

GET INDIA TO BECOME FIRST TRAVEL MART TO BE VISITED BY ANY INDIAN PM

Around 250 international buyers will be fully hosted under the Hospitality Schemes of MoT and MoC

The Global Exhibition on Services being organized by Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Government of India and Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) has been given the responsibility to organize the International Tourism Mart that has christened as Global Exhibition on Tourism— India (GET-India). The event is scheduled to take place from 23-25 April, 2015 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

GET-India is supported by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India and Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) will be taking the lead. The 3-day event is spread over 4,600 sq. mtrs where apart from stakeholders from the private sector, the enchanting Indian States would also be showcasing their tourism facets that will make it immensely interesting for the international buyers.

The Prime Minister has given his consent to inaugurate and visit the Exhibition. "This is the first time ever any Indian PM will be visiting an International Tourism Mart," said Sarabjit Singh, Vice Chairman, FAITH.

About 250 international buyers, who will be fully hosted under the Hospitality Schemes of Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Commerce, will be invited to take part in this fair. About 250 tour operators and 175 exhibitors will be a part of this event.

Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, urged all the members to participate in large numbers and make this Exhibition a big success.



BLOCK YOUR DATES

IATO ANNOUNCES DATES FOR ITS 31st ANNUAL CONVENTION FROM 20-23 AUGUST 2015

Pronab Sarkar, Hony Secretary, IATO have been appointed as Convention Chairman whereas Ravi Gosain, Joint Secretary, IATO, and Sanjeev Joshi, Executive Committee Member, IATO, have been appointed as Co-Chairman

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) in its recent luncheon meeting informed that the 31st IATO Annual Convention will be held from 20-23 August 2015. The venue for the Convention has not been decided yet; however the Association informed that it will be held outside Delhi for which they have three different states who are bidding. Pronab Sarkar, Hony Secretary, IATO have been appointed as Convention Chairman whereas Ravi Gosain, Joint Secretary, IATO, and Sanjeev Joshi, Executive Committee Member, IATO, have been appointed as Co-Chairman.

IATO SEEKS SUPPORT FROM TOURISM MINISTER TO REVISE BIOMETRIC PROCESS

Subhash Goyal, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) on behalf of IATO wrote a letter addressed to Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Union Minister of Tourism (Independent Charge), Culture (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) on 24th February, 2015. The letter was subjected to effectiveness of biometric scanning for all visa applicants' at all physical locations in the United Kingdom.

Goyal, in the letter has highlighted that how the news delivered by the Indian High Commission to London came as a

substantial shock to the tour operators in UK. IATO has urged the Minister about the drastic impact of the effectiveness of the biometrics, which will turn as a great setback for tourism. The tour operators eye upon this European market because it is India's one of the leading source market with 11.62 per cent of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) to India.

Therefore, the association has urged the Union Minister to defer Biometric Process for UK citizens from March 2015 unless Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) enabled by Electronic Travel Authorization is introduced for UK citizens.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear Members,

Greetings from IATO!

India government held its Annual Budget 2015/16 on 25th February, 2015 announcing country's economic development in 2015. The Budget aims to push the economy toward a more sustainable model of development with deeper reforms that focus on the faster adjustment of industrial structure, broader access for private investment, tightened supervision on monopolies, harsher controls on pollution and more attention afforded to low income groups.

Tourism did not get any great support except that Hon'ble Finance Minister made announcement that Tourist Visa-on-Arrival (TVoA) would be offered to up to 150 countries and mainly to boost the tourism sector. He also promised restoration of 25 cultural world Heritage sites. These are still deficient and require restoration including landscape restoration...I propose to provide resources to start work along these lines for these heritage sites, he said.

But I had expressed our unhappiness and written to Hon'ble Minister of Finance about the government's decision to increase service tax rate from 12.36% to 14% which no doubt will make our India holiday packages more costly. With this increase, government has put burden on potential vacationers even within the country by making travel and stay in hotel costlier. In my letter to Hon'ble Finance Minister, I have in clear terms mentioned, "we have been pleading with the government that the tourism service export be treated on a par with physical exports and tourism be extended all benefits that are being given to the physical exports, including exemption of Service Tax based on their foreign exchange earnings". Instead, the government had increased the service tax rate from 12.36% to 14%.

Also this could be more burden with 2% Swachh Bharat Cess. This is going to impact negatively our tourism business. This 2% Cess part needs clarification for which we are awaiting notification.

I hope our pleading gets a positive consideration. Hon'ble Minister of Tourism has also taken up our cause with union Home Minister about the problems being faced by intending tourists with the introduction of Bio-metric process for obtaining India visas in respective countries. He has also pleaded that such Bio-metric process be done on arrivals at international airports in India.

But you all will agree with me that this Budget has demonstrated the government's strong resolve for a cleaner, safer and rejuvenated India with medical facilities and better transparency. All these are essential points often considered by tourists before choosing a holiday destination. At least the government has put forth definitive timeline for a nationwide rollout of GST and that is by April 2016. This should help in settling Service Tax problem giving a significant boost to the industry. Overall, we do expect concrete measures to further improve investment climate and consumer sentiment and consumer consumption. Though tourism budget is disappointing, still it appears pragmatic and growth oriented if one takes into consideration the social aspects and political will to move forward. Action on Multiple Policy and administrative skill will be needed. Sustained coherence is needed. I am hopeful government will be able to do that under our great Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and tourism will also prosper.

With tourism salute!

Subhash Goyal



IATO'S REACTION ON UNION BUDGET 2015-16



Even though the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has announced Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) for 150 countries, but by the time this is done, people who are trying to sabotage the Prime Minister Vision have created a lot of damage to the growth of tourism by introducing Biometrics for getting an Indian Visa in many countries. Even the countries like Israel who have the maximum threat of terrorism, do not have Biometric, said Subhash Goyal, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO).

Goyal expressed his displeasure on the tourism industry not being given any relief. "Tourism Service Export should be treated at par with physical exports and tourism be extended all benefits that are availed to the physical exporters including exemption of service tax based on their foreign exchange earnings," he said.

Government has put additional burden by increasing service tax rate from 12.36 per cent to 14 per cent, which will make our packages costlier. Goyal urged the Modi Government to reconsider this so that tourism to India could flourish and we could achieve the target of 15 million of tourists in

next 3 to 5 years and create more employment through tourism.

The association looked at the government to put forth a definitive time line for a nationwide rollout of GST. The tax regime should help us set off Service Tax giving a significant boost to tourism Industry and we are happy that GST will be introduced by April next year (2016).

"Also this progressive Union Budget demonstrates the government's strong resolve for development and also ensures cleaner, safer and rejuvenated India with employment for youth, medical facilities, skill development, better transparency and governances, safety measures, development through Public Private Partnership and use of technology," he said.

Goyal also appreciated the government decision to develop World Heritage Sites - churches and convents of old Goa, Hampi, Elephanta caves, Leh palace, Varanasi temple town, Jallianwala Bagh etc., and make them more tourist-friendly. Goyal also expressed his happiness on the government concern to look after security of women and providing funds for Nirbhaya Fund, which will create confidence amongst women travellers.

IATO President expresses his happiness with the Railway Budget

"No increase in passenger fares and tickets can be booked 120 days in advance instead of 60 days to tackle tout menace is a landmark decision," said Subhash Goyal, President IATO after the Railway Budget was announced in the Parliament.

Goyal added that positive steps have been announced in the Railway Budget by Suresh Prabhu, Minister for Railways, which will boost Rail Tourism and IATO members would be able to render better services, which in turn will give greater satisfaction, security for women and travel comforts.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RAIL BUDGET

- No increase in passenger fares
- Tickets can be booked 120 days in advance instead of 60 days to tackle tout menace
- Introduction of train similar to bullet trains in design which will run on existing tracks
- Wi-Fi to be available at 400 railway stations
- To develop 10 satellite railway stations this year
- To expand water vending machines on more stations
- On-board entertainment facility could be extended on Shatabdi trains
- To improve cleanliness & design of bed linen
- All India 24x7 grievances helpline 138 to start soon
- 7,000 more toilets to be replaced by Bio-Toilets, new toilets at 650 stations, more vacuum toilets
- Rail connectivity to North Eastern states
- CCTVs to be introduced in select trains and suburban trains for women safety

2nd CONVOCATION OF INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

The 2nd Convocation of Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (an organisation of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India) was held in IITTM, Noida on March 22, 2015. As a part of this convocation, a total of 1605 students from batches of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 of all campuses were conferred post graduate diplomas.

Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Union Minister of Tourism (Independent Charge), Culture (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation) and Chairman, Board of Governors of IITTM was the Chief Guest on the occasion. In addition, the Guests of Honour included Dr. Lalit K. Panwar, Secretary, MoT, Govt. of India; Usha Sharma, Additional Director General, MoT, Govt. of India; Subhash Goyal, President, Indian Tour Operators of India (IATO) and Prof. T. V. Kattimani, Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University.

The Minister also gave away awards of excellence to outstanding students for their meritorious performance. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister announced that the Tourism Ministry is processing the proposal of setting up of a National Tourism University at Noida.

Congratulating the graduates, the Minister said that they are now the Brand Ambassadors of the country to promote tourism. The Minister said that the Tourism sector not only generates



foreign exchange, it also generates a lot of employment especially for women and is a source of women empowerment. He hoped that the graduates of IITTM will help to actualise India's hospitality mantra of Atithi Devo Bhava.

Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, while congratulating all the successful students expressed his happiness that this will help to get

trained manpower for servicing the tourism industry. Goyal also added, "One of the biggest problems that every organisation in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry faces is having ready to deploy trained staff at the entry level but this is a professional job and need best training which is given by IITTM and adds excellence in this profession."

Increase in the service tax to proliferate the cost of tour packages, says Goyal in a letter to FM

On behalf of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Subhash Goyal, President, IATO felicitated Arun Jaitley, Union Minister for Finance, Government of India, via a letter for presenting a progressive budget for 2015-16. The association accentuated on Jaitley's announcement about the Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) that will be offered to 150 countries from current 44 countries.

Purpose of the letter was to plead that India's inbound tourism should be treated at par with export of goods based on their foreign exchange earnings along with the benefits involving exemption of service tax, which should be extended to tour operators. The letter stated that the tourism growth is sluggish and more or less stagnant at 5-6 per cent growth since one decade due to global economic slowdown in major tourist generating countries.

IATO's letter to the Finance Minister (FM) also apprised about the Budget which now proposes to increase the service tax from 12.36 per cent to 14 per cent. According to the association, if the proposed tax comes into force it will increase the tour package cost automatically. The increase is

further surmounted (not specified at present) applicability of 2 per cent Cess on account of Swachh Bharat Cess on certain services. It further noted that due to multiplicity of taxes and double taxation in actual operation of tourism business, IATO members have priced themselves and they can't match the Holiday packages, which are on offer from our neighboring countries and we lose business in spite of having best of tourism sites in the world.

Therefore, the letter pleaded that service tax be withdrawn for tourism sector to give it a boost and achieve target of international tourist arrivals in the next three to four years under the vision of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.



IATO INPUTS GIVEN FOR REVAMPING NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY 2015

With reference to Ministry's letter regarding IATO inputs on the National Tourism Policy 2015, IATO suggested that the tourism Policy 2002 is quite old. Though it covers the various segments, it needs to be revamped in all aspects based on the current developments/trends in travel scene globally.

- **Sustainable Tourism:** There is now greater focus on the sustainable tourism/ responsible tourism and Ministry has finalized sustainable tourism criteria based on Global Sustainable Tourism Guidelines. Whole policy in this respect is to be reoriented towards environmental conservations and cultural protection and provide equal job opportunities. Stress should be given to the introduction of 'Responsible Tourism Model' which would benefit the local community.
- **Target for Tourist Arrivals:** Government should have a target fixed for tourist arrivals for a decided period of time and develop suitable strategies to achieve it
- **Master Plan and mapping of potentials:** We have to map the existing attractions and facilities through master plans of region identifying the gap capacity building at locations.
- **Capacity building to meet the requirement:** We should have a clear policy for exhaustive capacity building proportionate to the fixed targets for tourist arrivals.
- **Faster development of infrastructure:** We need to develop strategies to hasten the pace of infrastructure development.
- **Policy for waste management:** Special strategies need to be developed for waste management and garbage disposal at a faster pace at the tourist destinations, especially.
- **Policy on Right Taxation:** Taxation in India is higher than many other nearby destinations. Policy has to be spelt out to fix a competitive taxation rate.
- **Simplification of approvals and licenses:** Licenses and approval regime should be simplified and single window clearance model has to be introduced for helping out hospitality projects in the country.
- **Support to investors:** Support mechanism to investors should be given high priority.
- **Policy on safety and security for tourists:** Measures have to be taken for building-up good image of the destination by ensuring safety and security to the visitor.
- **Policy on pollution control and management:** Many Indian locations are highly polluted. We need to have a policy evolved to contain air, water and sound pollutions.
- **Qualitative Tourism:** India should promote 'Qualitative Tourism' than quantitative, attracting tourists who will stay longer, spend more and respect the culture and environment.
- **Marketing:** There is a need for professional marketing companies who are involved for promoting India using all latest technological innovations.
 - New short promotional film/DVD
 - Cleanliness campaign
 - Research based promotional/development activities
 - Investments related financial incentives
 - Regulatory norms for hotel and travel industry

Union Ministry of Tourism holds consultations with States and UTs for formulating the New Tourism Policy

The Union Ministry of Tourism held a meeting for formulating the New National Tourism Policy, 2015 with the representatives of Tourism departments of State Governments and Union Territories as a part of the consultation process with the stakeholders in New Delhi.

Addressing the representatives, the Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge), Tourism (Independent Charge) and Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma said that the New Tourism Policy should become the instrument for substantially increasing India's share in global tourism beyond the current share of 0.64 percent. The new Tourism Policy should help to boost the growth of Tourism so that its contribution to the GDP of the economy also goes up from the present 6.8 percent, he added.

"The Tourism policy should be framed with the participation of all stake holders to ensure everyone delivers with responsibility. The Tourism Policy should contribute to economy, promote cultural heritage, generate employment, should be pro-poor and also include women empowerment," the Minister said.

The representatives of State and UTs also put forward their suggestions and expressed their concerns related to their regions. They demanded tax incentives across the tourism related products and services, connectivity for remote areas, single window clearance and equitable treatment for the less developed regions of India.

A demand was also raised for National Calendar of festivals throughout India and a request was made to the Ministry of Tourism to

promote the local traditions of particular regions. Other issues related to tourist policies, preservation of water bodies and skill development were also discussed during the meeting.

Dr. Lalit Panwar, Secretary Tourism; Suman Billa, Joint Secretary Tourism; Usha Sharma, Additional Director General, and other senior officials were also present in the meeting. This is the second major meeting which follows the previous meeting with tour operators and travel agencies among others held last month.



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Many professors from Jaipur, University of Delhi, Banaras Hindu University, Lucknow University together with Tour Operators from Delhi and Banaras along with scholars, tour operators of Odisha participated in the conference.

Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, was one of the speakers at the inaugural session of 13th February, 2015 and spoke on the topic related to tourism perspective of India vis-a-vis Odisha with focus on Buddhist Heritage sites. The event was inaugurated by Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha.

Other business sessions included Buddhist sites and marketing, presentation on Buddhist sites of India and educational tours to selected sites as part of promotional purpose to facilitate tour operators to include the destinations in Buddhist packages. Cultural programme and B to B session for the tour operators leading IATO tour operators Lajpat Rai and JK Mohanty also made presentations in course of the conference period.

ATM TAKING PLACE FROM 4-7 MAY 2015

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) is being held 4-7 May, 2015 at the Dubai World Centre, Dubai. The theme for the India pavilion with space of 310.50 sq. mts. (having space for around 26 co-exhibitors) this year is 'Find What You Seek' with the objective to depict India as a year round multi-faceted destination. Ministry of Tourism has discounted the cost of participation for the members of the Indian travel & tourism industry as co-exhibitors at a participation fee of approx. US\$ 3688 per booth of 4 sq. mts. This information is circulated among IATO members to participate in the India Tourism Stand during the ATM 2015 to showcase their products in the Middle East market.

Foreign Trade Policy- Incentives for Tourism Industry under Served from India Scheme (SEIS)

Foreign Trade Policy has been announced on 1st April 2015 for the period 2015-2020. Under the new Foreign Trade Policy, some benefits have been announced by the Ministry of Commerce for the Services Sector including tour operators, travel agents, hotels, transports etc. under Services Export from India Scheme (SEIS). The Association is trying to get more clarity to know what the actual benefits are and how the members can avail those benefits and criteria/eligibility to claim such benefits.

