

# Macao expects healthy growth in Indian tourists in 2017

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By Komal Panchmatia

Macao, Mar 12 Having hosted nearly two lakhs Indian visitors last year, Macao is expected to see a continued growth in tourism from the subcontinent over the next year.

An autonomous region located on the south coast of China, Macao is best known for its entertaining night life, besides its historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which offers a rich mix of Chinese and European architecture and culture.

"We expect the year to be positive for the Indian market. The effect of demonetisation is already settling in and we expect the summer season to pick up for the travel industry and for Macao," Arzan Kharbanda, Head of Macao Government Tourism Office in India, told PTI here.

In 2016, Macao hosted 1,65,280 Indian visitors.

Arzan said the region which is known as the 'Las Vegas of Asia' owing to its flourishing gambling industry, is being promoted as an all year round destination for leisure, family and entertainment.

"As a destination, Macao promises various offerings right from sightseeing, shows and entertainment, festivities to shopping all year round," he said.

According to him, a growing affluent population in India makes it one of the potential international markets of Macao tourism, which currently receives the maximum number of foreign tourists from China, Hong Kong, and taiwan because of the proximity.

"Besides the big cities, we also see a huge potential in the smaller cities in India. In 2016, we penetrated into the tier II cities as part of our strategy by participating in exhibitions and sales visits.

"Indians love exploring the history and culture of Macao and its rich heritage including temples, gardens, fortresses and museums, are a major source of attraction for them," he said.

Museums like Natural and Agrarian Museum, Grand Prix Museum, Museum of Sacred Art and Crypt, Museum of Taipa and Coloane History, Macao Wine Museum, Macao Science Centre among others are extremely popular with Indian tourists, Arzan said.

"Best known as the city of blended cultures, Macao is a mecca of leisure and glitz. It also has cultural attractions like A-Ma Temple, Moorish Barracks, Ruins of St Pauls, The Friendship bridge and Macao tower," he said.

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