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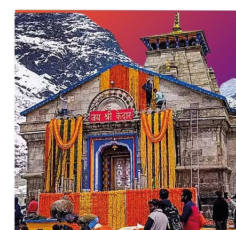
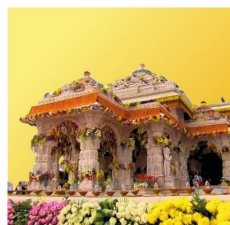
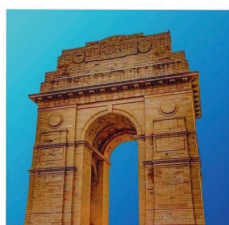


NITC

NORTH INDIA TOURISM EXPO & CONCLAVE

29TH MAY 2026

 CHANDIGARH



Focus States/UT's: Ladakh, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh.

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Editors note

Dear Reader,

The global travel and tourism industry continues to evolve at an extraordinary pace, shaped by changing traveller preferences, technological innovation, and the growing desire for meaningful experiences. This issue reflects the momentum, diversity, and transformation currently driving the sector across India and international markets.

As the summer travel season gains momentum, destinations and travel brands across the world are witnessing growing enthusiasm from travellers eager to explore new experiences, cultures, and leisure offerings. From scenic coastal escapes and immersive cultural journeys to luxury getaways and adventure tourism, Summer Travel 2026 is emerging as one of the strongest travel seasons in recent years. This edition highlights some of the destinations, trends, and experiences inspiring Indian travellers this summer.


This month's stories capture how destinations, tourism boards, hospitality brands, airlines, and travel companies are preparing for a new era of travel. From summer holiday trends and adventure tourism to AI-powered travel planning and luxury hospitality expansion, the industry is embracing fresh opportunities while redefining the traveller experience.

Our Interviews section brings valuable insights from industry leaders across cruise tourism, destination management, hospitality, and travel trade, offering perspectives on market trends, partnerships, and future growth opportunities.

As always, we remain committed to bringing our readers comprehensive coverage of the travel, tourism, hospitality, aviation, cruise, and railway sectors while highlighting the people and organisations shaping the future of the industry.

Happy Reading!

Warm Regards,
Ajay Gupta
Managing Editor – Travel Mail



travel mail

India's Leading Travel Magazine

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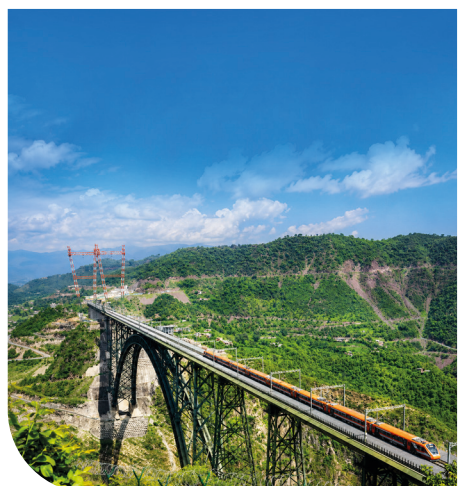
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Goa Tourism Development Corporation partners with Nature Trails by Thomas Cook to launch a curated Hampi Tour

Travel Mail Desk

The Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), in association with Nature Trails by Thomas Cook, has announced the launch of a specially curated Hampi Tour, offering travellers from Goa and beyond an immersive journey into one of India's most iconic heritage destinations, Hampi, located in North Karnataka. The initiative is part of GTDC's ongoing efforts to expand its portfolio of experiential travel offerings and provide curated outbound experiences that go beyond conventional itineraries.

The tour will take travellers to Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, known for its magnificent ruins, ancient temples, and rich history of the Vijayanagara Empire. Designed as a cultural and experiential itinerary, the tour will include an array of curated activities, including guided visits to iconic monuments and heritage sites, immersive storytelling experiences, comfortable travel and stay, and expert-led insights into the site's history, architecture, and local culture.

Tourists staying in Goa can extend their stay and visit Hampi through this

curated tour. Golden opportunity for local Goans who wish to visit this world heritage site. Goans can avail this GTDC special tour to spend their holidays and explore the rich history.

Mr. Kedar J Naik, Chairman, GTDC, added, *"This collaboration with Nature Trails by Thomas Cook reflects our commitment to offering diverse and high-quality travel experiences. The Hampi tour is designed for discerning travellers who seek more than just a holiday—it is for those who want to explore India's cultural richness in a meaningful way. We have also kept the price of the tour package very cost-effective to ensure maximum people enjoy this tour."*

Speaking on the joint initiative, **Mr. Kuldeep Arolkar, Managing Director, GTDC**, said, *"Goa Tourism is committed to continuously innovating and expanding the scope of travel experiences available to our audiences. This collaboration with Nature Trails by Thomas Cook allows us to offer a unique cultural journey that complements God's own rich heritage. It reflects our vision of promoting meaningful, experience-driven tourism."*

Mr. Abraham Alapatt – President & Group Head – Marketing, Service Quality, Value Added Services & Innovation at Thomas Cook (India) Limited and SOTC Travel, said, *"We are honoured to partner with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation for this unique initiative that opens up new cultural travel avenues for tourists from Goa choosing GTDC's curated travel itinerary. Our Nature Trails Ashoka Resort is designed around the philosophy of enhanced experiential travel, giving our guests a taste of local hospitality – reflecting Hampi's rich heritage and local culture. At Nature Trails, our focus remains on creating immersive hospitality experiences that combine comfort, deep local connection and cultural depth for today's discerning traveller."*

Interested travellers can book the Hampi tour through GTDC's official channels and partner platforms. Further details on itineraries, schedules, and pricing will be made available through GTDC offices and digital platforms.

