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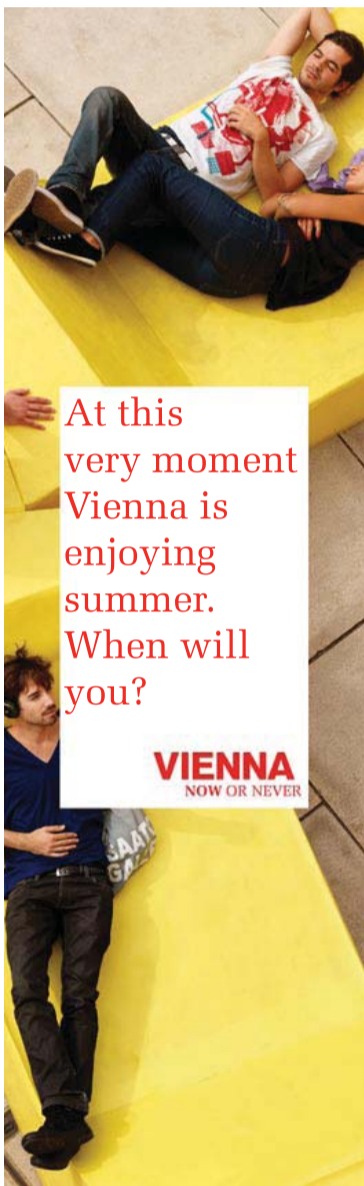


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E-ticket racket at Indian Railways

Agents overcharged passengers and hacked website...

It's the great Indian Railways (IRCTC) e-ticketing rip-off. An illegal network of agents has been uncovered charging passengers up five times the INR20 e-ticketing fee and hacking into the Railways website to corner tatkal tickets in bulk.

The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), the principal agency for ticketing, has recently stumbled upon this scam, Times of India said. Sources was quoted saying that sub-agents had developed a software package through which they hack into the IRCTC website during the opening hours of 8am to 9am and book tatkal tickets. The report said the IRCTC has set up an anti-fraud squad at the internet ticketing centre. In the past three months, the department has launched surprise raids on about 150 sub-agents. Now, it has fixed the rules for booking e-tickets. First, only a single user can register on one email ID to book tickets and agents would



not be permitted to book tatkal or normal tickets between 8am to 9am when the IRCTC website opens.

Second, registration of all new principal and sub-agents has been stopped.

The report said travel agents had created several IDs to apply for e-tickets, which were later de-activated. In June alone, the department deactivated around 2,831 multiple user IDs used to issue e-tickets. An IRCTC official

was quoted saying, "It has been found that passengers are charged somewhere between INR100 and 200 for every e-ticket, but no acknowledgement slip or receipt is given. "Instead passengers are told these charges are included in the price of the fare. Also, agents are supposed to charge a fee for every PNR number, but they charge for every passenger on a particular ticket."

Airlines await India approval to fly in A380

Foreign airlines are still waiting for approval from India to fly its A380, Bloomberg reported.

The government has not acted on requests to change regulations that bar overseas carriers from flying aircraft bigger than the Boeing 747 into the country, which rules out the A380. Emirates, together with Lufthansa, are eager to tap India's growing travel market with the A380, the world's biggest passenger aircraft. They have run up against policies that protect state-owned Air India Ltd, according to Rishikesh Krishna, a professor of corporate strategy at the Indian Institute of Management in Bengaluru. "All these measures are to shore up Air India and they completely distort the market," Krishna was quoted saying. Nasim Zaidi, secretary at the Ministry of Civil Aviation, had declined to comment when asked if the government was delaying A380 approvals to help Air India. An Air India spokesperson had also declined to comment, and Air India Chairman Arvind Jadhav did not respond to queries from Bloomberg.

The A380 offers a "significant cost advantage to airlines, allowing them to price tickets cheaper," Amber Dubey, a Gurgaon-based director at auditing and consulting company KPMG, was quoted saying.

Lufthansa, which flies to seven destinations in India with 52 weekly flights, is ready to operate the A380 to New Delhi as soon as India allows the service, the airline was reported saying to Bloomberg.

