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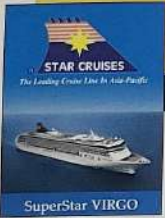
SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

# TRAVTALK

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## Mission MOT: Visa, Connectivity

In addition to proposing 16 countries for VoA, the MOT is also keen on boosting international and domestic air connectivity, while making India attract tourists across price points.

**VIVEK SETHI**

Addressing the gathering of global media at ITB-Berlin on March 6, 2013, K Chiranjeevi, Minister of State for Tourism (Independent Charge) announced that MOT will be focusing on easing visa process, facilitating affordability and enhancing air international and domestic air connectivity in India.

The move is in line with the ministry's ambition to garner one per cent of global



K Chiranjeevi addressing the press at ITB 2013, while other dignitaries look on

international arrivals during the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan Period.

"It is important to make visa procedures faster. I had

met Sushilkumar Shinde, Union Home Minister,

Government of India before leaving for ITB Berlin, 2013 and submitted a proposal to extend Visa-on-Arrivals to 16 more countries," said Chiranjeevi.

Presently, the Tourist VoA facility is being granted by immigration officers at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata airports to the citizens of eleven countries viz. Singapore, New Zealand, Luxembourg, Japan, Finland, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Philippines, Indonesia and

Contd. on page 14 ▶

**Chiranjeevi prods MHA and states on safety**

See full story on page 5 ▶

**Indian hotel room fares are the best**

See full story on page 13 ▶

**Airfare war, but it's a short term gain**

See full story on page 22 ▶

**Old monuments, but steady visitors**

See full story on page 28 ▶

## National Tourism Awards



President Pranab Mukherjee presented the National Tourism Awards for the year 2011-12 to Select World Tours and Kuoni Travel. Every year, the Ministry of Tourism presents these awards to felicitate efforts put in by stakeholders in the tourism sector. This year, 86 awards were presented in 36 different categories

See details on page 28 ▶

## Low-cost airports is the next step

New policy is in the offing which will boost operations from regional airports, says Ajit Singh, Union Minister for Civil Aviation.



**Ajit Singh**  
Union Minister for Civil Aviation

See full story on page 14 ▶

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**COVER STORY**

**India round-the-year**

► Contd. from page 1

Myanmar; for a maximum validity of 30 days.

An independent study conducted by the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM) has noted that TVOA scheme has a significant and positive impact on the decision to travel to India. In fact, the Ministry of Tourism had also proposed extension of TVOA to more airports like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Goa, Bodhgaya and Trivandrum.

The Ministry of Tourism had proposed extension of TVOA to Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Sweden and Norway to cover the

European and Scandinavian countries; Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to cover the emerging markets from the CIS countries; Brazil and South Africa to cover foster IBSA Cooperation, Trinidad & Tobago to foster the country's historical links; Thailand, Malaysia and Brunei to cover all the ASEAN countries.

Keeping in mind the recent travel trends, the Ministry of Tourism has also proposed TVOA scheme for South Korea, which is a very important tourism-generating market.

Anand Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, also apprised the global mediapersons that

efforts are being made in terms of boosting air international connectivity and also making India a round-the-year destination that attracts tourists across all price points, who are willing to experience Incredible India.

**In the offing**

The MOT had proposed extension of TVOA to Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Sweden and Norway, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Brazil and South Africa, Trinidad & Tobago, Thailand, Malaysia and Brunei to cover all the ASEAN countries.

► Contd. from page 1

**New policy for airlines**



After expressing his view on low cost airports boom in India ("I must say that if the first Indian aviation boom is due to low cost carriers, the next aviation boom will come from low cost airports"), Ajit Singh, Union Civil Aviation Minister of India recently divulged information about a soon-to-be-announced policy to boost the growth of regional air-connectivity in India. Under the route dispersal guidelines of current aviation policy, Indian carriers are required to fly to Tier II and III cities including regions of Jammu & Kashmir and North East which are not making commercial sense to the airlines. Thus, the Civil Aviation

and inclusive providing connectivity to Tier II and Tier III cities and remote and difficult areas of the country. Apart from the development of low frill airports, the gov-

provide extended frequency in smaller cities having low-frill airports or just an airstrip. Each available seat-km operated by regional carrier could be given one 'credit' and then

Instead of national carriers flying bigger aircraft with half loads, regional carriers can operate with smaller aircraft and better loads; enhancing regional connectivity

Ajit Singh, Union Civil Aviation Minister of India

ernment is in the process of formulation of a policy for promotion of regional and remote area connectivity in

be auctioned off to national carriers who can use such credits to meet their requirement of having to connect regional and remote areas without having to lose money on such routes. So, instead of national carriers flying bigger aircraft with half loads, regional carriers can operate with smaller aircraft and better loads; thus creating win-win situation for the market and enhancing regional connectivity in the country.