A NEW ERA OF EXPLORATION

Decoding the Maharashtra Adventure Tourism Framework

Travel Mail Desk

The breathtakingly beautiful Konkan coastline, majestic Sahyadri mountain ranges, dense forests, and rivers flowing from the hills together form the natural heritage of Maharashtra's diverse tourist destinations. With the growing number of tourists drawn to its natural beauty, the concept of adventure tourism has gained considerable importance in a short time. To develop land, air, and water-based adventure activities, the Government has taken a very positive initiative by implementing the Policy on Adventure Tourism. This policy has established a proper mechanism for organisers, operators, and activity providers to offer safe, well-regulated adventure tourism in the state. Adventure tourism is now viewed as an exciting new frontier in the tourism sector.

The Adventure Tourism Policy has shown an increased interest in adventure tourism activities. In view of the rapid growth and development of the adventure tourism sector, the government has initiated a formal registration process and official certification to ensure the safety and security of tourists. Under the Adventure Tourism Policy, a total of 809 applications have been received for adventure tourism activities. Out of these 809 applicants, 692 have been granted official certification for adventure tourism activities.

Although adventure tourism is receiving a good response throughout the state, the safety of tourists is also a major concern that needs to be addressed. There is growing interest among tourists in water adventure sports, mountaineering, and other high-altitude activities. In this regard, the government has taken a major decision, putting the safety of tourists at the core of its policy by outlining a set of regulatory guidelines.

The policy outlines safety measures that must be in place at adventure tourism sites. The adventure tourism sites should be equipped with directional maps and signboards that highlight the potential risks and safety instructions. The adventure tourism sites should also be equipped with watchtowers and sirens that warn tourists about potential hazards. The sites should also be equipped with safety measures, such as protective nets, to ensure tourists are adequately protected.

Shri. Shambhuraj Desai, Minister of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra
"As the tourism sector is growing, we are committed to taking adventure tourism in the state to a global level. This Adventure Tourism Policy is not only for attracting more and more tourists, but it will also provide employment opportunities for the youth of our state. This policy is promoting

safe tourism, and the growing scope of adventure tourism is giving a new direction to tourism in our state."

Shri. Sanjay Khandare, Principal Secretary (Tourism), Government of Maharashtra
"The Adventure Tourism Policy has a major role to play in the holistic development of the tourism sector in the state, along with economic growth. The policy has a strong focus on ensuring the safety of tourists while promoting adventure tourism activities. There has been a steady growth in the interest in adventure tourism activities, which in turn has created job opportunities. This well-structured policy is further boosting the development of adventure tourism."

Dr. B. N. Patil (IAS), Director, Directorate of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra
"Adventure tourism is not just about recreation for visitors; it is also about its contribution to the economic development of the state's tourism sector. Special attention is being given to infrastructure development and tourism safety in adventure tourism sites. Under this policy, importance is given to preserving natural heritage in promoting tourism as well. Adventure tourism centres have been developed in many places in the state, creating more employment opportunities for the people in those areas."



Meet Boston Appoints Sartha Global Marketing as its India Representative Firm

Travel Mail Desk

Meet Boston, the private-sector nonprofit tourism marketing organization representing Boston, Cambridge, and the metropolitan area, has appointed Sartha Global Marketing as its representative in the Indian market. This strategic partnership marks Meet Boston's formal entry into India and underscores the destination's growing focus on the rapidly expanding Indian outbound travel market. Through this partnership, Sartha Global Marketing will spearhead Meet Boston's engagement in India through public relations, travel trade, and marketing efforts. The goal is to position Boston as an attractive, year-round U.S. destination for Indian travellers by increasing destination visibility and building relationships with the travel industry and media.

"India is a growing market for Greater Boston, and we are delighted to partner with Sartha Global Marketing to elevate the destination's positioning in the Indian market," said **Martha Sheridan, President and CEO of Meet Boston.** *"Having travelled to India for recent media and trade missions, we've seen the tremendous*



interest and opportunity in the market. We are confident that we have found the ideal partner in Sartha, a group that

is passionate about storytelling and sharing all that makes our destination such a special place to visit."

"India represents one of the most dynamic and high-growth inbound leisure markets for Boston," added **Meet Boston SVP of Sales and Services Nik Pereira.** *"This partnership with Sartha Global Marketing is an important step in strengthening our presence on the ground. With increasing connectivity, a strong cultural and educational connection, we see tremendous opportunity to welcome more Indian travellers to experience all that Greater Boston has to offer."*

Speaking about the new partnership, **Sunil Puri, Joint-Managing Director of Sartha Global Marketing,** added, *"We are excited to represent Meet Boston in India. Boston's mix of history, culture, outdoor activities, a lively food scene, and passion for sports strongly resonates with Indian visitors. We are confident that our efforts will increase awareness and encourage more Indians to visit this beautiful city."*

Mr Mangesh Joshi (IAS)

Assumes Charge as Director, Directorate of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra

Travel Mail Desk

The Government of Maharashtra has announced an administrative transition as part of a recent bureaucratic reshuffle and has appointed **Mr Mangesh Joshi, an (IAS) officer,** as the **new Director of the Directorate of Tourism.** Mr. Mangesh Joshi (IAS) has assumed charge of his position at the Directorate of Tourism, Mumbai.

Prior to this appointment, he served as Deputy Director General at the Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune, where he effectively discharged his responsibilities. He brings with him substantial experience in administrative reforms, strategic planning, and

training, which is expected to contribute significantly to the development of tourism in the state.

Expressing his views after assuming office, **Mr Mangesh Joshi (IAS) said,** *"Maharashtra is a state rich in tourism potential. Our priority will be to ensure the effective implementation of existing tourism policies and to promote the state's tourist destinations at a global level. We aim to position Maharashtra as a unique and safe destination on the global tourism map. Additionally, through sustainable tourism initiatives, we are committed to generating local employment and accelerating the overall development of the state."*



He further noted that special initiatives will be undertaken in the coming period to attract tourists by preserving and promoting the state's forts, expansive coastline, eco-tourism assets, and cultural heritage, complemented by modern amenities.

Charlottesville, Virginia, Introduces Presidential Midweek Package for America's 250th Celebrations

Travel Mail Desk

Charlottesville, Virginia, is marking the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States with a special Presidential Midweek Package at Boar's Head Resort, offering a compelling addition for travel trade partners curating immersive U.S. itineraries.