Clinton "encouraged" by revived India-Pakistan talks

US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said that the United States was "encouraged" by the revived peace talks between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan.

Clinton spoke at a news conference after she talked with top Indian officials about Pakistan, the US withdrawal plans for Afghanistan and ways to broaden economic ties between the United States and India, Associated Press reported.

Her talks came less than a week after a terror attack in Mumbai killed 20 people, in the worst terror strike in India since the 2008 rampage that killed 166 people in Mumbai.

Meanwhile, external affairs minister SM Krishna made a strong pitch with Ms Clinton to ease visa



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton calling on Indian PM Dr Manmohan Singh
Press Information Bureau

regulations that have adversely affected Indian IT companies. He urged US to give more temporary work visa for Indian IT professionals and Ms Clinton assured the minister

that she would direct her officials to look into the matter, Hindustan Times said.

She is now in Chennai.

Delhi airport get sister airport in Incheon

The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) and South Korea's Incheon International Airport are now 'sister airports' allowing them to share technical, commercial and environmental best practices.

In a first for IGI, a sister airport agreement was signed by GMR Airports Holding Ltd (GAHL), which operates IGI airport and GHIAL in Hyderabad, with the Incheon International Airport Corporation, Indian Express said.




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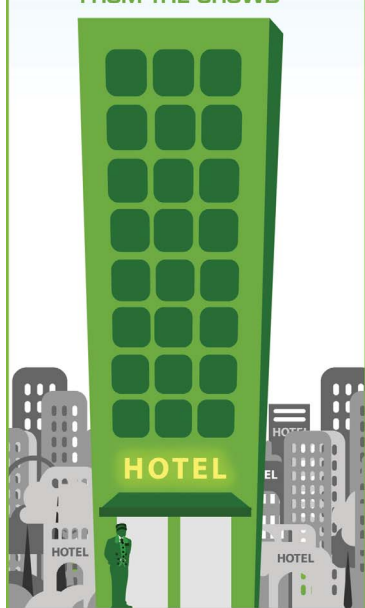



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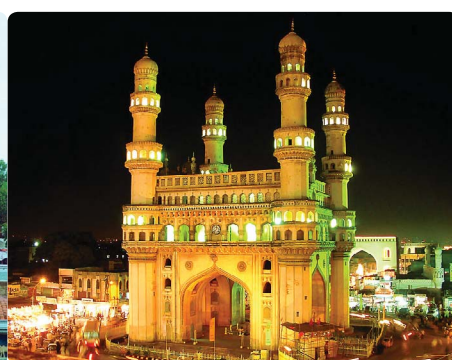
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Andhra Pradesh top tourist destination: ministry

Locals also flock to Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu...



With Tirupati temple attracting hordes of visitors, Andhra Pradesh has become the top tourist destination in India, recording 155.8 million domestic tourists last year.

According to NDTV.com, citing data from the Tourism Ministry, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu came in at second and third positions respectively with 144.8 million and 111.6 million domestic tourists. "Tirupati temple in Andhra attracts maximum tourists. In fact, the number of domestic tourists visiting the state is more than Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra which have Taj Mahal and Ajanta Ellora respectively," a senior Tourism Ministry official was quoted saying.

The number of domestic tourists across the country touched 740 million last year, up 10.7% over the previous year.

The other states which made

it to the top ten Indian tourist destinations are Maharashtra (48.5 million), Karnataka (38.2 million), Madhya Pradesh (38.1 million), Uttarakhand (30.2 million), Rajasthan (25.5 million), West Bengal (21.1 million) and Gujarat (18.9 million). The report said some 17.9 million foreign tourists visited India last year, registering a 24.4% increase year-on-year. Maharashtra attracted the maximum of 5.1 million foreigners, followed by Tamil Nadu (2.8 million) and Uttar Pradesh (1.7 million).

The other states and Union Territories which attracted significant number of foreign tourists are Delhi (1.9 million), Uttar Pradesh (1.7 million), Rajasthan (1.3 million), West Bengal (1.2 million).