Below are the highlights of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015:

- Served from India Scheme (SFIS) has been replaced with Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS). SEIS shall apply to 'Service Providers located in India' instead of 'Indian Service Providers'. Thus SEIS provides for rewards to all Service providers of notified services, who are providing services from India, regardless of the constitution or profile of the service provider.
- The rate of reward under SEIS would be based on net foreign exchange earned. The reward issued as duty credit scrip is usable for all types of goods and service tax debits on procurement of services/goods. Debits would be eligible for CENVAT credit or drawback.
- The present rates of reward are 3% and 5%. The list of services and rates of rewards would be reviewed after 30.9.2015.
- Duty credit scrips to be freely transferable and usable for payment of custom duty, excise duty and service tax.
- All scrips issued under 'Merchandise Exports from India Scheme' (MEIS) and SEIS and the goods imported against these scrips would be fully transferable.
- Scrips issued under Exports from India Schemes can be used for the following:
 - (i) Payment of customs duty for import of inputs/goods including capital goods.
 - (ii) Payment of service tax on procurement of services as per DoR notification.
- Basic Customs Duty paid in cash or through debit under Duty Credit Scrip can be taken back as Duty Drawback as per DoR Rules, if inputs so imported are used for exports.
- The nomenclature of Export House, Star Export House, Trading House, Star Trading House, Premier Trading House certificate has been changed to One, Two, Three, Four, Five Star Export House.

The criteria for export performance for recognition of status holder have been changed from Rupees to US dollar earnings. The new criteria is as under:

Status Category	Export Performance FOB / FOR (as converted) Value (in US\$ million)
One Star Export House	3
Two Star Export House	25
Three Star Export House	100
Four Star Export House	500
Five Star Export House	2000

S.No.	Sectors	Admissible rate
1.	TOURISM AND TRAVEL RELATED SERVICES	
A.	Hotels and Restaurants (including catering)	
a.	Hotel	3%
b.	Restaurants (including catering)	3%
B.	Travel agencies and tour operators services	5%
C.	Tourist guides services	5%
2.	TRANSPORT SERVICES	
A.	Maritime Transport Services	5%
B.	Air Transport Services	5%
C.	Road Transport Services	5%
D.	Services Auxiliary to all modes of Transport	5%

IATO ORGANIZES ITS MONTHLY LUNCHEON MEETING AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL NEW DELHI PASCHIM VIHAR

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) recently organized its monthly luncheon meeting at Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Paschim Vihar. The meeting was held to discuss the changes made in Service Tax and applicability of tax on the tour operators. The lunch was hosted by Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Paschim Vihar.

While addressing the members, Pronab Sarkar, Hon. Secretary, IATO, mentioned about the growth in international tourists (15.52 lakh) that has been increased by 2.3 per cent. "For revised Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme, the Ministry of Finance has given the approval and the file is submitted to our Minister for policy decision. The limit for each visit for exhibition, roadshow has been increased to Rs. 2.5 lakhs from Rs. 2 lakhs at present. Some hotel component cost will also be reimbursed," he said.

Expressing his concern regarding the Biometric process, Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, said, "While govt. is going to introduce E-visa to 150 countries on one hand, they have also introduced Biometric process for visas on the other. We want that Biometrics should be abolished and if it all this needs to be done, this should be done on arrival at the International Airports in India."

Rajeev Kohli, Vice President, IATO, informed that IATO will conduct training programmes focusing on skills related to the frontline and the operations staff, details of which are being worked out.

Giving more update on the upcoming mega travel show, Global Exhibition on Tourism (GET) India, Sarabjit Singh, Senior VP, IATO and Vice-Chairman, FAITH, said, "This is the first time ever any Indian Prime Minister is visiting any International Tourism Mart. Therefore, it is important from our side too to present the right picture. Over 95 organizations have been registered with us and the number might increase. Lately, we are expecting 250 buyers at large."

S.C. Kamra, Advocate and Solicitor (Excise and Service Tax) was the Guest Speaker on the occasion. He gave a presentation on Service Tax and categorically mentioned that the revised rate of service tax will be applicable once the budget is passed in the Parliament and President of India has signed the same which will be in the month of April 2015. Presently, Parliament session is not on and will start from 20th April 2015.





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PRODUCT

The Gods have been generous to Kerala. A 600-kilometre long coastline, enchanting backwaters, houseboat cruises, hill stations, wildlife sanctuaries, historical monuments, pilgrim centres, awe-inspiring art forms and Ayurveda- God's Own Country has it all. A pleasant climate throughout the year and a warm friendly people are add-ons that lure tourists into staying longer. Monsoon, culinary and adventure holidays, farm and village tours, tree house and home stay experiences, eco-tourism packages etc. Kerala has, today, grown into a multi-dimensional boutique destination offering a multitude of unique experiences and attractions to the world.

MARKET

Today, the astonishing tourist arrivals say it all. During 2014, foreign tourist arrivals to the state touched 923366 and domestic arrivals clocked 11695411. Foreign exchange earnings for 2014, too, reached Rs. 6399 crore and total revenue – including direct and indirect income – soared to Rs. 24,885 crore. What is gratifying is the fact that tourists are coming not just from traditional source markets like the UK, Germany and France but from several new markets across Europe and from countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Australia, Japan and the US as well.

ACHIEVEMENTS

With the word spreading and tourists waxing eloquent about Kerala, the awards too have gained momentum. Kerala Tourism's Responsible Tourism initiative at Kumarakom bagged the UNWTO Ulysses Award for Innovation in Public Policy and Governance – the first-ever for India. God's Own Country also won the Lonely Planet Award 2014

for the Best Family Destination in the world. The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) 2014 gave Kerala Corporate Social Responsibility award for Kumarakom Responsible Tourism Project and the Gold Award for its e-Newsletter as well as the Back home, Kerala Tourism grabbed four top honours at the National Tourism Awards, including the Most Innovative and Unique Tourism Project award for Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

PROMOTION

Comprehensive, time-specific, highly visible and well-thought-out marketing strategies have helped Kerala stay in the global limelight. Like Kerala's new global campaign, the Great Backwaters, that presents the magnificent waterways using aerial imagery. The campaign that aims to catapult the backwaters in the league of the Grand Canyon and the Great Wall of China is backed by social media activities as well. Back home, Kerala played host to the Kochi Muziris Biennale. This is a celebration of contemporary and traditional arts from different parts of the world.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Indeed, Kerala became the first state to adopt an RT Policy, implementing RT practices in eco-sensitive destinations like Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady and Wayanad. Other destinations like Kumbalangi and Bekal will soon join the RT movement. Kerala also took new strides in RT by organising the International Conference on Responsible Tourism in association with RT School@KITTS that saw the participation of global experts from the field. As a separate exercise, Kerala is reviving its ancient trade ties under the Spice Route initiative with 31 countries in Asia and Europe.

'VISIT KERALA' CAMPAIGN

The Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala has decided to launch a 'Visit Kerala' campaign in April 2015. In order to leverage this potential Kerala Tourism will launch a series of activities under the new initiative branded as 'Visit Kerala 2015'.

- Aggressive campaign targeting potential travelers in the traditional markets (International) for Kerala like UK, France, Germany, US etc and penetrating into new markets like China, Sri Lanka, Malaysia etc. Focus will be given to the upcoming markets like the US, Australia, Scandinavia etc as well.
- Focused Ayurveda/Monsoon campaign in Middle East to leverage the increased air connectivity.
- Hi-blitz Off Season campaign in India to counter seasonality in arrivals
- Ayurveda - 2nd Phase of 'Kerala - Home of Ayurveda' to be launched in select national and international markets like Germany.

Festivals – Comprehensive

Festivals/Events Calendar to be prepared and promoted strongly through multiple channels including India Tourism Offices and Embassies

- Wedding/MICE - Online and offline Campaign to promote Kerala as a Wedding/MICE Destination.
- Visit Kerala Contest for Tourists who holiday in Kerala in 2015, with attractive gifts and complimentary return holidays.
- Social Media/Online Campaign promoting 2015 as the best time to Visit Kerala highlighting the festivals/events and Visit Kerala Contest
- Organising Kerala food festivals in key cities in India and abroad.
- Tie ups with leading National Airlines to serve Kerala food in aircrafts on Vishu & Onam days, Cabin crew in Kerala attire on festival days, carrying Kerala articles in in-flight magazines, Special fares to tour operators etc



SERVICE TAX ON TOUR OPERATORS & UNION BUDGET 2015-16

(A) DEFINITION OF TOUR OPERATOR

1. A "tour operator" means any person engaged in the business of planning, scheduling, organizing, arranging tours (which may include arrangements for accommodation, sightseeing or other similar services) by any mode of transport, and includes any person engaged in the business of operating tours.
2. From the above definition given at the end of notification No. 26/2012-ST dated 20.6.2012, a person or a company engaged in the business of planning, scheduling, organizing or arranging tours by any mode of transport is a tour operator. A tour operator may also make arrangement for accommodation, sightseeing, transfer or other similar services. The mode of transport for the purpose of conducting tour may be by air, rail, surface transport or by river / waterways.
3. The definition of "tour operator" specifically includes the business of operating tours whether by a tourist vehicle covered by a permit or not. Prior to 01.07.2012, a person engaged in operating tours by a mode of transport (other than tourist vehicle covered by valid permit) was not covered in the ambit of "tour operator". However, the position has changed from 01.07.2012.