Jefferson's Monticello: Charlottesville, VA

As the home of Thomas Jefferson and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Monticello stands as one of the most significant locations to experience the legacy of the Declaration of Independence. Visitors can explore the iconic mountaintop estate through guided tours, immersive storytelling, and special programming marking the 250th anniversary.

Monroe's Highland: Charlottesville, VA

At Highland, the historic home of James Monroe, travellers gain insight into early American life through layered narratives that reflect the lives of those who lived and worked on the estate, offering a deeper understanding of the nation's evolving history.



Dine, Tour and Stay at Birdwood Mansion

Further enhancing the offering, Birdwood Mansion at the resort introduces an elevated culinary dimension through its guest residence chef program. Featuring an evolving roster of internationally acclaimed chefs, the experience includes curated menus, wine dinners, and interactive dining moments set within a restored historic estate.

Madison's Montpelier: Orange County, VA

Meanwhile, Montpelier – home to James Madison, the "Father of the Constitution", offers a rich exploration of America's founding ideals through exhibitions, educational programming, and experiences centred on constitutional history and civic engagement.

Set in the scenic Virginia countryside, the overall experience allows travellers to engage with pivotal chapters of American history while enjoying the region's natural beauty, making it ideal for those seeking meaningful travel around milestone celebrations such as America's 250th.

Vibrant Calendar of Entertainment

The destination experience is further complemented by a vibrant calendar of entertainment, including live performances such as the popular Killer Keyz Duelling Pianos and comedy events, including Jeff Dunham's "Artificial Intelligence" tour at the John Paul Jones Arena, offering additional options for travellers seeking a well-rounded stay.

Available for a limited period & valid for midweek stays, the Presidential Midweek Package presents a strong opportunity for travel planners to incorporate a unique, story-led experience into curated USA itineraries.

Visit Malaysia Carnival 2026 Brings Malaysian Culture, Cuisine, Tourism and Industry Closer to India

Travel Mail Desk

The High Commission of Malaysia in India successfully hosted the vibrant Visit Malaysia Carnival 2026 at its premises in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. The carnival welcomed a large and diverse gathering of families, students, travel enthusiasts, and members of the diplomatic and Indian community, creating an atmosphere filled with culture, flavours, business engagement, and festivities.

Organised in conjunction with Visit Malaysia Year 2026, the carnival served as an engaging platform not only to promote Malaysia's rich cultural heritage and tourism offerings, but also to reflect the growing depth of Malaysia-India economic and industry collaboration.

Dato' Muzafar Shah Mustafa, High Commissioner of Malaysia in India, said, "The Visit Malaysia Carnival 2026 is a



reflection of the strong people-to-people connection between Malaysia and India. Through culture, cuisine, and shared experiences, we aim to bring Malaysia closer to our friends in India and invite them to explore the many wonders our country has to offer during Visit Malaysia Year 2026."

Ahmad Johanif Mohd Ali, Director of Tourism Malaysia – New Delhi, added, "This carnival is not just a cultural showcase, but also an invitation to Indian travellers to discover Malaysia as a preferred holiday destination. With Visit Malaysia Year 2026, we look forward to welcoming more Indian tourists to experience Malaysia's nature, islands, shopping, cuisine, and unique multicultural harmony."

The carnival featured captivating cultural performances, live cooking demonstrations of authentic Malaysian dishes, education, tourism and business booths, interactive fun and games, and an exciting raffles draw for visitors of all ages. Guests enjoyed tasting an assortment of Malaysian cuisine and tropical fruits, offering a true flavour of Malaysia in the heart of New Delhi.

Online Duty-Free Pre-Booking Launched for International travellers: Adani Airports, MakeMyTrip

Duty-Free Just Got More Rewarding.

Adani Airports and MakeMyTrip partner to elevate Duty-Free shopping with up to 10% off on pre-orders.

adani | make my trip



AAHL operates duty-free outlets across Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangaluru, Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram. MakeMyTrip has increasingly emerged as the go-to platform for international travel in India. Together, the two companies are uniquely positioned to deliver an integrated, value-driven experience to the modern Indian international traveller.

Arun Bansal, Chief Executive Officer, Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), said "By enabling duty-free pre-booking through MakeMyTrip, we are bringing more convenience to international travellers. The integration allows travellers to plan purchases in advance, save time at the airport, and access curated offers, making the duty-free experience simpler and more rewarding."

Travel Mail Desk

Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL) and MakeMyTrip announced a partnership to make duty-free shopping more convenient and rewarding for international travellers.

As a part of this collaboration, a duty-free pre-booking service for both departure

and arrival has been introduced. Travellers can browse through 10+ categories, across 100+ brands and over 14,000+ SKUs and pre-book products on MakeMyTrip ahead of their journey, with access to online-exclusive offers across categories. The service is available for both departing and arriving international passengers, enabling advance planning of purchases.

Rajesh Magow, Co-founder and Group CEO, MakeMyTrip, said, "This association is a natural extension of our Connected Trips strategy, which is centred on building a seamless, end-to-end travel experience. This collaboration gives international travellers the ability to plan smarter, make informed choices, and save more, simply by booking duty-free purchases in advance."

Cleartrip Expands into Train Bookings with IRCTC Partnership, Strengthens Multi-Modal Platform

fare insights, PNR status tracking, berth preferences, and secure digital payments, all in a single, intuitive interface.

Manjari Singhal, Chief Growth and Business Officer, Cleartrip, said, "Train travel is a critical part of India's mobility ecosystem, and this launch marks an important step towards realising our vision of becoming a unified, multi-modal travel platform. With our partnership with IRCTC, we are focused on simplifying the booking experience and making it more accessible to millions of travellers."

Travel Mail Desk

Cleartrip announced the launch of train ticket bookings in partnership with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), the official ticketing arm of Indian Railways.

Leveraging IRCTC's strong infrastructure, this integration offers both reliability at scale and a simplified, user-friendly experience. Cleartrip will allow users

to search for, book, and manage their train journeys effortlessly within the app, marking a significant step towards becoming a unified, multi-modal travel platform.

