

Incredible India

Amman - Motaz Othman

India commanded a strong presence at the ATM (Arabian Travel Market), which was held in Dubai last May. Mrs Rashmi Verma, the head of the Tourism Office in India, attended the event. Mrs. Verma held a conference and further accepted to make an interview with Islamic Tourism to explain how the Indian government recognizes the importance of tourism as a vital tool in affecting socio-economical change. Mrs. Verma highlighted the point that there had been a relaxation of the country's tax system recently with the aim of encouraging the tourism industry. Tourism is positively increasing in India; the growth rate is estimated to be at 15.5%. It is believed that 2003 will procure promising results, especially regarding tourism from the Gulf region.

Mrs. Verma added that they have initiated a major promotional exercise in the international market under the slogan "Incredible India". It consists of staging conferences and meetings with trav-

el agencies and the organization of workshops and trips aimed at introducing India to the world. Selective media advertisements and the production of factual books detailing the life and culture of India are also on the agenda. The program includes a new website:

www.tourismindia.com

The head of the Tourism Office, states that India has heavily invested in prospective tourism, through the creation of new especially designated tourist areas and infrastructures. Every state has also established a center, which is responsible for the promotion of the country's cultural and historical heritage, thus illuminating India's immense and rich potential.

The Indian government is keen to develop tourism from different Asian countries, and especially from the Gulf region. ■