(B) RATE OF SERVICE TAX

1. Under the Union Budget 2015-16, it is proposed to increase the rate of service tax from 12.36% (including Ed. cess) to 14% (consolidated). The Ed. cess and SHE cess shall be subsumed in the revised rate of service tax.
2. The new service tax rate will come into force from a date to be notified by the Govt. after enactment of Finance Bill, 2015. With the notification of new service tax rate of 14%, Ed. cess (2%) and SHE cess (1%) of basic service tax shall cease to have effect simultaneously. Till such time the revised rate comes into effect, Ed. cess and SHE cess will continue to be levied in service tax. In other words, the present service tax rate of 12.36% will continue till the time Govt. notifies the new service tax rate of 14%.

(C) SWACHH BHARAT CESS (SBC)

1. An enabling provision is being incorporated vide clause 117 of the Finance Bill, 2015 so as to empower the Central Govt. to impose Swachh Bharat Cess (in short SBC) on all or any of the taxable services. The SBC can be imposed @ 2% of the value of taxable services.
2. SBC once imposed shall be in addition to service tax or other cess leviable on the taxable services. The combined impact of the proposed service tax rate (14%) and SBC (2%) will peg at 16% of the value of services.
3. The SBC shall be levied from a date to be announced by the Central Govt. and the same will not have immediate effect. Further it is not necessary that SBC is levied on all taxable services.
4. It is also provided that the provisions of service tax law and rules including those of refunds and exemptions shall apply mutatis mutandis to SBC.

(D) ABATED VALUE FOR SERVICE TAX PAYMENT

1. Consequent upon increase in floor rate of service tax from 12.36% to 14%, the effective rate of service tax applicable on abated value in the case of tour operators will stand increased. This is explained in the following chart:-

Sr. No.	Type of Service	Abatement available	Abated value	Pre-Budget rate	Post-Budget rate
1.	Package Tour	75%	25%	3.09%	3.50%
2.	Arranging or booking accommodation only.	90%	10%	1.236%	1.40%
3.	Other services including arranging cab etc.	60%	40%	4.944%	5.60%

The Post-Budget rate of service tax is not applicable immediately. The floor rate of 14% service tax will take effect after the Budget is passed and the date is announced by the Central Govt. for this purpose.

2. The abatement is available to a tour operator only if he does not avail the facility of CENVAT credit on inputs, capital goods and input services used for providing the taxable services. In case a tour operator is availing CENVAT credit facility on input, capital goods or input services, (except corresponding services received from other tour operators) he will pay service tax on full value and not on the abated value.
3. The benefit of claiming abatement under notification No. 26/2012-ST is optional. A service provider/ tour operator may choose to avail benefit of notification and pay service tax on the abated value. He may also elect to forgo the abatement and pay service tax on the entire value. In case, the tour operator forgoes the abatement and opts to pay service tax on the entire price, he is entitled to the benefit of CENVAT credit on all eligible inputs, input services and capital goods used to support the output services of the tour operator.

(E) PAYMENT OF SERVICE TAX BY AIR TRAVEL AGENTS

1. An air travel agent providing services of issuing air tickets can pay service tax on the commission received by him from the airline or from the consolidator. Alternatively, he has an option to pay service tax at the following rates:-

- (i) Domestic bookings 0.62% of basic fare
- (ii) International bookings 1.24% of basic fare

The above rate of service tax @ 0.62% / 1.24% is an alternate rate as substitute of paying service tax on the gross commission / service charges at full rate.

2. Consequent upon proposed revision in floor rate of service tax from 12.36% to 14%, the alternate rate has also been increased correspondingly. The revised rate of service tax / alternate rate in the case of air travel agent will be as under:-

- (i) Domestic bookings 0.70% of basic fare
- (ii) International bookings 1.40% of basic fare

The revised alternate rate has not come into operation immediately. The revised rate will come into force as and when the revised floor rate of 14% service tax is announced by the Govt. after enactment of Finance Bill, 2015.

3. The expression "basic fare" is defined in rule 6(7) of Service Tax Rules as that part of the air fare on which commission is normally paid by the airline to the air travel agent.

4. The air travel agent exercising option to pay alternate service tax of 0.62% / 1.24% on basic fare shall continue to pay service tax at the alternate rate throughout the financial year and he is debarred from changing the option during the same financial year.

(F) CENVAT CREDIT FOR TOUR OPERATORS

1. You may recall, in the Union Budget 2014-15, the condition of not availing CENVAT credit for the tour operators in respect of input services was partially relaxed from 01.10.2014. A tour operator paying service tax on abated value was allowed to avail CENVAT credit in respect of service tax paid by the input service provider who is also working as tour operator. The input service provider / tour operator may be paying service tax either at full value or on abated value. Therefore, even if both the brothers/ tour operators are paying service tax on abated values, the tour operator obtaining services from other tour operator/counterpart can avail input service tax credit (CENVAT credit) in respect of service tax charged by the counterpart tour operator.

2. A similar facility was extended by the Govt. in the case of cab operators engaged in renting of motor cabs. A cab operator paying service tax on abated value of 40% of the gross amount can now avail CENVAT credit in respect of corresponding service tax charged by another cab operator/ service provider.

3. However, the tour operator is still not eligible to take service tax credit in respect of service tax charged by other service providers like:-

- Air travel agent;
- Rail travel agent;
- Cab operator / transporter;
- Hotel services;
- Services of tourist guide;
- Foreign currency sellers including Money Changers etc.

4. With availability of limited facility of CENVAT credit to the tour operator, he may adjust the credit availed by him during the month against payment of output service tax liability of that month and pay the balance service tax, if any, in cash. At the same time, the tour operator can collect the full amount of service tax on the abated value from the customer. In this case, the CENVAT credit availed and utilized by the tour operator will add to his profit.

5. SAFEGUARDS:-

(a) The assessee availing CENVAT credit should ensure that input service provider is working as a tour operator and not in any other capacity such as cab operator / transporter, travel agent etc. Service tax charged by the cab operator would not be eligible for CENVAT credit even if the cab operator is registered under the category of tour operator. For this purpose, the assessee should ensure that the service provider is engaged in the business of planning, organizing, arranging tours by any mode of transport. In case the service provider is providing cab only for transfers, local sightseeing etc. for the tourists, he may not be working as tour operator. The burden lies on the main tour operator regarding admissibility of CENVAT credit in respect of service tax charged by his counterpart / tour operator.

(b) The assessee availing CENVAT credit should ensure that the service provider issues an invoice which should be serially numbered with date and should contain at least the following particulars:-

- (i) Complete name and address of the service provider;
- (ii) S.T. registration number of the service provider;
- (iii) Name and address of the assessee receiving taxable service;
- (iv) Complete description and value of service provided;
- (v) Service tax payable.

In case the invoice of the service provider does not contain the above particulars, such invoice will be treated as defective invoice and would not be admissible for taking credit.

(c) The invoice of the service provider should be original copy. Photocopy or extra copy of the invoice is not acceptable.

(d) The tour operator is advised to avail CENVAT credit only after making payment to the service provider against his bill and not on receipt of bill.

(e) The CENVAT credit available in the books on the last date of the month can be utilized against payment of output service tax for that month. For example, service tax for the month of February, 2015 can be paid by 6th of March, (tax deposited electronically through internet banking). The CENVAT credit balance available in the books as on 28th February can alone be utilized for payment of output service tax liability for the month of February, 2015 though it can be discharged on 06.03.2015. In other words, CENVAT credit earned on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th March, cannot be utilized for paying output service tax for the month of February, 2015.

(f) You may recall that in the last Budget, w.e.f. 01.09.2014, the Govt. placed a time limit of 6 months for the manufacturer / service provider to

take CENVAT credit within 6 months of the date of the invoice / duty paying document and beyond 6 months it was not possible to take credit entry. Since the period of 6 months was too short, the Govt. has now relaxed this time limit to one year which is a reasonable period. The tour operators are advised to stick to this period of one year for availing credit entry from the date of input supplier's invoice and there is no provision for relaxation of condonation of delay in taking credit entry by any reason.