**Connecting India!**

With the formulation of new policy to give boost to the regional air connectivity, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has also geared up to build airports in smaller cities and towns. It has already upgraded 30 non-metro airports and four will be upgraded this year. Additionally, it has undertaken the job of modernising 28 new airports along with upgrading undeveloped and inactive airstrips which can handle small-sized aircrafts.

Ministry plans to replace the existing guidelines with a new policy to incentivise airlines to fly to regional airports which includes code sharing and seat credit mechanism among airlines. The ministry is also creating a fund—the Essential Air Services Fund (EASF)—for providing a direct subsidy to encourage domestic airlines to fly to remote areas

India incentivising the Indian carriers to operate on these routes including code sharing and seat credit mechanism. I expect this policy prescriptions will provide much needed driving force to Indian carriers to provide air connectivity to large number of smaller towns and remote areas."

The seat credit mechanism will create a win-win situation for regional and national carriers. Under this, the regional operators would operate at high seat factors with smaller aircrafts and

Singh said, "It is an idea. We are discussing the same with the airline. If we mandate an airline to fly to North East and it is unable to operate, it would be able to trade seats under this new policy. It will be similar to carbon credits." However, when asked when is the ministry aiming to introduce the policy, Singh says, "We will soon announce it."

**New Tidings**

This soon to be announced policy will hopefully boost the growth of regional air service in the country

## ITDC: A makeover in the process

▶ Contd. from page 6

Event Management, Duty Free / Travel Retail, Light & Sound shows, etc., renamed as Ashok Events (erstwhile Ashok Reservation & Marketing Services). This event management arm has been managing the flagship events of the Ministry of Tourism but is now getting offers of managing events of other ministries. "In the last two years, Ashok Events have managed events of 20 different ministries, nationally and internationally," Panwar said. ITDC has trained 7000 youths in the last two years under 'Hunar Se Rozgar Tak' scheme by providing two months skill training and aims to train 10,000 students per year for the entire 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan through their

In the last two years, Ashok Events has managed events of 20 different ministries

Lalit K Panwar  
Vice Chairman & Managing Director,  
ITDC

16 hotels. Further, it is conducting 'light & sound' shows at 20 heritage monuments and there are 20 additional requests to look into. It is also becoming aggressive in the Duty Free / Travel Retail division where it has opened seaport shops and is adding airport shops in Coimbatore and Goa.

Someone in the conference asked if ITDC (or MOT) needs a brand ambassador to promote itself more... the answer to that was the Minister of Tourism himself; a popular actor, said ITDC Head. Now the question is; Will K Chiranjeevi really give a performance for a tourism and hospitality blockbuster? The travel trade is optimistic but it will have to again wait and watch, surely not for another 22 years...

## Chiranjeevi bats for Clean India, more infrastructure



K Chiranjeevi, Minister of Tourism (Independent Charge), has urged the corporate world to join hands with MOT to promote Campaign Clean India. During an interaction with CII Tourism committee members, the Minister announced setting up of six MICE centres in the country. He also said that world-class culinary institutes will be set up at Tirupati, Kolkata and Noida by the end of this year.

During an interactive session with CII Tourism Committee Members on March 13 at New Delhi, K. Chiranjeevi, Minister of Tourism, shared with the stakeholders that the Incredible India campaign would be in two parts - 'Find What You Seek' and domestic campaign 'Go Beyond' urging travellers to travel beyond. During his interaction with industry members,



emphasising upon MICE, he announced the launch of six convention centres in India. Besides, he also made an announcement to establish world-class culinary institutes with the Centre at Tirupati

and centers at Kolkata and Noida in India by November/ December 2013. Reinforcing about 'Clean India' campaign, he requested industry representatives to join hands with MOT to promote this cause.

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### Aiming High

ITDC has trained 7000 youths in the last two years under 'Hunar Se Rozgar Tak' scheme by providing two months skill training and aims to train 10,000 students per year for the entire 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan through our 16 hotels

It is becoming aggressive in the Duty Free / Travel Retail division

# The National Tourism Awards go to...

This time, the National Tourism Awards have come with a difference. Before the awards ceremony took place, the Ministry of Tourism had announced the winners of the most-coveted awards of the tourism industry.



TT BUREAU

Speaking on the occasion, **K Chiranjeevi**, Minister of State for Tourism (Independent Charge) says, "This is for the first time that the winners of the National Tourism Awards are being announced before the official ceremony takes place." For

2011-2012, a total of 87 awards were given in 36 categories to the best performers in the industry. The award ceremony was held on March 18 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. President **Pranab Mukherjee** was the Chief Guest. This year, a special award was given to Yann Marten, Author of 'Life of Pi'.