With this launch, travellers can access train ticket bookings across routes in India, including General and Tatkal quotas as prescribed by the guidelines of the Ministry of Railways, alongside essential services such as real-time seat availability,

Gaurav Patwari, Chief Business Officer, Air, Cleartrip, said, "With over 800 million reserved passengers travelling by train every year, the opportunity isn't just about scale; it's about delivering a differentiated experience. By embedding seamless booking experience, predictive intelligence, and personalisation into the platform, we are ensuring that every step, from discovery to post-booking support, is fast, reliable, and stress-free."

ixigo Launches Native Travel Apps on ChatGPT; Brings Conversational Travel Planning

Travel Mail Desk

Across Flights, Trains, Buses and Hotels

ixigo announced the launch of native apps for its three platforms – ixigo flight & hotel, AbhiBus, and ConfirmTkt – inside ChatGPT, bringing end-to-end travel planning directly into a conversational AI interface.

With this integration, users can search and compare travel options across flights, buses, trains, and hotels in real time within ChatGPT and then seamlessly proceed to booking via the respective ixigo Group apps through simple conversational prompts. ixigo has also introduced real-time flight tracking inside ChatGPT, enabling users to track flights and access key updates on boarding gates, baggage belts, check-in counters, and more.

Users can enable ixigo's apps in ChatGPT and get started by simply typing "@ixigo", "@AbhiBus" or "@ConfirmTkt" in a prompt. Using natural language, they can search for domestic and international flights with real-time prices and availability, access intelligent fare insights, and view nearby dates with the best fares—helping travellers optimise their plans when their schedules are flexible. This built-in price intelligence brings contextual, real-time decision-making directly into the



conversational experience. Users can also track live flight status seamlessly within the same flow, and to proceed to make bookings, they are then led into the ixigo app/website.

This also extends to hotel discovery and bookings, including deep, conversational queries – for instance, going from a simple prompt like “find me a seaside hotel in Goa” to real options, dynamic pricing, and booking options. The ixigo app further enhances this journey with integrated airport cab options, enabling travellers to find reliable and cost-effective rides

to and from major airports across the country.

Speaking on the launch, **Rajnish Kumar, Group Co-CEO and Alope Bajpai, Group CEO, ixigo**, said, “We’re reimagining how travel planning, search and bookings can leverage horizontal AI platforms. By bringing ixigo apps to ChatGPT across ixigo, ConfirmTkt and Abhibus, over a billion monthly users of ChatGPT can now go from a simple question to a complete travel plan with real-time insights, live tracking and booking options- all within one conversation and in seconds.”

SOTC Travel expands its distribution across 53 cities, inaugurates its landmark 100th store in Mumbai’s Nariman Point

Travel Mail Desk

SOTC Travel, a leading omnichannel Travel and Tourism Company, has achieved a significant milestone with the inauguration of its 100th retail store at Nariman Point, Mumbai. The store was inaugurated by Mr. Vishal Suri – Managing Director & CEO at SOTC Travel, along with Mr. SD Nandakumar, President & Country Head – Holidays and Corporate Tours at SOTC Travel. This landmark expansion underscores the Company’s strong growth trajectory and its commitment to enhancing customer access through a robust and strategically located retail network across India.

With its integrated omnichannel model, SOTC continues to strengthen its position as India’s favorite travel partner. The Company’s approach seamlessly blends its physical retail presence with digital platforms, enabling customers to engage across multiple touchpoints. Catering to a diverse range of traveller segments—including multigenerational families, couples, GenS (seniors), millennials and GenZ, delivering experiences that resonate with evolving travel preferences.



Milestone launch underscores strong retail expansion strategy

As the Company expands geographically, it remains focused on enhancing convenience while deepening its regional connect, offering localized holiday

expertise and tailored travel solutions to meet the needs of customers across Indian markets.

SOTC’s digital-first approach is anchored in continuous investments in technology and innovation. The Company has introduced several customer-centric solutions, including its AI-powered chatbot Ezy, a multilingual website experience and a diverse portfolio of regional products designed to cater to the unique preferences of travellers across India. These initiatives ensure a seamless, intuitive and highly customized journey for customers from inspiration to booking and beyond.

To further enhance traveller confidence, we have introduced TravSure – a pioneering initiative to redefine travel protection. It is designed to meet the realities of modern travel and ensure our customers feel secure wherever they go. In addition, we also offer value-added protections such as visa rejection cover, further safeguarding travellers against unforeseen financial risks.

Airbnb Data Shows How Indian Travellers Are Turning to Asia This Summer

Travel Mail Desk

This summer, Indian travellers are choosing Asia. Powered by a generation raised on Korean dramas, Japanese aesthetics, and Asian street food culture, destinations across Asia feel both familiar and exciting, and travel interest is reflecting that. Travellers are exploring destinations that offer a compelling mix of cultural discovery, strong connectivity and convenient travel times, making Asia an appealing choice for summer getaways.

Airbnb data reveals growing interest in destinations across Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asia. Osaka (over 85% growth in searches), Tokyo (over 90%) and Busan (over 95%) recorded some of the strongest increases in search interest among Indian travellers. This aligns with broader travel trends pointing to rising interest driven by pop culture fandom, culinary appeal and ease of travel. Kuala Lumpur (over 50%) and Bangkok (over 35%) continued to see steady demand, reflecting their strong connectivity and familiarity among Indian travellers.



This interest in exploration is also shaping domestic travel trends. Within India, travellers are increasingly looking beyond established hotspots and exploring destinations that offer nature, heritage and cultural richness. Thiruvananthapuram (over 90% growth in searches), Puri (over 30%), Jaipur (over 70%) and Meghalaya (over 70%) have all seen strong growth in interest.

