The journey of a thousand leagues begins with a single step. Commonwealth Games, being such a journey, began in the form of Queen's Baton Relay from The Buckingham Palace, London. Traversing all commonwealth nations and covering lacs of kilometers, the Queen's Baton reached Jaipur on September 22, 2010. Amidst a huge crowd of sport-lovers, school children, officials, sport personalities, etc., Mr. Ashok Gehlot, hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan along with Ms. Bina Kak, State Tourism Minister formally flagged off the relay, handing over the Queen's Baton 2010 Delhi to Olympic silver medalist and double-trap shooter Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore. The relay, commencing from Amar Jawan Jyoti, received a rousing reception, from where Colonel Rathore took charge as the first baton bearer of the day. Arjuna Awardees Mr. Gopal Saini, Mr. Kuldeep Singh Garcha, Mr. Shiriram Singh and Mr. Surendra Kataria subsequently took turns to carry the baton further. The procession of the baton through the walled city was throughout accompanied by a huge fanfare and enthusiasts, eager to have a glimpse of the prestigious torch.

The relay culminated at the iconic city landmark Hawa Mahal, after passing through Sanganeri Gate and Badi Chaupad. The event was marked by a vibrant and spectacular cultural programme organised at Jawahar Kala Kendra.

Earlier, the baton received a splendid welcome at Bharatpur, where it entered the State of Rajasthan from Mathura. The much-anticipated event lived up to expectations in the Jaipur city, as the baton arrived at Ghat-Ki-Ghuni. A light drizzle complemented the glorious celebration, as students lined up the path holding national flags and showering floral tributes. From Jaipur, the Queen's Baton moved on to Jodhpur and Bikaner.
‘Gear up for the New World Order’ was the message that emerged loud and clear at the annual meet of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) held at Udaipur on 2nd-5th September, 2010. The event, which saw participation of about 1500 delegates from the industry, focused on formulating action plan to survive in the new world order and to develop new-age modalities to revamp the tourism sector.

Mr. R.H. Khwaja, Secretary Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (GoI) inaugurated the event and underlined the need for a long term agenda for the Ministry of Tourism with the help of the industry stakeholders and experts. In his welcome address, Mr. Rajesh Mudgill, Chairman, Convention thanked the members for their presence in large numbers.

Mr. Devesh Chaturvedi, Additional Director General Tourism, GoI and Ms. Usha Sharma, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan also graced the occasion. Ms. Usha Sharma, spoke about the rich heritage and culture of Rajasthan and the efforts that were being made by Rajasthan Tourism to increase tourist arrival by developing new products and circuits. Mr. Vijay Thakur, President IATO, in his presidential speech talked about the growth that tourism and hospitality sectors had been registering and the challenges that could be expected in future.

The Convention provided a platform where operators discussed with the policy makers, issues that affected the tourism sector. Many sessions and panel discussions were organised throughout the convention to delve upon critical issues and the initiatives that the industry needed to look at in order to adapt to the changing scenario.

Addressing the first session which focused on the convention's theme, Mr. Amitabh Kant, MD & CEO, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (DMICDC) drew some parallels between India's economic scenario with that of China and spoke about the future of the tourism economy. Taking experience as key, another session tried to explore how India was using the Bollywood platform to promote its destination. The session on ‘States – are they serious?’ pictured the hopes that States had to fulfill to promote tourism and whether they were on the right track. It also touched upon issues like tourism synergies and unique ways of promoting tourism. The Convention raised some key issues related to the modus operandi for the trade as it moved ahead.

The Convention also saw presentations on Rajasthan Tourism and Delhi International Airport's terminal T3, and a Travel Mart that provided a unique opportunity to participants to deliver their brand message to the top-notches in the Travel & Tourism industry. The Convention delved on the steps to create awareness among tour operators and to meet challenges of today.

