

# Russia on revival route

Bharat Bhushan Atree, Chairman & Managing Director, Caper Travel Company, speaks to TRAVTALK on what is affecting Russian arrivals to India and what can be done to put Russia back on the top of tourism chart.

**ANKITA SAXENA**

The devaluation of ruble saw Russian tourism market spiral down in 2015. "The year has been a disaster due to various reasons—the dwindling economic situation; unpredictable fluctuations in local currency market; change in government policy to promote domestic tourism over outbound tourism; restrictions on government employees to holiday outside Russia amidst the general unrest in the current geopolitical situation," says **Bharat Bhushan Atree**.



**Bharat Bhushan Atree**  
Chairman & Managing Director  
Caper Travel Company

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In these tough times India, however, can be of importance to the Russian tourists. Atree says, "The tourism market shall not suddenly improve as the reasons hampering outbound tourism are still in force. However, with the closure of Egypt as a destination for Russian tourists, we expect to see an increase in the demand for India as a destination." He also pointed out that the Russian tourists coming to India are mostly budget clients.

Discussing the challenges India faces in attracting Russian tourists and the required support of the travel trade partners, Atree says, "Travel agents are crucial network for us and we are keeping them motivated and enthusiastic about the destination by offering them many lucrative holiday packages." He adds,

"All concerned partners like hotels, transporters, DMCs etc., should offer competitive packages for the Russian market at least for the coming one to two years and thus make India an affordable destination for Russian tourists."

Speaking about the main agenda in 2016 to tap the Russian market, Atree adds,

"Our main focus currently is to maintain low costs due to the devaluation of the Russian currency by almost 100 per cent. For the Russian tourists, almost everything has become double the price. We are also looking at an effective use of technology to make the distribution of products easier and cost-effective. We aim to continue promoting India as a

destination in the Russian market in these difficult times as well. It is also important that the Indian tourism market increases its marketing spend in Russia to continue to get tourists from the Russian market." Atree calls upon the Indian government to support Russia by offering true visa on arrival facility instead of e-Tourist Visa.

## WTTCII appoints new Chairman and Vice Chairman

**Kapil Chopra**, President, The Oberoi Group, has been appointed as the Chairman of World Travel & Tourism Council, India Initiative



Kapil Chopra



Ashwani Lohani

(WTTCII) for the year 2016. Chopra, who served as the Vice Chairman of WTTCII for the year 2015, takes over from **Manav Thadani**, Chairman, HVS, South Asia. WTTCII announced its new office-bearers for the year 2016 during its Annual General Meeting that was held on December 9, 2015 in New Delhi. **Ashwani Lohani**, Chairman & Managing Director, Air India has been appointed as the Vice Chairman of WTTCII for the year 2016.

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