"What we are seeing this summer is travel driven by curiosity and culture," said **Amanpreet Singh Bajaj, Country Head, Airbnb India and Southeast Asia.** *"Asia offers something rare: the familiarity of a culture Indian travellers love, and a chance to discover a new destination. That, paired with greater connectivity and the option to plan a meaningful yet short trip during a long weekend, makes Asia even more appealing to Indian travellers. It's interesting to see that Indian travellers are slowly moving beyond the templated and obvious, both internationally and within India, and proactively seeking destinations that feel more personal, not just popular."*

Yatri Launches City-Wide Campaign #SkipTheTraffic #SwitchToPublic

Travel Mail Desk

Yatri, the Official Mumbai Local Train App, has launched a city-wide movement, **#SkipTheTraffic #SwitchToPublic**, urging Mumbaikars to rethink their daily commute and consciously shift from private vehicles to public transport.

The campaign is built on a simple but powerful insight: Mumbai doesn't lack public transport-it lacks confidence in navigating it seamlessly.

With **#SkipTheTraffic #SwitchToPublic**, Yatri is reframing public transport as the smarter, more reliable everyday choice, one that helps commuters avoid daily traffic, reduce commute-related stress, and move through the city with greater ease.

Beyond convenience, the campaign also encourages a larger shift in mindset. Every move from private vehicles to public transport is a step toward reducing congestion, lowering individual carbon footprints, and contributing to a cleaner, more breathable Mumbai.

"The campaign is an opportunity to spark a larger behavioural shift across the city. With the #SkipTheTraffic #SwitchToPublic campaign, we're encouraging Mumbaikars to rethink their everyday commute, not just to avoid traffic and daily frustration but to

make a choice that benefits the city as a whole. When public transport becomes seamless and dependable, choosing it becomes instinctive. This campaign is about enabling that shift -one commute at a time," said **Reeva Sakaria, Co-Founder, Yatri.**



68% of Indian Travellers Likely to Use AI for Their Next Trip: Agoda

Travel Mail Desk

Indian travellers are increasingly turning to artificial intelligence (AI) to take the guesswork out of travel planning, not just for inspiration but across the journey from destination discovery to dining. According to Agoda's 2026 Travel Outlook Report, while one in three (33%) state they already use AI for travel planning, almost twice as many (68%) say they are likely to use it for their next trip. For a market that has always been quick to embrace technology, this indicates a growing appetite for AI across all stages of travel planning.

Data from the report suggests that what Indian travellers want from AI goes beyond a simple search. When asked how they would use it, respondents pointed to recommendations for local attractions and activities (38%), personalised itinerary creation (37%), and destination suggestions (29%). Interest also extends to dining recommendations (23%) and budget management (22%). These findings point to a traveller who expects AI to be present in every stage of the trip-planning process, not as a shortcut but as a smarter way to plan.

Sentiment towards AI-generated recommendations is broadly receptive, with nearly 9 in 10 respondents (88%) saying they either trust or feel neutral about such recommendations, including over half (53%) who express clear trust. This aligns with findings from Agoda's 2025 Travel Trends survey, in which nine in ten Indian travellers reported using travel apps when booking trips, pointing to an established comfort with technology in travel planning. For Indian travellers, embracing AI in travel planning is less a behavioural shift and more a natural progression, especially for a generation that has been planning and booking travel through a screen for over a decade.

Agoda has previously explored this through its 2025 AI-powered Vacation Planner campaign, which invited Indian travellers to answer a set of questions about their preferences, generating customised itineraries and destination visuals, with personalised recommendations delivered by Bollywood celebrity Ayushmann Khurrana. The campaign was a real-

world expression of the tailored, intuitive planning experience that travellers are increasingly looking for, and one that the 2026 survey findings reflect.

Gaurav Malik, Country Director, Indian Subcontinent & Indian Ocean Islands at Agoda, said, "Indian travellers are showing a clear appetite for AI across every stage of trip planning, from discovering destinations to deciding what to eat and even budgeting. This is no longer an emerging trend but is fast becoming the baseline for how a well-planned trip comes together. At Agoda, we continue to offer a range of technology and innovations that make the entire trip planning experience more accessible, convenient, and personalised for every traveller."

As AI becomes a more natural part of how people research and plan their travel, India stands out as a market where AI adoption in travel is not just growing but gaining clear intent and direction.

Destination Discovery

Travel Planning

Dining Recommendations

Budget Management



Skyscanner's Smarter Summer report

77% of Indians are confident to travel this summer

Travel Mail Desk

Despite a backdrop of uncertainty, summer travel is still on for many, with 77% of Indians confident about travelling in the next 3 months. In fact, nearly 9 in 10 Indians are planning or have already booked their Summer 2026 holiday. With only about 38% yet to book their summer holidays, but are actively looking, showing sustained desire for travel despite ongoing uncertainty.

However, there are early signs of more informed planning, with 58% believing July offers cheaper flights compared to August, highlighting a growing awareness of when to travel for better value.

Neel Ghose, Travel and Destinations Expert, Skyscanner India, said, "Summer 2026 is shaping up to be one of the most intent-driven travel seasons we've seen in India, but what's changing is how that intent is translating into action. Travellers are not stepping back; they are adapting within constraints. Instead of cancelling, they are staying flexible on where they go, with many willing to switch destinations in response to changing costs and conditions. We're also seeing a clear shift in mindset from 'where everyone is going' to 'where else can I go'. This growing openness to alternative and lesser-known destinations signals a more confident and value-aware traveller, one who is more open to switching plans if it improves the overall experience. With these pressures shaping decisions, travellers are looking for smarter ways to unlock value without compromising on the trip. Tools like Skyscanner's 'Whole Month' search are helping travellers make smarter decisions by making it easier to compare options, track fares, and identify better-value travel windows."

Outsmart Destination Choices and Summer Crowds

This shift is already visible in destination choices and travel patterns:

- 81% are open to lesser-known destinations
- 60% are actively seeking quieter, less crowded places
- 9 in 10 say it is important that their holiday spend benefits local communities and small businesses



Aviral Gupta, CEO of Zostel and Zo World, said, "At Zostel, we've been watching this shift happen in real time. Offbeat destinations across our network grew 88% year-on-year, and a significant 60% of those guests were first-time travellers, many of them from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Smaller-town India is no longer just a backdrop for travel stories; it's where the story begins. Partnering with Skyscanner on this report only reinforces what we see on the ground every day. The Indian traveller is smarter, bolder, and more curious than ever."