Traditional tourist haunts such as Kerala and Goa received less than a million each.

Virgin offers freebies for Indian students

With new academic session in universities in the US and the UK beginning soon, Virgin Atlantic airlines of Britain said it would offer free baggage and other offers for students traveling to those countries.

The airlines announced increase in free baggage allowance of 46kg for students travelling to the US and the UK, Indian Express said.

Apart from it, the airline would also be providing free holiday package for parents or two friends

of a lucky flyer, which would be valid from 16 July till 31 October. "The holiday package for one lucky student includes two complimentary return air tickets from Delhi to London on Virgin Atlantic as well as three nights hotel accommodation in London and three tickets each to the city's major tourist landmarks including The London Eye, Madame Tussaud's, The Tower of London, Ripley's Believe It or Not, Hop On Hop Off tour," a statement from the airline said.

THE DAY IN NUMBERS

5
Hilton is to add five more properties in India this year

12
Number of Kingfisher flights delayed yesterday because of fuel supplies disruption over a payment issue

46
Virgin Atlantic is offering free baggage of 46kg for Indian students heading to the UK and US.

90
The fleet size of new Mercedes Benz cars bought by Delhi-based car rental company Carzonrent India to meet rising demand.

155.8
Number of domestic tourists in millions that Andhra Pradesh attracted last year.

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Delhi car rental company buys Mercedes fleet

Delhi-based car rental company Carzonrent India has purchased a record number of 90 Mercedes Benz cars from the company dealer. Times of India said it was the biggest single deal made by the company in the country. Each customized, gold-tinged C-class Merc costs more than INR 28 lakh.

Rajiv Vij, managing director of the firm, said in the report that the new fleet would add to the existing fleet of Mercedes Benz. In 2008, it bought 70 such cars. Vij said demand was rising for luxury vehicles in cities like Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad.

"Today, almost 25% of our car rental revenues come from the luxury segment," he was reported saying, adding the company was now looking forward to build a fleet of limousines.

Kingfisher flights back to normal



Kingfisher Airlines operations returned to schedule yesterday, a day after 12 flights were delayed because fuel supplies were disrupted over a payment issue with a vendor.

"After office hours (Monday), due to a misunderstanding with one of our vendors, 12 flights out of a daily network of more than 370 flights were delayed," Kingfisher spokesman Prakash Mirpuri, was quoted saying in a Wall Street Journal report.

The airline was forced to delay the flights as Hindustan Petroleum Corp. Ltd. refused to supply because bills weren't paid, a person close to the development was quoted saying in the report.

The report added that growing losses and depleting cash flows have forced airlines to defer payments to several suppliers. Air India had to cancel a number of its flights last month after oil companies refused to give it more fuel than it could pay for.

Travelocity India files suit against Cleartrip

Travelocity India has filed a civil suit against Cleartrip in the Mumbai High Court claiming damages of US\$37.5 million (over INR165 crore) due to an alleged data theft by top executives of the rival.

Moneycontrol.com said the suit has been filed last week by online travel agencies, Desiya and Travelguru both owned by Travelocity, the company said in a statement.

In 2009 Travelocity had filed an FIR with the Gurgaon police against Cleartrip CEO Stuart Crighton and former CEO of Desiya, Amit Taneja alleging they had illegally procured various confidential information, hotel business database and know-how of its business processes, the report said.

Last August, both Crighton and Taneja underwent a procedural arrest in Gurgaon and were released on bail.

A Cleartrip spokesperson quoted in the report said: "Cleartrip believes that this civil suit is vindictive and the figures quoted are completely groundless and something we deny strongly.

"We can only assume that this has been added for additional sensationalism to this case as it seems to be losing steam".

The spokesperson further said since December 2009, senior executives of Cleartrip have been "facing continuous harassment with what Cleartrip believes to be a misconceived and baseless criminal complaint filed by a large American travel portal, Travelocity".

Cleartrip has cooperated fully with the investigating authorities and would continue to do so, the spokesperson said, adding "as the matter is sub-judice, we are not able to comment further."