- (g) Since the extension of time period for taking credit entry from 6 months to one year has come into operation from 01.03.2015, the tour operators are advised to avail credit in month of March, 2015 itself if credit has not been taken in the past on any input invoice issued by the service provider on or after 01.10.2014. The enhancement of time limit of one year for availing credit is welcome relief for the industry.
- (h) The assessing availing credit is required to maintain proper record for receipt and consumption of input services including the relevant information regarding value of taxable service, name and address of the service provider, service tax charged, CENVAT credit taken and utilized etc. The details may be maintained in either manually or in EXCEL sheet or in any computer/accounting software.

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
CUSTOMS, CENTRAL EXCISE AND SERVICE TAX
KNDRIYA UTPAD SHULKH BHAWAN, TELANGKHEDI ROAD
CIVIL LINES, NAGPUR-440001**

It is brought to the notice of the Public that the new Service Tax rate of 14% has been proposed In the Finance Bill, 2015 by the Hon'ble Finance Minister on 28-02-2015. The new Service Tax rate 14% is not effective immediately and shall come into effect only from a date to be notified later. The existing rate of Service Tax is 12.36% (Inclusive Cesses)

It has come to the notice of this office that though the new Service Tax rate of 14% has not yet been given effect, some of the service tax providers have started billing & recovering the amount of Service Tax at the rate of 14% from their customers. This practice is not only completely illegal but amounts to collecting consideration from the general public which is not so required to be collected as Service Tax.

It is therefore appealed to, bring any such instance to the notice of Customs, Central Excise & Service Tax Department. The details of the nominated officers of the Department for Vidarbha Region for this purpose are, as under

Name S/Shri	A.V.Deshmukh	P.A.Thakur	A.B.Chakrovorty
Designation		Assistant Commissioner	
Commissionerate	Nagpur-I	Nagpur-II	Wardha
Office Phone No.		0712-2560596	
Mobile No.	9527544868	9822624258	9890223720

This office looks forward to your co-operation in this regard.

(Ashish Chandan)
Commissioner

IATO organizes its Active Members Meet at Hotel Tulip Inn

Hotel Tulip Inn hosted Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Active Members Meet on 4th February, 2015 as also to showcase their property.

During the meeting, Subhash Goyal, President, IATO, discussed about the growing numbers in Tourist Visa on Arrival enabled by ETA. However, the association is pleading for more traffic generating countries like Nordic countries, France, Spain, Italy and Switzerland where tourists are really facing problem with Biometric process and lot of cancellations have been reported by the citizens of these countries due to the hardships they face to get Indian visas.

Speaking while addressing the members Goyal stated, "At least for France, I have been able to defer it till May 2015 and trying for other countries. Request is to have the Biometric process on arrival at international airports and not in originating country; otherwise all our efforts will be unproductive. Now for Poland also, this biometric process deferred till 31st May on our request."

IATO has been discussing impending issues with Dr. Lalit K. Panwar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), post which MoT has decided to organize Inter Ministerial meet. The meet aims to work in sync with all concerned ministries to deliberate their sustainable growth of tourism and bottleneck areas.

On the occasion, Sarabjit Singh, Senior VP, IATO, briefed the attendees upon GET India 2015. Singh urged the members to work in unity to turn the event into a huge success.

Railway issues taken up with Minister of Railways

In order to ventilate about the 'Exorbitant increase in fares for chartering of Himalayan Heritage Train to Darjeeling' and 'Change in Schedule of Shatabdi Express Train for Delhi-Agra-Delhi', Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) wrote a letter to Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister for Railways, Government of India; P. Guha, Executive Director (Coaching), Ministry of Railways, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of Tourism (IC), Culture (IC) and Civil Aviation (IC), Government of India; and Arunendra Kumar, Chairman Railway Board, Rail Bhawan.

The association stated that the members promoting Himalayan Rail journeys especially Darjeeling Himalayan Toy Train experience informed about the exorbitant increase in chartering of the respective heritage train. Along with the complication they are facing about meeting the high cost especially the difference of high cost and cost shown in website.

According to the letter, the website of Indian Railways is showing charter of the same train at a cost of Rs. 22000/- per train. However, the railway ministry has directed them to pay an increase of about 159 per cent on the price shown in the website. Apparently, no reasons have been indicated about the exorbitant rise and the value additions provided. Therefore, the association considers it is a clear case of 'Misinformation' and 'Over Charging' on the part of the Government body.

The association further suggested that such increase should always be made with advance notice and not whimsically. This process divulges progressive lack of civic governance in every area; especially in the Railways. Concluding the letter, IATO propounded that any increase should be done with sufficient notice and website should not create confusion especially the Government website.

INDO NEPAL JOINT WORKING GROUP MEET IN DELHI



The 1st meeting of the Indo-Nepal Joint Working Group (JWG) on Tourism Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 19th February, 2015. The Indian delegation was led by Suman Billa, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and the Nepalese delegation was led by Umakanta Parajuli, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Gov-

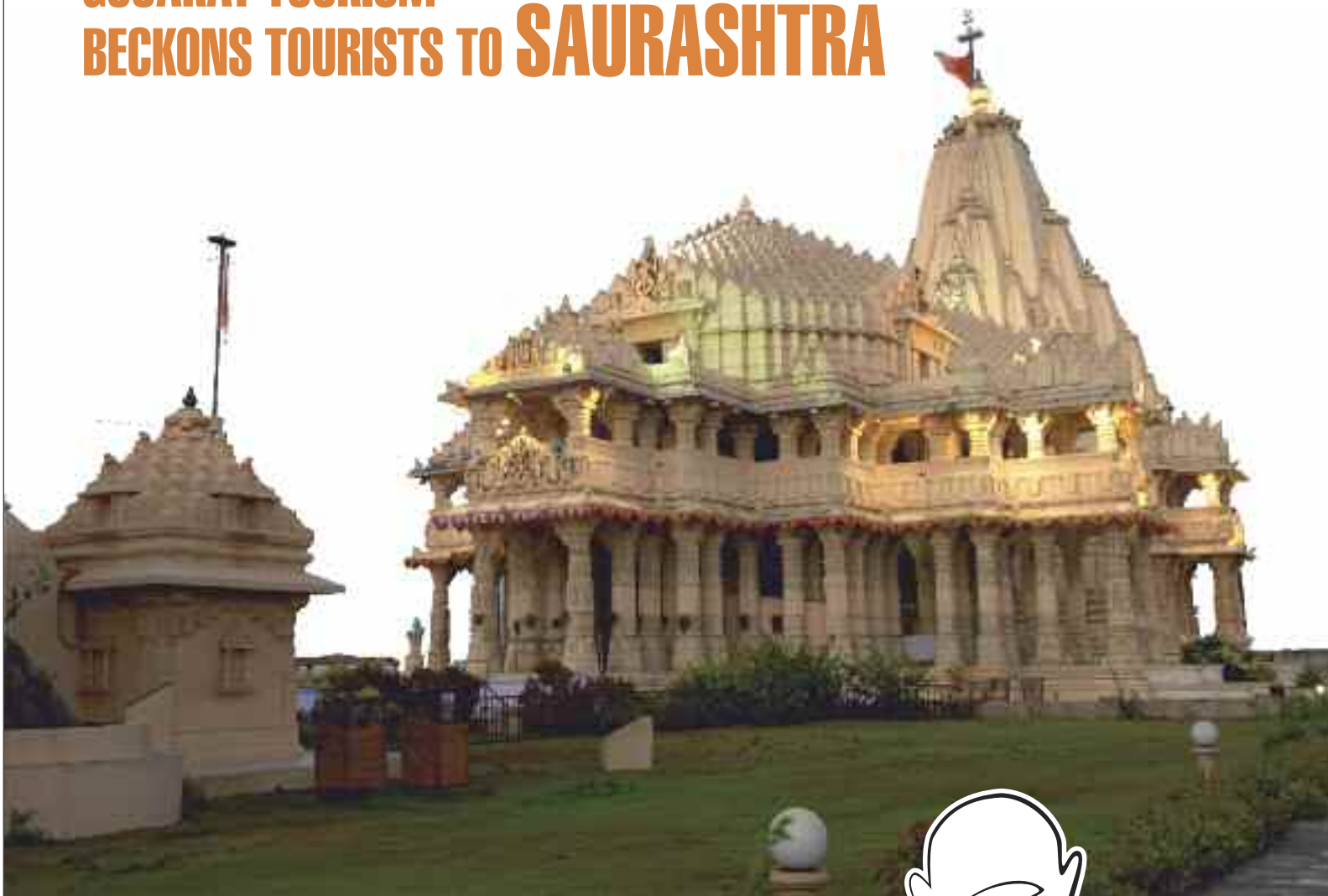
ernment of Nepal. Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) was represented by the President, Subhash Goyal and Hony. Secretary Pronab Sarkar and exchanged views on tourism cooperation related to promotion, marketing, investment in tourism and hospitality sector.

