of our ability.

I wish you all the best this festive season. Let us work hard to make it a great Indian tourism decade.

Thanks and regards,

Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO

REINVENTING TOURISM POTENTIAL

The 33rd Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) convention was held in Odisha from September 7 to 10, at the Mayfair Convention Centre in Bhubaneswar. Many of you were already part of the idea exchange and celebration as the industry came together to reinvent India's tourism potential. Here are the highlights of how IATO delivered yet another success story



Moving past the challenges of the industry the association had decided to plan ahead and discover new ways of growth through this convention. The theme 'India Tourism- Time to reinvent ourselves' laid emphasis on the need of changing with the times. The convention was inaugurated by Alphons Kannanthanam, minister of tourism, Government of India; Naveen Paitnaik, chief minister, Government of Odisha; Rashmi Verma, secretary tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Ashok Chandra Panda, minister of tourism and culture, Government of Odisha among other government associates.



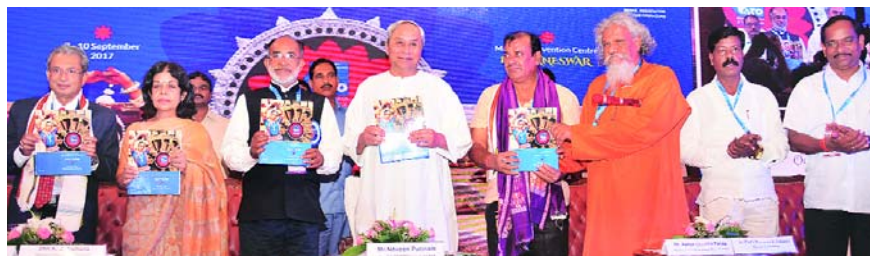
Welcoming everybody, Pronab Sarkar, president, IATO, said. "IATO takes pride in associating with Odisha government and welcoming delegates to the state. The state has immense tourism potential which will be unveiled over the next few days. We hope to make this convention another door to new opportunities for the travel industry and Odisha tourism."

Naveen Paitnaik said, "This convention is a global platform for exchange of ideas and Odisha is ready to take the big leap in tourism. Odisha has a lot to offer with its pristine beaches and exquisite cuisine among numerous other things. The new international connections have increased tourist arrivals and we are also looking at hosting more sports events to showcase Odisha as a destination."

Alphonso Kannanthanam, attended his first official event after taking charge as the minister of tourism. He said, "As one of the great civilizations of this world we need to make a difference through our tourism. It is up to the agents in this room along with the government to reflect their love for the country in growth and development. I am not looking forward to timed ideas but radical ones that can change the face of tourism in India. I request everyone here to feel free to come up with something new and interactive ideas that you believe can promote India for its true potential."

Commenting further, Verma stated, "Odisha is a great venue picked by IATO, which has true potential. I am sure the next three days will see concrete discussions and innovative ideas being brought forward by the members."

The Government of Odisha had shown tremendous support in inviting delegates from all over India to the convention. Ashok Chandra Panda had extended the invitation to the entire travel and tourism fraternity. Commenting on the recent growth in the state, Panda, stated, "A lot has changed in the state over the years and our latest tourism policy introduced



last year gives more investment opportunities to the private players. The problem of international connectivity has been solved with Air Asia starting its weekly service to Kuala Lumpur which will soon turn into a daily flight. Spice Jet has also shown interest in starting a weekly service connecting Bhubneswar to Sharjah which will add to our international connections. We have proposed to add three areas of Jeypore, Rourkela and Rajgarh under the Udaan scheme which shall help increase regional connectivity and also promote tribal tourism. Odisha has also been sanctioned ₹80 crore in the Swadesh Darshan Scheme which shall trigger further developments.”

Lally Mathews, honorary secretary, IATO mentioned that there had been tremendous efforts from the government of Odisha to bring the convention to their state. Mathews added, “It feels great to see such active support from the government. It shows that they understand the importance of tourism and are deeply involved in the development process as well.” As more delegates flew in from all across the states, the first day witnessed sessions of all active members and allied tour operators. Issues like ethics in business, investments, and business relations were all discussed during the inaugural day through active members meeting.

The inaugural ceremony saw mesmerising Odisha folk dance performances welcoming the delegates and introducing them to the state. The IATO Manual was also released during the event along with the distribution of Hall of Fame Awards. The special Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to JK Mohanty, CMD, Swosti Group of Hotels.

