

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- Positive as signs of recovery in the economy become stronger and business travel improves. Travel trade reports that the favourable exchange rate still playing a role in increased interest in Britain. Growth trends in student traffic are very encouraging at around 20% year on year since 2006 and are expected to continue.
- Although rising, airfares are still attractive.
- Reduction in some airline connections (e.g. Virgin from Mumbai, Kingfisher from Bangalore to London) is a concern.

Britain in the News

- According to a research by Future Brands published in Economic Times, Britain is overall 8th top country brand and in the top 5 in nightlife, shopping, political freedom, technology, ease of business, conferences and new business.
- London's Heathrow Airport has been voted the worst airport in the world for the second year running in a poll of 14,500 frequent fliers while Singapore's Changi was again ranked as the best.
- British Airways is linking Mumbai with London with the launch of its social media site Metrotwin Mumbai. The site helps travellers find their 'home from home' in Mumbai and London, with recommendations from expert bloggers and local communities. It aims to bring together the best of both cities and remind travellers to Mumbai or London of the similarities between the two places.
- Several articles have appeared in mainline newspapers showing Britain as a favourable destination for travel from India in terms of value for money.

General Market Mood

- Belying predictions, the Indian economy grew by a significant 7.9% in the second quarter of this fiscal year, up from 6.1% in the previous quarter, essentially due to a good showing by the industry and the services sector. This has resulted in a surge in the stock markets and people are generally happy about recovery.
- Job markets also opening up and India looks like the most bullish recruiter in the New Year.
- All these are positive trends and might eventually lead to increased travel.

Consumer Behaviour

- Consumer spending has increased because of host of factors like low interest rates, a more benign job market and good second quarter GDP numbers.
- Interest rates for loans for travel and study, etc. continue to be low.

Media Matters

- Nothing to report for October to December.

Routes and Fares

- Following dailies are still non-operational : British Airways from Kolkata, Virgin from Mumbai and Kingfisher from Bangalore. Airlines are reporting satisfactory load factors both outward and inward but extremely poor yields due to cut-throat pricing pressures from carriers like Qatar remains a cause for concern.

Business Tourism

- Nothing to report for October to December.

Leisure Travel Trade

- Nothing to report for October to December.

Competitor Activity

- Singapore Airlines (SQ) and Tourism New Zealand have signed a marketing agreement to develop and promote tourism to New Zealand on SQ services. The three-year deal takes effect on 1 January.
- Shahrukh Khan one of India's most famous movie stars, has been appointed the Honorary Ambassador of Korea (Culture & Tourism) in India. A grand ceremony for the same held at the Taj Lands End Hotel in Bombay, was graced by many high-profile delegates associated with Shahrukh Khan and about 20 other delegates representing Korea Tourism, which is spending large sums of money on media, consumer and travel trade promotions.
- Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and India Tourism, Australasia office Sydney, hosted six city road shows for Australian, New Zealand and Thailand tour operators and travel professionals interested in learning more about India's wide range of travel options for active travellers.
- The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) joined hands with popular key attractions like Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, Ocean Park Hong Kong, Madame Tussauds Hong Kong and Ngong Ping 360 to present a "Discover Hong Kong Fair" for a first-hand experience of family fun activities and sights offering in Hong Kong. They staged a "Discover Hong Kong Fair" at the Select CITYWALK at Saket in South Delhi.

VisitBritain Activity Update

- Successfully conducted Britain and Ireland India Mission in the three cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore from 7-11 September.
- Helped facilitate for Beatles Story and Mersey Partnership a week long promotion for the city of Liverpool which included on ground events at the British Council and consumer activities in a famous shopping centre in Delhi.
- Started social networking for the Dynamic Britain campaign and registered presence on Facebook and twitter.

Upcoming activity

- To introduce Yorkshire to the Indian traveller. For this we will be working with three big travel agents in India and along with Welcome to Yorkshire, will help them develop Yorkshire packages. Will also take them on a familiarisation of the region and will pool in resources to market these itineraries.
- Promote Britain through the new Sherlock Holmes movie.
- An event in order to promote Scotland as "UNESCO city of literature" around Ian Rankin's visit in January.
- Facilitating phase 2 of Liverpool promotions.
- Start phase 3 of British Airways value campaign.

Who's in Town?

Nothing to report for October to December.