In the joint meeting both the sides focused on



promotion of (i) Buddhist Circuit, (ii) Hinder Circuit and (iii) Adventure Tourism. Exchange visits of tour operators and to promote tourism between in two countries and importance of participating in tourism fairs and events in each other's country were also focused for continuous growth of tourism between the two countries.

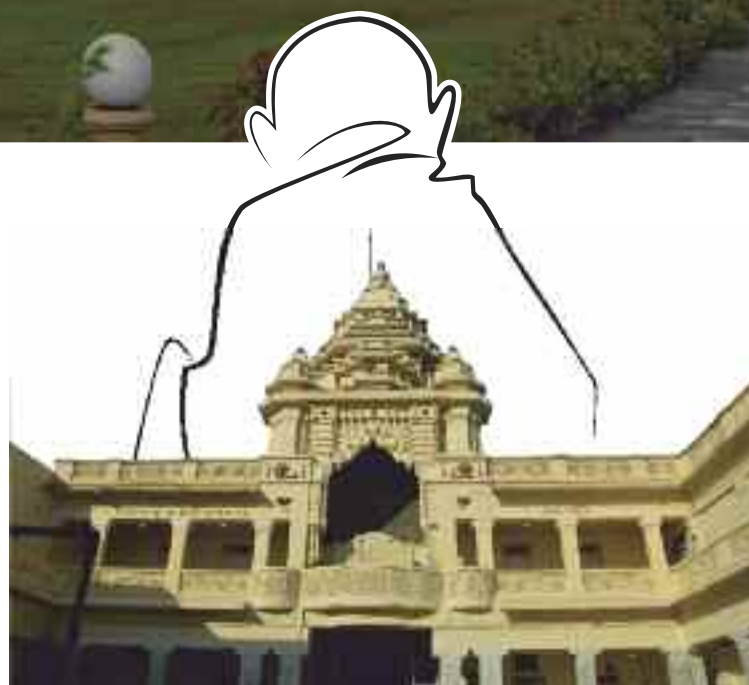
GUJARAT TOURISM BECKONS TOURISTS TO SAURASHTRA



In a decade from now, Saurashtra in Gujarat may stake claim as one of India's bustling newest industrial corridor of Gujarat with a cluster of ports serving as gateway to the world and as a maritime hub with ship-building and repair industry.

But for millions, Saurashtra, the region with pristine beaches is a fabled land that abounds in religious shrines, wildlife sanctuaries, palaces and relics of royal legacies; from the Asiatic Lions of Gir and the Jain temples of Palitana to the ancient ruins scattered in the Barda Hills. To boost the tourism in Saurashtra, Gujarat Tourism has evolved a three-nights four days package that offers tourists a great opportunity, a broad spectrum of visual delights and an unforgettable spiritual experience.

Saurashtra region offers a wide spectrum of fascinating places of holy pilgrimage centres with Lord Shiva reigning in Somnath as one of the 12 sacred Jyotir Lingas, Dev Bhoomi Dwarka, the abode of Lord Krishna, another district in the region depicting the grandeur of princely states is Porbandar, the Birth place of Mahatma Gandhi. It is also the region where one can see the edicts of emperor



Ashoka, the Mauryan ruler who helped spread Buddhism throughout south and south eastern Asia in the 3rd century BC, inscribed on the basalt rocks enroute from Girnar to Junagadh. The hills around Junagadh have Buddhist cave complexes.

Located around 12 kms from Gomti-Dwarka is the Nageshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, which attracts thousands of devotees all year round.

Saurashtra thus offers a rare combination of delving into the hoary past when our civilization advanced and flourished and also a peep into the future in the wake of development.



Surashtra is dotted with many historical structures and ruins. Bet Dwarka is the place where Lord Krishna lived. A visit to Junagadh means rendezvous with the majestic wild Asiatic lions whose one hither look will take the breath away. Gir is also the home of leopards, hyenas, crocodiles. Gir forest is one of the most diverse places in Gujarat, both in flora and fauna. Around half of the forested area of the park is the teak forest and most-sighted animal in the park is the Chital or Indian spotted deer. Gir is also home to more types of birds than any other park in Gujarat.



One of the greatest clusters of Jain monuments in Gujarat can be seen at Palitana, near the east coast of Saurashtra, where one of the most impressive temple complexes in India is situated on a sacred mountain summit, the Shatrunjaya hill. The temples are set in the nine enclosures called Tuks. Some of the best works of Jain temple architecture can be seen in the Khateshwar Tuk. The view of the temples cluster, with its massed domes and shikhars reach out to the sky provides one of the greatest sights one can eversee. The historic 863 temple complex has exquisite carvings, jewelled idols and detailed architecture, and an awesome aura of devotion.



Saurashtra Darshan Tour Package

Day 1	Friday	Rajkot, Jamnagar City sightseeing, Night halt at Dwarka	475 kms
Day 2	Saturday	Nageshwar Jyotir Linga, Rukmini Temple, Harsiddhi Mata Temple, Porbandar sightseeing, Night halt at Porbandar	190 kms
Day 3	Sunday	Visit Bhalka Tirth, Dehotsarg, Triveni sangam, Darshan at Somnath, Visit to Sasan Gir, Night halt at Junagadh	275 kms
Day 4	Monday	Junagadh local sightseeing, Visit Jalaram Temple at Virpur, Back to Ahmedabad	325 kms

Tour starts from Toran Hotel, Opp. Gandhi Ashram - Ahmedabad.
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Mumbai	18	Indigo, Go Air, Spice Jet, Air India, Jet Airways
Indore	1	Jet Airways
Chennai	5	Spice Jet, Indigo, Air Costa
Kolkata	3	Go Air, Indigo
Hyderabad	3	Spice Jet, Indigo, Air India
Bengaluru	3	Indigo, Air Costa
Pune	2	Spice Jet, Indigo
Jaipur	2	Spice Jet, Indigo

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Bhavnagar	2	MEHAIR



For more information, contact :
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www.gujarattourism.com

IATO takes decision for change in Chapter Chairman and introduces Regional Chairman

On the persistent demand from the Chapter members and keenness expressed by some members to volunteer, Executive Committee has taken a decision in the larger interest of the organization to bring in some change in some chapters. There is no aspersion on any of the previous Chapter Chairmen but this is being done with the intention of giving chance to other members. EC has also taken a landmark decision by appointing Four Regional Chapter Chairman for better coordination of IATO Activities in the region with the state governments, members and travel trade stakeholder so that IATO becomes more effective in getting benefits for the members and resolve related issues in consultation with concerned agencies.

LIST OF REGIONAL CHAPTER CHAIRMAN AND STATE CHAPTER CHAIRMAN

1. IATO REGIONAL CHAPTER CHAIRMAN

- Mr. Sunil Gupta, Chairman, Northern Region
- Mr. E.M. Najeed, Chairman, Southern Region
- Mr. J K Mohanty, Chairman, Eastern Region
- Mr. N.S. Rathor, Chairman, Western Region

2. STATE CHAPTER CHAIRMAN- REGION WISE

Northern States

- Mr. Bhim Singh, Chairman, IATO Rajasthan Chapter
- Mr. Harmit Singh, Chairman, IATO Chandigarh, Haryana & Himachal Pradesh Chapter
- Mr. Manmeet Singh, Chairman, IATO Punjab Chapter
- Mr. Gopal Rai, Chairman, IATO Madhya Pradesh Chapter
- Mr. Prateek Hira, Chairman IATO Bihar, Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand Chapter
- Mr. Khaliq Wangnoo, Chairman, IATO Jammu & Kashmir Chapter

Southern States

- Mr. Pandian K, Chairman, IATO Andaman & Nicobar & Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Chapter
- Mr. Sejo Jose, Chairman, IATO Kerala Chapter
- Mr. Ranga Reddy, Chairman, IATO Andhra Pradesh & Telengana Chapter
- Mr. S. Mahalingaiah, Chairman, IATO Karnataka Chapter

Eastern State

- Mr. Ashish Phookan, Chairman, IATO North East States
- Mr. Benjamine Simon, Chairman, IATO Odisha Chapter
- Mr. Debjit Dutta, Chairman, IATO West Bengal Chapter
- Mr. Deepak Gupta, Chairman, IATO Sikkim and North Bengal Chapter

Western State

- Mr. Martin Joseph, Chairman, IATO Goa Chapter
- Mr. Jayendrasingh Jhala, Chairman, IATO Gujarat Chapter
- Mr. Himanshu Agashiwala, Chairman, IATO Maharashtra Chapter

IATO MEMBERS PARTICIPATES IN MICROSOFT TECH DAY POWERED BY FOETRON

Microsoft, a name synonymous with technology that has shaped the present through numerous cycles of evolution over decades, had invited IATO members for an event titled 'Microsoft Tech Day powered by Foetron' on 28th March 2015 at The Oberoi Hotel New Delhi. IATO members got a sneak into what lies ahead with various sessions on technology, the right methods of adoption. The expected results as well as business impacts were also discussed. IATO has been in dialog with Microsoft for a few months now to see how they can deliver services & products to benefit their members. As a major sector in India, the travel domain has been identified as the first to enter this technology corridor, and many more such events are to follow.