Since its inception, the association has brought forward industry stakeholders on a single platform to broaden their learning horizons. One of the main motives of the IATO convention is to come together as a team and identify the potential that lies within the country.



PICTURE GALLERY



IATO Run for Responsible Tourism

The second day of the convention began with IATO Run for Responsible Tourism which came as a great opportunity for members to participate in an activity with a cause.

Continuing his support to the association, Ashok Chandra Panda, minister of tourism and culture, Government of Odisha flagged off the run. Many members and delegates participated showcasing their solidarity with the industry. The participants' enthusiasm was a perfect start to the enlightening day that was planned ahead. Here are a few glimpses from the run.



PICTURE GALLERY

Cultural connect over networking

The cultural performances at the convention gave another opportunity to the delegates in experiencing Odisha. From beautiful Odissi dances to local musicians, the networking dinners were surely the highlight of every evening. Here are a few glimpses from Odisha.



A DAY OF EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The second day of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Convention 2017 in Bhubaneswar concluded on a power packed note with back to back discussions unfolding the makings of an exciting tourism destination while focusing on new ideas and creative branding. The sessions were highly interactive with participation from the audience which contributed to relevant proposals being brought forward



It has always been said that India is a destination with great potential and the first session was an honest take on how it is being perceived on the global level. The first panel detailed on the future aspects that could diversify India's global branding and make a significant difference to tourism arrival numbers. The session concluded on a note that India needs to create a specific target segment oriented marketing strategy followed by delivery of the promised product.

The second session of the day highlighted the tourism offerings of the host state - Odisha. Experts representing government bodies explained the infrastructural progress that has been made in these years that can boost tourism numbers. Some factors like international connectivity, opportunity filled tourism policy, vibrant tourism products and constant infrastructural development were highlighted by the panelists. Dr. Mona Sharma, principal secretary tourism, Government of Odisha expressed, "We are ready to host any kind of tourists with our special product offering. A dedicated team can work with agents to manage big groups in showcasing various touristic products that Odisha has to offer such as art, culture, heritage, tribal and eco-tourism."

Emphasising the importance of airlines in the tourism sector, the third session brought together major airlines and ministry representatives to discuss the way forward. With the new UDAAN policy opening up a whole new area for domestic flights, the panel discussed on how to leverage on new policies to bring in more international and domestic tourists and how regional connectivity scheme is going to uplift tourism in the country.

Post the lunch at Mayfair Lagoon, the delegates returned to witness another round of insightful sessions. The discussion on marketing shared some crucial points on how tour operators have been successful with their innovative tourism products to become smart, suave and nimble marketers. Top stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality industry



threw light on how they have established their brands and let it grow over the years.

The fifth session of the day elaborated on the challenges and opportunities for the next generation of tour operators. It was a heart to heart discussion among panelists who revealed what it takes to enter a family business in the tourism sector and take forward the legacy.

India is known for its monuments, culture, dance forms and music among many other things. The last session of the day highlighted on how to move beyond these offerings and indulge tourists in other inventive products. The session successfully discussed on what needs to be done to address the next generation of travellers and compete with markets like Singapore, Australia, Dubai among others, who are giving us tough competition.

The day also witnessed state presentations by Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Manipur and Uttarakhand with representatives showcasing their lucrative new offerings. Apart from bringing together members from all across the states, IATO once again served as a platform for knowledge exchange and idea generator.



AN OPTIMISTIC FUTURE

As the 33rd IATO Convention came to an end, the association once again proved to be one of the largest networking platforms and knowledge exchange medium for the travel trade industry. The sessions were not only thought provoking but gave enough information to the tour operators to take the first step towards a positive change for their businesses. As India undergoes a drastic change in taxation policy while facing global challenges, the IATO convention gave an optimistic direction to the travel fraternity.



The day started with a powerful Goods and Service Tax (GST) session to discuss the issues related to the implementing and adoption of the new GST system. Experts helped the delegates with all the technical questions by answering in detail. The session was extended as delegates indulged in a direct dialogue with the two experts. As the travel and

tourism industry enters the execution phase of this new tax regime, the session was a great help for tour operators.

