**Embassy of India**

**Muscat**

**\*\*\***

**Press Release**

**Indian Embassy hosts Roadshow to promote tourism to India**

Embassy of India, Muscat, organized an ‘India Tourism Roadshow’ on 27th March 2018, to promote ‘Incredible India’ as a preferred destination for tourism including medical and wellness tourism for Omanis. The Roadshow was organized with a view to familiarize various stakeholders in outbound tourism from Oman with the increasing ease with which people can travel to India as well as the diverse tourist attractions and advanced medical facilities in India. H.E Ambassador, Sheikh Hilal Marhoun Salim Al Maamari, Chief of West Asia Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Chief Guest and Mr. Mohammed Al Riyami, Director, International Cooperation, Ministry of Tourism was the Guest of Honour. Around 180 Omani Officials and representatives of tour operators, travel agents, airlines and other stakeholders participated in the Roadshow.

2. Representative of India Tourism, Dubai, Shri. I.V. Rao, made a presentation on ‘Incredible India’. Representatives of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, States of India, also made presentations on tourist attractions of their States. A video highlighting tourist attractions of Goa was also played. As the Embassy has been taking initiatives for increasing the ease with which people can travel to India, Shri. Kannan Nair- Second Secretary (Consular) at the Embassy gave an overview on visa requirements for travel to India.

3. The Embassy has been engaged in various activities for promoting tourism, including medical tourism, from Oman to India. Over the years, the number of visas issued by the Embassy has increased from about 59,000 issued in 2013 to 101,578 visas, including 35,920 e-visas, in 2017. Notably, about 95% of visas issued in 2017 were for tourism and medical tourism purposes. Due to introduction of e-Visa, people of Oman are able to obtain short term visas through online procedure, which has also contributed to rise in number of Omanis visiting India.

4. India and Oman are maritime neighbours, with historical people-to-people contacts, spanning over 5000 years. The two countries are well-connected through around 250 weekly flights with capacity of 27,405 weekly seats from each side. Oman Air connects Muscat to 11 cities in India; Salalah is also connected to various Indian cities. People of Oman are generally familiar with India’s natural beauty, rich cultural diversity and historical sites as well as India’s advantage as a premier healthcare destination. In recent years, India has emerged as one of the coveted destinations for tourism, including medical tourism, for people of Oman.

5. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of India, Shri Indra Mani Pandey, highlighted the historical relations between India and Oman anchored in people-to-people contacts and called for expanding tourism exchanges between the two countries in order to strengthen bilateral relations. He pointed out that Indian community can play the role of a catalyst in encouraging mutual tourism. In this context, he referred to the MoU between India and Oman on Cooperation in Tourism, which was signed during the visit of Honourable Prime Minister of India to Oman during 11-12 February 2018.

\*\*\*

**Muscat, 28th March 2018**