Outsmart Flexible Travel Planning

While travel intent remains strong, flexibility is also reshaping how plans are executed. Although 58% of travellers have fixed travel dates due to work or school commitments, 30% are choosing to switch destinations rather than cancel trips, showing how adaptability is becoming central to travel planning.

As travellers balance fixed schedules with evolving preferences, the findings point to a clear shift towards more flexible, value-led decision-making, where being open to alternatives is becoming the defining factor in making summer travel plans work.

Outsmart Group Travel Planning Hurdles

Planning group summer holidays is known to be effortful. On average, Indians spend over 15 hours coordinating a group trip, with nearly half saying it is more stressful than major life events such as moving house or planning a wedding.

The biggest challenge often lies in aligning preferences, budgets and schedules, making group travel one of the most time-consuming parts of the journey. As a result, travellers are increasingly looking for ways to simplify decision-making and reduce friction when planning together. The Skyscanner app has multiple travel planning tools to help travellers compare options and find the best deals available.

Beyond Planning: The Emotional Side of Travel

But beyond the planning, travel remains an emotional experience shaped by the moments, sounds, and memories that stay with us long after the trip ends. Complementing these insights from the Smarter Summer Report, Skyscanner has also curated a summer soundtrack, in collaboration with musician and artist Mayur Jumani, created from familiar sounds of travel, from planes taking off to security check-in, luggage trolleys, and airport announcements, bringing the rhythm of the journey itself to life.

'Look East' Travel Trend shapes Indian summer holiday choices

Travel Mail Desk

With summer already underway, Indian travellers are making the most of the season with spontaneous, experience-led getaways across East and Southeast Asia. Insights from Thomas Cook India and SOTC Travel highlight a strong "Look East" trend, with travellers favouring destinations that offer ease of access, shorter travel durations and a rich mix of cultural, culinary and leisure experiences. From vibrant cities to island escapes, these destinations are emerging as the perfect playground for last-minute summer travel.

Japan: Japan in summer is a sensory experience, where centuries-old traditions meet high-energy celebrations. Travellers can witness vibrant matsuri festivals with taiko drumming, parades and spectacular fireworks displays, while also exploring Tokyo's immersive digital art museums and quirky themed cafés. In Kyoto, early morning heritage walks through temple districts and bamboo groves offer a quieter, cultural contrast. Food lovers can go beyond sushi—sampling regional ramen trails or joining izakaya hopping tours in Osaka. For a more offbeat experience, travellers can stay in a traditional ryokan, participate in a tea ceremony or take a scenic rail journey through the Japanese Alps, making every moment deeply immersive and uniquely local.

South Korea: South Korea offers a compelling blend of pop culture, tradition and cutting-edge experiences that resonate strongly with Indian travellers. In Seoul, visitors can explore royal palaces like Gyeongbokgung in traditional hanbok, shop in vibrant districts such as Myeongdong and Gangnam, or dive into the city's buzzing café and K-beauty culture. Food enthusiasts can indulge in Korean barbecue, street food markets and interactive cooking experiences. Beyond the capital, Busan's coastal charm offers beachside relaxation and seafood markets, while Jeju Island provides scenic landscapes with waterfalls, lava tubes and hiking trails. From K-pop and K-dramas to heritage villages and wellness retreats, South Korea delivers a dynamic and trend-forward summer escape.

Indonesia: Bali offers far more than just beaches, positioning itself as a holistic escape blending culture, wellness and adventure. Travellers can start their day with sunrise yoga overlooking rice terraces in Ubud, followed by a visit to Tirta Empul for a traditional water purification



ritual. Evenings come alive with the dramatic Kecak fire dance at Uluwatu Temple set against a cliffside sunset. Adventure seekers can trek up Mount Batur at dawn or explore hidden waterfalls in the island's interior. Bali's café culture, beach clubs and artisanal markets add a contemporary edge, while the Bali Arts Festival provides an authentic window into the island's rich cultural heritage.

Thailand: Thailand continues to deliver high-energy, multi-layered travel experiences that cater to every kind of traveller. In Bangkok, visitors can explore bustling floating markets by day and rooftop bars by night, while also indulging in guided street food tours through Chinatown. The islands offer a different pace—whether it's kayaking through limestone caves in Krabi, snorkelling in the Phi Phi Islands or enjoying a private long-tail boat excursion at sunset. Wellness seekers can indulge in traditional Thai spa therapies, while culture enthusiasts can visit ornate temples or even take a Thai cooking class. Thailand's versatility and vibrant atmosphere make it a perennial summer favourite.

Vietnam: Vietnam offers a dynamic mix of landscapes and experiences that feel both immersive and refreshingly different. Travellers can spend a night cruising through Ha Long Bay, waking up to sunrise over limestone karsts, or wander through Hoi An's lantern-lit streets, stopping for riverside dining and local craft shopping. For a more relaxed island escape, Phu Quoc offers pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters and a slower pace of travel.

Visitors can snorkel among vibrant coral reefs, take the world's longest over-sea cable car to Hon Thom Island, or explore the lively night markets known for fresh seafood and local delicacies. In Sapa, guided treks through terraced rice fields offer interactions with local communities, adding depth to the journey. Urban explorers can dive into Hanoi's Old Quarter on a vintage Vespa food tour or discover hidden cafés serving Vietnam's famous egg coffee. With its balance of culture, cuisine, island escapes and natural beauty, Vietnam is quickly becoming a must-visit destination.

Mauritius: Mauritius goes beyond the typical beach holiday, offering a rich blend of relaxation and exploration. Travellers can sail on a catamaran along the coast, snorkel in coral reefs or take a helicopter ride to witness the island's famous "underwater waterfall" illusion. Inland, lush national parks and waterfalls provide opportunities for hiking and nature trails, while cultural experiences—from sega dance performances to local rum tastings—offer insight into the island's heritage. Whether it's a scenic road trip or a luxury beachfront stay, Mauritius delivers a well-rounded, indulgent escape.