Daman & Diu Administrator interacts with IATO members

In order to provide meaningful platform and prospective investors and leading stakeholders in the tourism sector to join hands in creating state-of-the-art environment for promoting Diu as a prime tourist destination, Ashish Kundra, IAS, Administrator of Union Territories of Daman & Diu had an interaction with the IATO Active Members on 26th March, 2015 at the Ethiopian Cultural Centre, New Delhi.



IATO RAISED ITS CONCERN ON THE 100 PER CENT HIKE AT GIR NATIONAL PARK

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) in regard to 'Exorbitant hike in the Safari permit charges at Gir National Park' wrote a letter to Sonal Mishra, Principal Secretary (Tourism), Government of Gujarat. The letter enunciated the hike in Safari entry permit charges at Gir National Park. The following charges have been escalated by an exorbitant 100 per cent without any prior information and valid for immediate application for the tour operators. It further stated that the charges are not applicable for pristine bookings but also for all pervious booked safaris. It implied that even confirmed Safari bookings held earlier are liable to pay the variation of the charges. In case one does not pay the difference, the safari is being cancelled and no refund is being paid for the amount paid earlier.

Due to the exorbitant prices, the difference is so big that the tour operators cannot meet the gap from their own

resources and it is quite difficult for the members to claim the prodigious from their clients in the name of policy changes and sudden decision of the government.

IATO mentioned that had this information been circulated in advance, the members would have been able to narrate the same information to the clients. Such uncertainty in state government business operations would leave a negative impact in the minds of overseas tour operators and they would avoid Gujarat. It won't be out of place to mention that as it is, there are many problems faced by tourists in absence of availability of permits at Gir, where only limited numbers of permits are issued with many restrictions. Such limitations are deterrent to boost Gujarat destinations.

Therefore, the association requested the Principal Secretary of Tourism to reconsider about the 100 per cent hike and maintain status quo in the light of deleterious effect on the tourism business.

IATO widens its reach with roadshows

IATO has extended its reach to newer markets and strengthened its presence in various source markets through roadshows in consultation with Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India and the concerned India Tourism Offices. Details of the roadshows are given below:

Road Show No. 1	July 9-Krakow, Poland
United Kingdom: June 2015	July 10-Warsaw, Poland
June 15-Glasgow	
June 16-Leeds	Road Show No. 3
June 18-Birmingham	East Asia: July 2015
June 19-London	July 20-Taipei, Taiwan
Road Show No. 2	July 22-Seoul, Korea
Baltic Europe: July 2015	July 24-Busan, Korea
July 6-Riga, Latvia	July 27-Tokyo, Japan
July 7-Vilnius, Lithuania	July 29-Osaka, Japan

Road Show No. 4
Europe: October 2015
October 5-Belgrade, Serbia
October 7-Zagreb, Croatia
October 8-Sofia, Bulgaria
Road Show No. 5
USA: August 2015
Roadshows have been planned for USA also for which dates will be announced soon

India Festival in China

India's traditional hand crafts including cotton and linen crafts, paintings unfolded before spectators a feast of rich Indian Handicraft Heritage. This has created good interest to visit India from China.

IATO represented in a big way at ITB Berlin

ITB Berlin is an annual trade show organized during 5-8 March, 2015 in Berlin (Germany). The trade fair is looking at the long term opportunities for tourism, its high growing economic value, whilst addressing key issues. The longest tourism fair is a premier meeting place for the Travel Trade Industry and a forum for establishing high quality customer contacts and conducting business.

IATO members have joined India National Pavilion and many members have their own stand outside India Pavilion also. "India Pavilion was well-setup and gave us an opportunity to interact with lot of trade visitors, other exhibitors on a one to one basis. As tour operators we always like to meet our counterparts, in overseas personally so that we can understand the needs of the clients better from these tour operators and that too all under one roof," said Sushil K Singh, Managing Director, Jatak Travels (one of the participant at India Pavilion at ITB).



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IATO SUGGESTS MEASURES TO MHA FOR PROMOTION OF TOURISM

In order to communicate more advanced measures to maintain the safety and security of the tourists in India, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) writes a letter to Usha Sharma, Additional Director General (Tourism), Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India.

The letter stated the prior discussion of the association held in sight of Dr. Lalit, K. Panwar, Secretary (Tourism), MoT. The discussion concluded with the Tourism Secretary on the pretext of providing free Sim card to international tourists coming to India on tourist visa with minimum talk time with compliments of the Ministry.

During the meeting, it was also decided to invite suggestions from the industry. Therefore, IATO recommended certain measures for the safety and security of the tourists, which was submitted to the PS to Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Suggestions for the Ministry of Home Affairs

(MHA) regarding promotion of tourism were:

- MHA currently controls access to all mountaineering peaks in open and restricted areas. We have been trying to get them to declare all peaks up to 6000 Mts. (in open areas) to be declared open for climbing.
- Currently there is a requirement to get special clearances for these peaks that can taken up to a period of 4-6 months and still cannot be guaranteed.
- Similarly, it implies for trekking into border areas in Ladakh, Himachal and the North East. Our neighbours allow open traffic of foreign nationals in these areas however; these are off limits for Indian operators. If we need to stake a claim to these areas the best way forward is to allow tourists to explore and visit these areas.
- Use of Satellite Phones which has been announced but not yet practiced.
- Mountain Rescue for stranded trekkers and climbers. One has to rely on the goodwill of the Indian Air Force or Army to make this

happen. If we can crack this and hand over this job to NDRF or a similar body backed by a policy then we will automatically attract many adventurers. Nepal is a classic example for quick reaction to mountain rescues.

- 4 Digit SOS number related to security of tourists all over India.
- Touts and Beggars operating at airports and railways stations need to be controlled by the Police.
- Uniform dress code for Police in all states.
- Tourist friendly police officers with English speaking abilities.
- Police Assistance at main tourist spots.
- Highway Patrol on major tourist routes.
- Signages/ Display about the information of nearest police station/police control room, near to the railways stations, airports, bus stand and major tourist spots.
- All airports/railway stations in all major tourist cities, taxis should have tracking GPS system he above were some of the points which could immediately give.

IATO coordinates with ASI for Full Moon night viewing of Taj Mahal

Sunil C. Gupta, Regional Chapter Chairman- Northern Region (NR) had arranged to get the information from Superintending Archaeologist Agra Circle and with Director General (ASI) to inform us the details/ dates for Full Moon for night viewing of Taj Mahal for 2015-16. The details provided by the Director General (ASI) for Full Moon, night viewing of Taj Mahal for 2015-16 is:

- The Taj Mahal by moonlight shall be open on Full moon day, two days before and two days post the full moon.
- On every Friday, it shall remain closed.
- The entrance tickets presently are as follows:
Adult: Foreigners- Rs 750/- Indians- Rs 510/-
Children: 3-15 years: Foreigners- Rs 500/- Indians- Rs 500/-
- The tickets will be issued only one day in advance through ASI, Agra office; there is no same day issue of tickets. The timings for ticket purchase are 1000-1700 hours.
- The tickets are computer printed individually with full details of the guests and are non-transferable.
- ASI needs following details in advance on the application form for all guests:

Foreigners: Scan passport copy with name, gender, passport number, age and nationality

Indians: Full names with gender age and scan copy of any ID with photo for all guests.

- ASI shall allot tickets for any batch as per availability. The tickets are issued from the first batch onwards.
- The guests shall have to reach at Shilpgram parking on their own 30 minutes prior along with ticket and identity card / passport and then shall be taken under police escort in battery van and back. There is no charge for battery van.
- The guests are permitted for only 30 minutes inside the Taj Mahal and entry is only till first red sandstone platform of main gate.
- Video cameras, tripod, mobile phones, cigarettes and hand bags are not permitted. Only handheld still cameras and binoculars are permitted without any extra charge.
- The timings are 2030-2400 hours. Eight batches of 50 persons. Total 400 visitors per day.
- Guides are not allowed free and if required separate full ticket as applicable to Indians (Rs 510/-) shall have to be purchased.
- Taj Mahal for moonlight visits shall not be open to visitors during the month of Ramadan.