Fresh equity infusion for Air India

The Government continues to back the ailing, loss making Air India. The latest is the approval by group of ministers of INR12,000 million as equity infusion to enable the state owned once Maharaja line to fly.

Another demand of the airline agreed upon is that it will get INR5,320 million from the government for operating VVIP flights and rescue flights to evacuate Indians from troubled spots.

The Group of Ministers, headed by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, will meet again next week to work out details, and look at the turnaround plan for the airline.



EYE ON EUROPE

★ German MP wants human rights info on holiday brochures

The head of the German parliament's tourism committee has called for holiday brochures to contain information about the human rights situation in the countries being advertised, although he rejected the idea of boycotts. Christian Democratic MP Klaus Brähming was quoted saying in The Local newspaper that the committee was currently discussing whether it made sense to go on holiday to countries ruled by a dictatorial regime. "I am calling for travel catalogues to voluntarily inform on how a country, among other things, deals with human rights. Positive situations will thus be rewarded. I don't believe in boycotts," Brähming had told Die Welt newspaper. "It was only with hindsight that one saw what a corrupt system the former Tunisian president Ben Ali had installed in his country. In the tourism branch business had been conducted above all with the large companies. "After the Jasmine revolution smaller tourism firms are now coming up in tourism. That creates new jobs on the ground and strengthens the economy of the country. In this respect tourism is always political."

★ Great Hotels of the World removes booking and card fees

London-based hotel sales and marketing alliance, Great Hotels of the World, has removed all booking and credit card fees from its website. The company said it is confident that the change will help to increase the number of reservations made on its website. Sonia Giaimo, Leisure Sales Manager for Great Hotels of the World said, "In the light of market changes, we have decided to remove all booking and credit card fees which we believe will enable us to stand head and shoulders apart from our competitors. In light of the recent criticism surrounding companies who utilise large credit card and booking fees, we have decided to take action and allow customers to feel at greater ease when making a reservation through us."

★ bmi to launch flights to Nice and Agadir

bmi said it would launch flights from Heathrow to Nice and Agadir later this year. The airline is to fly daily to the south of France destination on 25 August, which will be increased to twice daily from 30 October. In addition, there will be two weekly flights to Agadir, the airline's third city in Morocco, from 29 October. The carrier is also to increase its frequency to Marrakech from three to five flights per week from 1 October.

★ New marketing push for French tourism

France has launched a new campaign to attract more foreign tourists and encourage them to spend more money. The Connexion quoted Business Minister Frédéric Lefebvre as saying that he wanted France to regain the position of world number two country for tourism revenue within the next two years, after the US. Despite being the most visited country in the world, with 80 million tourists each year, France is currently in third place in terms of revenue. It generated EUR49.4bn (INR3,132 arab) from tourism in 2009, while Spain managed EUR53.2bn and the US achieved EUR93.9bn, according to the World Tourism Organisation. A new brand, Rendez-Vous en France, has been unveiled that aims to improve the visibility of France to potential holidaymakers.

★ HRG makes Olympic effort to support clients in 2012

HRG As the UK gets ready to begin its 'one year to go' countdown to the start of the London 2012 Olympics, Hogg Robinson Group (HRG) is taking extra steps to ensure that its corporate clients are supported during the Games. It is now known that 65% of London's usual 120,000 rooms will be allocated to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, (LOCOG). With a large proportion of the remainder available for the hotels themselves to sell, HRG anticipates that as little as 12,000 to 18,000 London hotel rooms will be sold into the general marketplace, significantly reducing the number available for business travellers to use. Additionally, although details on airline scheduling are still to be supplied, it is likely that capacity on in-bound flights will be reduced – which could have a knock-on effect on those travellers trying to enter the UK for business during July and August 2012, it said.



BY THE WAY

Dhoni's bat fetches INR71.8 lakh

■ The cricket bat used by India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni to hit a match-winning six in the World Cup final has fetched a staggering £100,000 (INR 71.8 lakh) at an auction, reports said. The auction was held in London on Monday to raise funds for his charitable foundation that was launched in India last year, PTI reported.av

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The number of domestic tourists visiting the state is more than Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra which have Taj Mahal and Ajanta Ellora."

