

MakeMytrip.com plans to sell rail tickets

By S REPORTER
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MakeMytrip.com, an online travel portal, is in advanced stages of discussion with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited for a possible tie-up to enable online reservation of rail tickets on its site.

Currently, railway tickets can be booked online only on Indian Railway sites.

The agreement had received

in-principle approval, and was subject to formal a nod by the railway ministry, said Keyur Jaich, co-founder and CEO, MakeMytrip.com. A final approval from the department was expected before the end of this fiscal, he added.

With nearly 50,000 online railway tickets getting booked and 50 lakh people traveling by trains everyday, the travel agency is looking at tapping the huge customer base, apart from lever-

aging from the large number of railway budget hotels in the offering.

At present about 80 per cent of the online booking in MakeMytrip.com site is for air-tickets, and the rest is for hotels. In the coming months the company is targeting a more even distribution in its booking pattern, with at least 40 per cent for hotels.

"We are more focused on the hospitality sector, and a tie-up with the Indian Rail-

ways would provide us with a great opportunity to expand our customer base, as the railway is going to add at least 5,000 budget rooms in the coming years," he said.

Last year MakeMytrip registered a turnover of Rs 562 crore, and for the present fiscal it has set the target of Rs 1,200 crore, a growth of 124 per cent over the last year.

To reach the mark, the company would focus on smaller towns like Waj, Kakinada and Vijaywada, as in absence of office offices of prominent travel agencies in the area, online booking provided with a good potential to grow, said.

Further, with nearly 2,400 hotels expected to come up by 2011, when the Commonwealth Games take place in Delhi, the online hotel-booking business offered leeway to grow, he said.

MakeMytrip launched its sixth office offer in Kolkata on Thursday. The company is targeting a revenue of Rs 10 crore by the end of this fiscal year 2008, and Rs 50 crore by the end of March 2009.

According to study by PricewaterhouseCoopers research agency, "the nearly US\$14 billion travel market in India presents massive online opportunities for legacy and startup travel companies."

The online travel industry is pegged to be around \$2 billion by 2008, from the present \$1.3 billion, registering a 40 year-on-year growth, according to the study.

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Deep Kalra, founder & CEO, MakeMyTrip.com, at the press meet

SIBRATA MAJUMDAR