FTAs show an increase of 5.3% in March 2015

The following are the important highlights regarding Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism during the month of March 2015.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs):

FTAs during the Month of March 2015 were 7.30 lakh as compared to FTAs of 6.93 lakh during the month of March 2014.

- There has been a growth of 5.3% in March 2015 over March 2014.
- FTAs during the period January- March 2015 were 22.81 lakh with a growth of 3.2%, as compared to the FTAs of 22.10 lakh with a growth of 7.9% in January- March 2014.
- The percentage share of FTAs in India during March 2015 among the top 15 source countries was highest from UK (12.52%) followed by USA (12.35%), Bangladesh (12.28%), Sri Lanka (4.40%), Germany (4.28%), Canada (3.39%), Malaysia (3.26%), France (3.24%), Japan (2.71%), Australia (2.67%), Thailand (2.67%), China (2.55%), Russian Fed. (2.31%), Singapore (1.70%) and Afghanistan (1.58%). These top 15 countries accounts for 71.91% of total FTAs during March 2015.
- The percentage share of FTAs in India during March 2015 among the top 15 ports was highest at Delhi Airport (32.4%) followed by Mumbai Airport (16.7%), Chennai Airport (7.8%), Haridaspur Land check post (6.7%), Bengaluru

Airport (5.6%), Cochin Airport (4.0%), Kolkata Airport (3.8%), Goa Airport (3.3%), Sonauli Land Check post (3.2%), Hyderabad Airport (2.6%), Amritsar Airport (1.7%), Trivandrum Airport (1.5%), Ahmedabad Airport (1.4%), Gede Rail (1.4%) and Tiruchirapalli Airport (1.2%). These top 15 ports accounts for 93.3% of total FTAs during March 2015.

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs):

FEEs during the month of March 2015 were Rs. 10,451 crore as compared to Rs. 10,152 crore in March 2014. FEEs in US\$ terms during the month of March 2015 were US\$ 1.674 billion as compared to FEEs of US\$ 1.662 billion during the month of March 2014.

- The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms during March 2015 over March 2014 was 2.9%.
- FEEs from tourism in rupee terms in January-March 2015 were Rs. 33,036 crore with a growth of 1.7% as compared to the FEE of Rs. 32,473 during January-March 2014.
- The growth rate in FEEs in US\$ terms in March 2015 over March 2014 was 0.7% compared to a decline of 5.3% in March 2014.
- FEEs from tourism in US\$ terms during January-March 2015 were US\$ 5.310 billion with a growth of 1.1% as compared to the US\$ 5.253 billion with a decline of 6.9% during January-March 2014.

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

PERCENTAGE SHARE
OF FTAs IN INDIA
DURING FEBRUARY
2015 AMONG TOP 15
SOURCE COUNTRIES

12.52%
UK

12.35%
USA

12.28%
Bangladesh

4.40%
Sri Lanka

4.28%
Germany

3.39%
Canada

3.26%
Malaysia

3.24%
France

2.71%
Japan

2.67%
Australia

ETA enabled by TVoA grow by 1220% in March 2015

Government of India launched Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) enabled by Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) for 43 countries. The Government extended this Scheme to the citizens of Guyana in January, 2015. The following are the important highlights of tourists arrived by ETA enabled TVoA during March, 2015:

- During the month of March 2015, a total of 25,851 tourist arrived by ETA enabled TVoA as compared to 1,958 TVoA during the month of March 2014, registering a growth of 1220.3%.
- During January- March 2015, a total of 75,859 tourist arrived by ETA enabled TVoA as compared to 5,841 TVoA during January- March 2014, registering a growth of 1198.7%.
- This high growth may be attributed to introduction of ETA enabled TVoA for 44 countries as against coverage of earlier TVoA scheme for 12 countries only.
- The percentage share of top 10 source countries for ETA enabled TVoA, in India during March 2015, were as follows: USA (33.25%), Germany (14.64%), Russian



Federation (13.13%), Australia (8.37%), Republic of Korea (6.39%), Ukraine (4.21%), Mexico (2.93%), Japan (1.99%), New Zealand (1.91%) and Israel (1.68%).

- The percentage shares of different ports for ETA enabled TVoA, in India during March 2015, were as follows: New Delhi (47.32%), Mumbai (18.55%), Goa (12.03%), Bengaluru (6.27%), Chennai (5.60%), Hyderabad (2.93%), Kolkata (2.78%), Kochi (2.68%) and Trivandrum (1.84%).

MEMBER EXPRESSED HAPPINESS ON IATO'S INTERVENTION FOR SETTLEMENT OF DUES

16th February 2015

To the respected office
bearers of IATO,

First and foremost, my sincere
thanks for taking out time to
attend to my complaint. It is
certainly evident that without
your intervention in the matter, a
solution would not have been
possible.

I do acknowledge that the amount
of Rs. 7,227/- has been refunded
to me, needless to mention, after
a lot of follow up.
I would just end my conversation
here thanking IATO for their
efforts and help once again.

Regards,
Deepa Sachdeva

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPROVED TILL 11th FEBRUARY, 2015

IATO Membership continues to increase and the importance of IATO members in the minds
of overseas operators is gaining. The Secretariat gets lot of queries from overseas agents/tourists
to check whether the company they plan to deal is a member of IATO or not.

ACTIVE (change of status)

1. Tour Express

Deepak Gupta, Proprietor
Nitin Jain, Travel Coordinator
Email: info@tourexpressindia.com,
nitin@tourexpressindia.com
Tel: 011-26170177
Web: www.tourexpress.in

Email: arun@worldwideyatra.com,
bookings@worldwideyatra.com
Tel: 011-45171111
Web: www.worldwideyatra.com

ALLIED

1. Trip Planners World Pvt. Ltd.

Sanjeev Gulati, Managing Director
Email: sgulati@tripplannersworld.travel
Tel: 022-26828082
Web: www.tripplannersworld.travel

6. Eternal Glories

Kunwar Anurag, Proprietor
Email: e.glories@gmail.com
Tel: 0562-2602660
Web: www.enternalglories.com

2. Eternal Journeys Pvt. Ltd.

Mahendra Singh Rawat, Director
Email: office@eternaljourneys.in,
msr@eternaljourneys.in
Tel: 0120-4121692, 8800700112-113
Web: www.eternaljourneys.in

7. Carmel India Tours Pvt. Ltd.

Boby K. Mathew, Managing Director
Nitin Sharma, General Manager
Email: boby@carmelindiataours.com,
nitin@carmelindiataours.com
Tel: 011-40591595, 42058095
Web: www.carmelindiataours.com

3. La Esperanza Tours & Travels

Vandana Dhingra, Proprietor
Email: holidays@la-esperanza.co.in, vandna.dhin-
gra@la-esperanza.co.in
Tel: 0124-4381042, 4381043
Web: www.la-esperanza.co.in

8. World Escapes India Pvt. Ltd.

Arun Kapoor, Director Sales
Anil Sharma, Director Mktg.
Email: arun.kapoor@worldescapes.co.in,
asia@worldescapes.co.in
Tel: 011-65459595
Web: www.worldescapes.co.in

4. Shriansh Tours

Vijay Kumar Sharma, President
Email: info@shrianshtours.com,
vijay@shrianshtours.com
Tel: 0562-2217020
Web: www.shrianshtours.com

9. Khanna Travels And Holidays

Manoj Khanna, Partner
Vinod Khanna, Partner
Email: manoj@khannatravels.com,
vinod@khannatravels.co.in
Tel: 022-41555555
Web: www.khannatravels.com

5. Delhi Air Movers Travel & Tours (P) Ltd.

Arun Sharma, Managing Director
Abhinav Sharma, Director

10. Aptierre India Travel

Archana Manchanda, Proprietor
Email: aptierre@gmail.com
Tel: 011-43048468
Web: www.indien-reisen.com

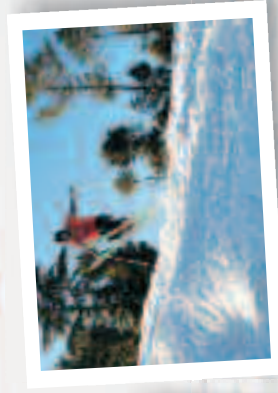
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For further details: Central Reservation Office, Coffee Home, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, (Opposite Hanuman Temple)
Connaught Place, New Delhi- 110001, Telephone No: +91-11-23365358/23363607, Mobile:9899692790

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Delhi Tourism



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