A Tourism Ministry official commenting why Andhra Pradesh is tops among domestic tourists.

Air India revives LCC plan

Debt-ridden flagship carrier, Air India, is planning to boost its revenue by starting a low-cost carrier in the domestic sector, top airline sources was quoted saying in an Indian Express report.

The proposal is set to come up for the airline's board's consideration in its meeting on 27 July, it said.

"It has been proposed to overhaul Alliance Air's current operations and turn it into a low-cost domestic carrier," said a senior airline executive. Alliance Air is a fully owned subsidiary of Air India providing connectivity in the Eastern and North-Eastern sectors. "The emphasis will be on 'on-time performances (OTP) and lower fares," the executive was quoted saying.

Air India has a poor track record of OTP, and the latest (June) official data showed that it has slipped to the last spot in the domestic market.

The fleet of Alliance Air will see an addition of 14 Airbus 320 family aircraft from Air India (domestic).

"These are the older aircraft, which are currently being under-utilised. Initially, four of these will be inducted in the Alliance Air fleet," the source was reported saying.



The fares for the low-cost model will be priced at levels below Air India (domestic).

Air India is the only full service carrier in the country which does not have a full-fledged low-cost domestic arm.

This, however, will be the second such attempt for Air India to launch a low-cost airline. The Civil Aviation Ministry had earlier announced similar plans for Air India Express, its budget medium-haul international carrier in 2009.

BIZ BRIEF

Attrition highest in IT sector: Study

The information technology (IT) and healthcare sectors are witnessing the highest attrition rates - 23% - according to a study conducted by MyHiringClub.com. In contrast, the banking and financial services sector witnessed an attrition rate of 18%, followed by healthcare (12%), FMCG (11%) and automobiles and manufacturing (11%).

Cloud computing to create 1 lakh jobs

As the next technology wave, cloud computing by enterprises has the potential to create about 100,000 new jobs in India, a study said. "Of the projected US\$4.5-billion total cloud computing market in India by 2015, private cloud will account for US\$3.5 billion, generate about 100,000 additional jobs and save about 50% of cost of IT operations for Indian enterprises," the study by Zinnov Management Consulting and global IT firm EMC Corporation, said.

Hilton to expand



Hilton plans to add five more properties in India this year. Martin Rinck, president, Asia

Pacific, Hilton Worldwide, said that 'India is critically important growth market for us'.

The chain has signed a pact with Eros Hotels to manage the Nehru Place hotel in south Delhi, earlier with the Intercontinental.

The owners will spend INR750 million on refurbishing the property after which the hotel will be branded the Hilton. Until then it will be Eros - Managed by Hilton.

Hilton has two hotels in Mayur Vihar Delhi, one in Saket New Delhi and another in Janakpuri New Delhi.

Outside the Capital, Hilton flag flies in Mumbai and Chennai.

Rinck has not revealed the cities where these five new properties will come up this year.

Low-cost international flights face hurdle flying out of Delhi airport

Low-cost carriers that were planning to start international operations from Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 1D would have to rethink their plans, Times of India reported. A joint committee of the Airports Authority of India and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had told the airport management that it would be a 'waste of resources' to start international operations at 1D.

The report said despite these reservations, Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) is still carrying on with work at the terminal.

An airport source said was quoted saying; "DIAL has reportedly got clearance for construction work at the terminal and work has been going on for the past few months. "We are not sure if permission has been granted for actually carrying out international operations."

IndiGo Airlines has announced

the commencement of its international operations from September this year while SpiceJet, which operates two daily flights to Kathmandu from T3, is planning to shift them to T1D as well.

Customs and immigration officials are against the move, saying that terminal 1D is too small for international operations. Sources say that they barely have enough staff at T3 and diverting some of them to terminal 1D will make work very difficult for them. "The terminal was built for domestic operations and there isn't enough space to set up more counters for international operations. The move will also adversely affect domestic operations as half their space will be taken. How will three busy low-cost carriers manage their flights with four baggage belts?" the sources were quoted saying.

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