Maldives: The Maldives offers an unparalleled sense of escape, where the focus is on slowing down and reconnecting. Beyond relaxing in overwater villas, travellers can snorkel alongside vibrant marine life, enjoy guided night fishing excursions or indulge in underwater dining experiences. Wellness is a key highlight, with spa therapies set against ocean views and sunrise yoga sessions on private decks. Unique experiences such as sandbank picnics, dolphin cruises and personalised butler-led stays elevate the destination beyond a typical beach holiday, making it ideal for those seeking exclusivity and tranquility.

New Zealand: New Zealand is a paradise for nature lovers and adventure enthusiasts alike. Travellers can cruise through the breathtaking fjords of Milford Sound, take scenic drives through rolling landscapes or explore glowworm caves for a unique natural spectacle. Queenstown, known as the adventure capital, offers everything from bungee jumping and jet boating to more relaxed vineyard tours. For a slower pace, visitors can enjoy lakeside stays, scenic दरेन journeys and immersive Māori cultural experiences. The country's pristine beauty and wide range of activities make it a truly unforgettable destination.

Brand USA Introduces Global Ambassador Program in India



Travel Mail Desk

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, is expanding its travel trade Ambassador Program in 2026, bringing the initiative to India for the first time as part of a major international rollout. Building on proven success, the program will scale across Brand USA’s core markets with a goal of appointing 250 travel trade Ambassadors by July 4, 2026, in alignment with America250 – the United States’ 250th anniversary.

Applications for the India cohort open on April 27, 2026, with travel advisors invited to apply via <https://ambassador-application-five.vercel.app/> by submitting either a written or video entry outlining their passion for the USA and their contributions to the travel trade.

“Travel advisors are one of the most powerful drivers of international visitation, and their influence extends well beyond individual bookings,” said **Malcolm Smith, Senior Vice President, Global Markets & Chief Trade and Product Development Officer at Brand USA.** *“Through the expanded Brand USA Global Ambassador Program, we’re investing in a network of highly engaged experts who can amplify U.S. destination knowledge within their markets. As a platform designed to connect the travel trade and inspire new USA specialists, it strengthens engagement and supports sustained inbound growth to the United States as part of our broader international strategy during America250.”*

The program was first piloted in Australia and New Zealand in 2025, where it brought together 12 travel advisors to form the inaugural cohort of Brand USA

Ambassadors. Focused on strengthening U.S. destination expertise, fostering mentorship, and encouraging knowledge sharing across the travel trade, the pilot demonstrated strong industry impact and set the foundation for global



expansion. Central to the program is a peer-to-peer approach, where agents share their knowledge and experiences within their own networks – creating a more connected and informed travel trade community.

A platform for industry change-makers

Positioned as a platform for engaged travel advisors, the program is designed for individuals who are passionate about the USA and eager to deepen their expertise, share knowledge, and play a more active role in industry conversations.

With education at its core, ambassadors gain access to a range of opportunities through Brand USA and its partners, including invitations to industry events, VIP networking access, and a structured training program featuring:

Benefits for India Ambassadors

Official recognition as a Brand USA Ambassador for India for a one-year tenure, supported by a press release across leading travel trade media, along with a certified badge for use across the Ambassador’s official platforms. Invitation to a kick-off event in India to onboard Ambassadors. A curated welcome kit featuring exclusive branded merchandise with the Ambassador emblem.

Participants will also be recognized across industry channels, reinforcing their role as trusted voices within the travel advisor community. A key highlight would be a chance to participate in an exclusive fam trip to the USA.

Beyond Prague

Exploring Czechia's New Travel Experiences

Travel Mail Desk

Indian travellers are returning to Europe, but this time, the focus is shifting from ticking off landmarks to seeking more meaningful, experience-led journeys. As this shift takes shape, Czechia is inviting travellers to look beyond its capital and discover a side of the country that feels both familiar and refreshingly new.

Prague continues to be the natural starting point, known for its historic charm and vibrant cultural scene. What is increasingly shaping travel to Czechia, however, is what lies beyond. A growing range of regions that offer distinctive experiences, all within easy reach of the capital. In line with evolving traveller preferences, Czechia is now actively introducing these regions into Indian itineraries, encouraging journeys that are more immersive and well-rounded.

This growing interest in exploring beyond Prague is also reflected in recent travel patterns. In 2025, Czechia welcomed over 90,000 Indian visitors, marking approximately 12.38% increase year-on-year. While Prague continues to attract the majority, regions beyond the capital are steadily gaining traction as travellers look for more immersive and less crowded experiences. This shift was further reinforced at Czechia Travel Trade Day 2026, which took place in Prague from 20th to 21st April 2026, where Czechia highlighted a wider portfolio of regional experiences and is actively

working with partners to introduce these emerging destinations into Indian itineraries.

Among the regions now being introduced to Indian travellers, some are redefining what Czechia has to offer. The Pilsen Region is not just about beer, even though it is the birthplace of the world-famous Pilsner. The region is quietly expanding its identity, with experiences that go beyond the expected. From exploring the legendary Pilsner Urquell Brewery to discovering traditional spirits at the historic Prádló Distillery, considered among the oldest distilleries in Czechia and known for preserving time-honoured production methods, travellers can experience a deeper side of the country's beverage heritage. The journey continues with Bohemia Sekt, the country's leading producer of sparkling wines, often referred to as the Czech equivalent of champagne, offering a refined glimpse into Czechia's evolving wine culture. Paired with castle visits and local culinary experiences, Pilsen presents a side of Czechia that feels both familiar and unexpectedly diverse.