The industry has radically changed in the past years with the social media boom and one has to keep innovating to stay relevant. Therefore, a special session was planned with Facebook with two representatives flying in from

Singapore headquarters giving the presentation. As expected it was a power packed session which garnered rapt attention and numerous queries from the audience. The team highlighted on the importance of Facebook advertising to grow both big and small businesses. With Facebook reaching out to 70 million people every day, it surely poses as an interesting

growth opportunity to be looked into by tour operators and tourism boards.

The second session of the day ventured into discussing new business ideas for India as a tourism destination. As everyone is familiar with the standard basic programs like The Golden Triangle, Classical India, India and Nepal, this session further added on how reinvention and recreating of existing products can drastically affect the growth of business. The panel including top tour operators from various segments like inbound, adventure and cruise agreed that each business needs to modify their products for the target markets.

The valedictory session saw the august presence of chief guest HE governor of Odisha, Dr. S C Jamir. Congratulating the IATO team for their hard work in ensuring the

success of the convention, he said, "I have seen that this annual event has been immensely productive and helped to raise the tourism bar for several states and see the great opportunity unfold for Odisha. The state possesses a unique identity through its various tourism offerings and I am sure the IATO members have witnessed its true potential. More international connections, e-visa facility at airports and infrastructure development can further boost tourism in Odisha. Our government's dedication along with IATO team's efforts will surely work to the state's benefit."

Extending his congratulations to the IATO team, Satyajeet Rajan, director general, ministry of tourism, Government of India, stated, "India moved 12 ranks on competitiveness for travel and tourism list released by the

World Economic Forum. Looking at the sincerity and dedication of IATO members we can sure reach the top 20 rankings soon. Together as representatives of India we need to find more striking markets in Asia, China and South Africa to grow tourist arrivals."

The day also witnessed state presentations by tourism boards of Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh. Apart from highlighting the conventional state offerings they specially added some new products of the state. After an interactive session, IATO recognised the work of the industry through awards followed by the IATO Chill Out Zone. The convention ended on a positive note with delegates returning home with the enthusiasm to take their work to greater heights.



EVENT REPORT



THANK YOU NOTES

It is my immense pleasure to congratulate the IATO team in completing such a successful event in Odisha. We were thoroughly able to enjoy the convention with the seamless arrangement of transport, food and tours. The cultural shows were truly amazing. Thank you for making this great convention a grand success.

V.K.T. Balan

*chairman & managing director
Madura Travel*

It was good to bring IATO back to the Temple City - Bhubaneswar which is also now set to be a smart city. Since the last IATO convention here, our partners in the trade had an opportunity to rediscover the Mayfair group as well as explore our new properties. The convention was also well organised in terms of the panel discussions, and the pre and post event tours. It was encouraging to see IATO take cognisance of the younger generation making inroads in the tourism space and offering sound guidance and feedback to them.

Bjorn De Niese

*vice president, sales and marketing
Mayfair Hotels and Resorts*

The IATO convention in Bhubaneswar truly helped smaller tours operators to get updated on the new tourism products. It gives us insight into the marketing and sales strategies that could be used in

our companies. A lot of state tourism boards come up with new projects which smaller agents never come to know. We got to meet them under one roof. With the new challenge of GST, many agents were not aware that the GST levied on joy rides like elephant and camel ride is at 28 per cent. While GST on cars stands at 5 per cent and buses is 18 per cent. Also, the post tours gave us an insight on the diversity of tourism opportunities in the region. Overall, it was a great opportunity to hear and walk with the stalwarts from the industry.

Vishal Yadav,

*director, Incredible Destination Management
Services Pvt. Ltd*

It is indeed a pleasure to attend another IATO convention and witness it grow into such a huge platform. Some very interesting topics were discussed that helped us with a lot of information on how to develop new products to grow our business.

Sanjay Razdan

director, Razdan Holidays

It feels great to be a part of India's travel industry and see people gather at such a large scale to share issues. Some of the sessions have been very enlightening and I am sure the industry shall be able to gain a lot from it.

