

15% growth in Indian tourists visiting Australia

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INDIA'S tourism sector appears to have shrugged off overt concerns of the slowdown, with outbound travellers to Australia registering a healthy double-digit growth of 15 per cent between June and July this year.

It's a significant departure from the pedestrian single-digit growth of 7-8 per cent seen during the January-May period. "The closure of Jet Airways, which had a code share agreement with Australia's Qantas Airways, and the election season affected tourists' growth in the first five months. But June and July saw a rebound and we expect the momentum to continue during the holiday season and the forthcoming ICC T20 World Cup event," said Nishant Kashikar, country manager, India and Gulf, Tourism Australia.

If last year saw 3.7 lakh Indians visiting Australia, Kashi-



kar expects 5 lakh visitors in couple of years. Similarly, Indian tourists' spend will likely increase from last year's ₹8,300 crore to ₹11,500 crore. A significant amount of tourists' spend came from leisure travellers,

while the rest came from business travellers, and those travelling for short-term period due to employment opportunities and education. Interestingly, the average spend per trip was about ₹2.4 lakh, which is why



We expect an additional, up to 40,000 Indian visitors to Australia... We want to make the ICC T20 World Cup for women a record-breaker hosting over one lakh spectators in Melbourne

Nishant Kashikar, country manager, India and Gulf, Tourism Australia

India is the sixth largest nation for Australia in terms of spend, though it's ranked eighth in terms of visitors.

"In last five years, there has been a 16 per cent CAGR growth in Indian tourist inflows against 8 per cent average growth in overall outbound tourism in India," he said.

One of the reasons for growth was currency. While rupee weakened against the US and UK currencies, it strengthened against Australian dollar. Second, in 2017, Australia started online visa processing requiring no personal visits or biometrics. So, almost 80 per cent of applications are processed online.

Third, the presence of large Indian diaspora comprising 7.5 lakh Indians, besides 90,000 students is driving tourist arrivals in the country. As the host nation for the ICC T20 World Cup for Women and Men in 2020, Australia is attempting to break records.