### Top 4 category winners

<b>Category I</b>	<b>Category III</b>
1st: Select World Tours	1st: SDU Travel
2nd: Kuoni Travel	2nd: Caper Travel
<b>Category II</b>	3rd: Tushita Travels
1st: Minar Travels	<b>Category IV</b>
2nd: Abercrombie & Kent India	1st: Travelite
3rd: Trail Blazer Tours	2nd: GB Morrison Travels
	3rd: Travel Spirit International



National Tourism Awards 2011-12 ceremony at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi

## Award Winners 2011-2012

Travel Operators	Hotels	States
<b>Travel Agent/Inbound Tour Operator</b> <b>Category V</b> 1st: Indian Trails Sourcing Services 2nd: Adventure World 3rd: Tour Masters <b>Category VI</b> 1st: Pioneer Personalised Holidays 2nd: Welcome Travels 3rd: Special Holidays Travel <b>► Tourist Transport Operator</b> <b>Category I</b> 1st: Ajay Travel 2nd: Carzonrent 3rd: KTC <b>Category II</b> 1st: Touraids Travel Services 2nd: Rajindra Bus Service 3rd: Ex-Soldiers Tourist Taxi Service <b>Category III</b> 1st: Delhi Airport Service 2nd: Shreya Travels <b>► Domestic Tour Operator</b> 1st: Southern Travels 2nd: My Leisure Breaks 3rd: Panicker's Travel (India) <b>► Adventure Tour Operator</b> <b>Sea &amp; Sky Travel</b> <b>► Tour Operator Promoting Niche Segments other than Adventure and MICE</b> Thomas Cook (I) Ltd <b>► Most Innovative Tour Operator</b> Far Horizon Tours <b>► Best MICE Operator</b> Select World Tours <b>► Best Overseas Tour Operator to India from North America</b> Indus Travels, Canada	<b>► Best Hotel</b> Five Star Deluxe: The Oberoi, New Delhi Five Star: Vivanta by Taj - Ambassador, New Delhi Four Star: Vivanta by Taj Kumarakom, Kerala Three Star: Gateway Hotel Vadodara, Gujarat <b>► Best Heritage Hotel</b> Basic: Samode Haveli, Gangapole, Jaipur, Rajasthan Grand: Savoy Hotel, Ooty <b>► Best Eco Friendly Hotel</b> ITC Hotel, ITC Maurya, New Delhi <b>► Best Standalone Convention Centre</b> Hyderabad International Convention Centre, Hyderabad <b>► Best Hotel-based Meeting Venue</b> The Ashok, New Delhi <b>► Best Wellness Centre</b> Somatheeram Ayurvedic Hospital and Yoga Centre Kovalam, Kerala	<b>► Best State/Union Territory, Comprehensive Development of Tourism</b> 1st: Andhra Pradesh 2nd: Rajasthan 3rd: Gujarat <b>► Best State: Campaign Clean India</b> Arunachal Pradesh <b>► Best Tourism Promotion Publicity Material</b> Karnataka <b>► Best Tourism Film 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki'</b> Gujarat Tourism <b>► Most Innovative Use of Information Technology</b> Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited Special Prize: Arunachal Tourism <b>Miscellaneous</b> <b>► Best Airport</b> Class X Cities: Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad Rest of India: Visakhapatnam Airport, Visakhapatnam

### Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat win big

Andhra Pradesh wins seven awards while Gujarat bags three at the National Tourism Awards 2011-2012.

With seven awards, Andhra Pradesh was the biggest winner at the National Tourism Awards 2011-2012 that was presented in Delhi recently. The state got the first prize for best state in Comprehensive Development of Tourism. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation got Best Civic Management of a Tourist Destination while Warangal City was adjudged the Best Heritage City. The state's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad and Vishakhapatnam Airport got the Best Airport in Class X Cities and Rest of India respectively. Apollo Health City, Hyderabad was the also awarded the Best Medical Tourism Facility while The Hyderabad International Convention Centre got the award for the Best Standalone Convention Centre.

Gujarat Tourism was among the big winners at the award ceremony. The state tourism bagged three National Tourism Awards for best tourism film, innovative use of information and technology and was also adjudged one of the best states for comprehensive development of tourism in the country.

The state government's tourism campaign, 'Khushboo Gujarat Ki' featuring Amitabh Bachchan was awarded the prestigious National Tourism Award 2011-12 in the Best Tourism Film category. Gujarat Tourism Minister Saurabh Patel and Sanjay Kaul, MD, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL) received the awards from President Pranab Mukherjee at a function held in Delhi. K Chiranjeevi, Minister of State for Tourism and Parvez Dewan, Secretary, MOT were also present at the occasion.

Gujarat was adjudged the third best state in Comprehensive Development of Tourism while Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited also received the award for Most Innovative Use of Information Technology.

Among the northeastern states, Arunachal Pradesh bagged an award in the Best State: Campaign Clean India category apart from winning a special prize for Most Innovative Use of Information Technology.



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# ITB Berlin Convention turns 10 this year

The world's leading travel trade show, International Tourismus Borse (ITB 2013) was held from March 6-10. Over 170,000 visitors, among which 113,000 were trade visitors and 11,000 represented companies from 180 countries, displayed their products and services at this leading B2B platform of the tourism industry. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, UNWTO representatives, the PATA, the WTTC, as well as more than 100 ministers of tourism and state secretaries, met in Berlin to help shape the future for growth in the tourism industry.