The City of Lakes hosts IATO Annual Convention 2010

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With more than 290 lakh international and domestic tourists’ arrivals every year, Rajasthan is easily one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in India. The State’s popularity is primarily due to its rich heritage, forts, palaces, lakes, colourful and lively fairs and festivals besides, golden sand dunes and rich wildlife. The Government of Rajasthan has undertaken many initiatives to attract more footfalls to the State. ‘Rajasthan Calling’ is one such initiative, which is a series of roadshows and campaigns, with the idea to give a feel of the State to domestic tourists. This was organised in the months of September, October and November across 19 major Indian cities including Chennai, Mumbai, Bangalore, Patna, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. The two-day ‘Mini Rajasthan Festival’ was the major highlight of this campaign which aimed to give an experience of Rajasthan, its vibrant culture and traditions to the visitors. The purpose behind ‘Rajasthan Calling’ was to give a feel of Rajasthan to domestic tourists and showcase the State’s tradition, culture, the wide range of Rajasthani handicrafts and Rajasthani delicacies. The event included setting up a mini Rajasthani gallery, food court and craft shops in each city coupled with cultural performances to attract locales in each city. The food court at the venue served traditional delicacies. In about 25 stalls, handicrafts and folk art from various regions of the State were showcased during the festival. Visitors to the festival witnessed wooden toys from Bassi-Chittor, terracotta from Siaya, stone artefacts from Banswara and Tichupada, Gota work from Ajmer, Aratari Zardozi work from Nyla village, leather items – Bags, Jutis, etc. from Jodhpur and Bhinmal, tie & die from Akola, brass nakkashi from Balahedi and forest products from Barna. The response that this event received in various cities was simply tremendous and it proved that there are various pockets across the country that are a potential source for domestic tourists in future.
Curtain’s Up: Son-et-lumière, Kumbhalgarh

The month of September unfolded many new attractions for the tourists adding more charm to the experience called Rajasthan. One such step in this series was the inauguration of the Son-et-lumière at the historical Kumbhalgarh Fort by Ms. Bina Kak, honourable Tourism Minister, Government of Rajasthan. The inauguration event was held on 26th September, 2010 in which Mr. Ganesh Singh Parmar, Member of Legislative Assembly from Kumbhalgarh, graced the occasion as the special guest. Ms. Usha Sharma, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Mr. Onkar Singh, Collector, Rajmamb were also present at the event which marked the beginning of a spectacular light and sound extravaganza which brought back to life the glorious history of the maharanas of Mewar.

For those desirous of delving into Rajputana's glorious and tumultuous past, this spectacular show by the Indian Tourism Development Corporation unfolded the history of the brave Rajput rulers in the most fascinating way. The Government has spent an amount of ₹195 lac to present the story of one of the most inaccessible forts of India.... Kumbhalgarh.

RTDC has been operating and maintaining the sound and light show with the sponsorship by Club Mahindra Holidays. During these exciting 45 minutes, viewers experienced many hair-raising moments right out of glorious life of maharanas, noble courtiers and loyal maids. This show highlighted the history of Kumbhalgarh which began with the construction of this Fort. Birth of the legendary King Hamir, the great sacrifice by Panna Dhai, the haunting stories from Haldi Ghati war, valour and the glory of Maharana Pratap are few select episodes from the annals of Fort’s historic and legendary past which are brought to life by this show.

The accompanying soundtrack and the suitably dramatic and mysterious voice-over complement the environment. The screenplay of the light and sound show was conceptualised by Col. Kapoor and Ms. Gitika Deven. Soulful narration by veteran actors Raza Murad and Ranjeet transported viewers back in time to witness the life and time of many great warriors like Maharana Kumbha and Maharana Pratap.

Daily Show
Duration: 45 Minutes
Fee:
Indian Tourists
Adult: ₹75 (Mon-Fri) and ₹100 (Sat-Sun)
Child (5-12 years): ₹40 (Mon-Fri) and ₹60 (Sat-Sun)
Foreign Tourists: ₹200 per person

Located 84 kms north of Udaipur in the wilderness, Kumbhalgarh is cradled in the Aravali Ranges. The fort was built in the 15th century AD by Rana Kumbha.