Nalini Singh

account manager, Facebook

Tourism Statistics- August 2017

11 per cent growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals in August, 2017 over August, 2016

71.3 per cent growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals on e-tourist Visa in August, 2017 over August, 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 and FTAs on e-Tourist Visa from tourism during the month of August, 2017:

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs)

- The number of FTAs in August, 2017 were 7.24 lakh as compared to FTAs of 6.52 lakh in August, 2016 and 5.99 lakh in August, 2015.
- The growth rate in FTAs in August, 2017 over August, 2016 is 11.0 per cent compared to 8.8 per cent in August, 2016 over August, 2015.
- FTAs during the period January-August 2017 were 63.98 lakh with a growth of 15.2 per cent over same period of previous year, as compared to the FTAs of 55.54 lakh with a growth of 9.5 per cent in January-August 2016 over January-August 2015.
- The percentage share of FTAs in India during August 2017 among the top 15 source countries was highest from Bangladesh (21.26 per cent) followed by USA (11.60 per cent), UK (9.46 per cent), Sri Lanka (6.41 per cent), Malaysia (3.71 per cent), Japan (2.74 per cent), Canada (2.57 per cent), France (2.46 per cent), Germany (2.39 per cent), Australia (2.37 per cent), Nepal (2.11 per cent), Singapore (1.96 per cent), China (1.94 per cent), Oman (1.76 per cent) and

UAE (1.57 per cent).

- The percentage share of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during August 2017 among the top 15 ports was highest at Delhi Airport (26.99 per cent) followed by Mumbai Airport (15.49 per cent), Haridaspur Land Check Post (12.06 per cent), Chennai Airport (9.37 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (6.36 per cent), Cochin Airport (5.01 per cent), Kolkata Airport (4.42), Hyderabad Airport (3.50 per cent), Gede Rail Land Check Post (2.74 per cent), Tiruchirapalli Airport (1.94 per cent), Trivandrum Airport (1.67 per cent), Ghojadanga Land Check Post (1.46 per cent), Ahmadabad Airport (1.36 per cent), Sonauli Land Check post (1.35 per cent) and Amritsar Airport (0.89 per cent).

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

- During the month of August, 2017 total of 1.13 lakh tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 0.66 lakh during the month of August 2016 registering a growth of 71.3 per cent.
- During January-August 2017, a total of 9.49 lakh tourist arrived on e-tourist visa as compared to 6.06 lakh during January-August 2016, registering a growth of 56.5 per cent.
- The percentage shares of top 15 source countries availing e-Tourist Visa facilities during August, 2017 were as follows: UK (12.6 per cent), USA (9.6 per cent), UAE (6.7 per cent), Spain (6.3 per cent), France (5.9 per cent), Oman (5.6 per cent), Italy (4.9



During the month of August, 2017 total of 1.13 lakh tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 0.66 lakh during the month of August 2016 registering a growth of 71.3 per cent.

per cent), China (4.1 per cent), Germany (4.0 per cent), Australia (3.4 per cent), Canada (3.3 per cent), Korea (Rep.of) (3.1 per cent), Singapore (2.9 per cent), Israel (2.3 per cent) and Malaysia (2.0 per cent).

- The percentage shares of top 15 ports in tourist arrivals on e-Tourist Visa during August, 2017 were as follows: New Delhi Airport (44.1 per cent), Mumbai Airport (19.5 per cent), Chennai Airport (8.9 per cent), Kochi Airport (7.2 per cent), Bengaluru Airport (7.0 per cent), Hyderabad Airport (3.8 per cent), Kolkata Airport (1.9 per cent), Trivandrum Airport (1.5 per cent), Amritsar Airport (1.4 per cent), Tirchy Airport (1.2 per cent), Calicut Airport (1.0 per cent), Ahmadabad Airport (0.9 per cent), Dabolim (Goa) Airport (0.4 per cent), Jaipur Airport (0.4 per cent) and Pune Airport (0.3 per cent).

New Members as on August 22, 2017

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Air India launches direct flight to Sweden, connecting Delhi and Stockholm

India's national air carrier Air India launched its first non-stop flight, the Dreamliner B-787, to Stockholm, Sweden, from Delhi in August. With an all-female crew on board, the cockpit was under the control of Capt. Nivedita Bhasin. The Dreamliner will fly thrice a week, every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and leave Delhi at 14.50 hours and reach Stockholm at 18.40. The return flight will leave Stockholm at 20:40 hours and reach Delhi at 07:20 hours next day. With an increase of passenger volume between India and Sweden by 50 per cent in three years, the direct flight is likely to further bolster the growing relationship between India and Sweden. The flying time of passengers will be reduced by at least two hours.



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The Eurasian Spoonbill at Vedanthangal