Meanwhile, the Liberec Region offers a completely different perspective where nature, design and craftsmanship come together. While the region is known for the iconic Ještěd Tower, a futuristic structure set against panoramic mountain views, it is equally defined by its creative edge. Spaces like Pačinek

Glass showcase how traditional Czech glassmaking is being reimaged through contemporary art and design, with visitors even having the opportunity to try their hand at glass blowing, turning a centuries-old craft into a personal, immersive experience. Set within the dramatic landscapes of the Bohemian Paradise, with its sandstone formations and scenic trails, Liberec stands out as an experience that goes far beyond the typical European itinerary.

Together, these regions highlight how Czechia is evolving beyond its capital, offering travellers a more layered journey where culture, history and distinctive local experiences come together seamlessly. Commenting on this evolving trend, **Ms. Barbara Andelová, International Marketing Manager – New Markets, CzechTourism**, said *"Indian travellers are increasingly looking to go beyond the well-known highlights of Europe and spend more time experiencing local culture and regional diversity. Czechia offers a unique mix of historic cities and emerging regions, and we are actively working with partners to introduce these experiences into Indian itineraries, allowing travellers to explore at their own pace while discovering something new with each visit."*

As travel plans for the upcoming season take shape, Czechia offers Indian travellers the opportunity to discover more not just of Europe, but of the destination itself.



Disneyland Paris unveils Disney Adventure World and opens World of Frozen, marking a new era of immersive storytelling

Travel Mail Desk

Disneyland Paris enters a bold new chapter with the opening of World of Frozen and the unveiling of its reimagined second park, now renamed Disney Adventure World. This landmark transformation represents one of the most ambitious expansions in the resort's history, offering guests fully immersive worlds inspired by stories from Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar Animation Studios and Marvel.

At the heart of this new experience lies Adventure Way, a vibrant promenade designed as a gateway to exploration, featuring landscaped gardens, entertainment and new dining experiences, as well as Raiponce Tangled Spin, a family attraction inspired by Walt Disney Animation Studios' Tangled.

Adventure Way leads to Adventure Bay, a breathtaking central lake that anchors the park and hosts the all-new nighttime spectacular, Disney Cascade of Lights. Beyond it rises the expansion's centrepiece, World of Frozen, a fully immersive land transporting guests into the Kingdom of Arendelle.

Opening day began with a heartfelt moment as children from Make-A-Wish and their families became the first guests

to step into Adventure Way, reflecting Disneyland Paris' long-standing commitment to creating joy for those who need it most.

This milestone follows a spectacular inauguration ceremony held the previous evening.

During the ceremony, **Natacha Rafalski, Présidente of Disneyland® Paris**, said *"With Disney Adventure World, we're not only unveiling a reimagined second gate at Disneyland Paris; we're opening the door to a new era. An era where our guests walk straight into the heart of the stories they love."*

"We continue to expand Disneyland Paris with ambition and purpose," **Thomas Mazloum, Chairman of Disney Experiences**, said *"The reimagining of our second gate reflects the very best of what Disney represents: boundless imagination that brings people together."*

"Few stories have resonated with fans around the world like Frozen," said **Josh D'Amaro, Chief Executive Officer, The Walt Disney Company**. *"From the screen to our parks, cruises, and beyond, its*

impact continues to grow, and with World of Frozen and Disney Adventure World, we're giving guests at Disneyland Paris the opportunity to experience that story in entirely new ways."

The ceremony featured a special musical performance celebrating Disney Animation's Frozen, highlighted by a moving duet between a young Make-A-Wish child and French-American singer Santa. The moment was enhanced by the appearance of Olaf, brought to life through cutting-edge robotic technology developed by Walt Disney Imagineering, and marked the 25,000th wish granted at Disneyland Paris since 1992.

The celebration drew international attention, welcoming celebrities including renowned French designer Christian Louboutin, acclaimed actress Léa Seydoux, French actor Lucas Bravo, cinema icon Isabelle Huppert, and world-renowned football champion Olivier Giroud.

With Disney Adventure World and World of Frozen, Disneyland Paris reaffirms its position as Europe's leading tourist destination, continuing to innovate and deliver unforgettable experiences for guests from around the world.



Khorfakkan

Sharjah's Coastal Gem

Travel Mail Desk

Located on Sharjah's picturesque east coast, Khorfakkan has emerged as one of the emirate's most captivating destinations, inviting visitors to explore scenic landscapes, cultural landmarks and exciting outdoor experiences. Nestled between the dramatic Hajar Mountains and the eastern coastline of Sharjah, the charming coastal town of Khorfakkan offers travellers a refreshing blend of nature, adventure and heritage.

Khorfakkan's story dates back thousands of years, with archaeological discoveries indicating human settlement in the region since the early Bronze Age. Historically, the town developed as an important trading hub due to its strategic coastal location and natural harbour.

Over the years, it retained its original charm and evolved as a magical destination steeped in history but with all the modern conveniences.

One of the destination's highlights is Khorfakkan Beach, a beautiful three-kilometre crescent-shaped shoreline ideal for relaxing by the sea or enjoying thrilling water sports. Adventure seekers can dive into the region's vibrant marine life with snorkelling and scuba diving, paddle through tranquil waters on kayaking excursions, or embark on boat trips around the nearby Sira Khorfakkan Island, a popular spot known for its crystal-clear waters and colourful coral reefs.

Visitors can also explore iconic landmarks such as the stunning Khorfakkan Amphitheatre, a majestic Roman-inspired venue overlooking the bay, complete with a dramatic waterfall cascading from the mountainside. For nature lovers, Al Rafisah Dam offers kayaking, scenic walking trails, and breathtaking mountain views, while the nearby Al Hefaiyah Mountain Conservation Centre provides a chance to discover native wildlife in a protected natural habitat.

Perched high above the city, Al Suhub Rest House offers spectacular panoramic views of the coastline and mountains, making it a perfect spot to unwind and take in the beauty of the region.

The city also plays a key role in maritime trade through the Port of Khorfakkan, one of the UAE's major container ports and the only natural deep-sea port on the country's east coast. Strategically positioned along global shipping routes connecting Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Middle East, the port has helped shape Khorfakkan's identity as both a historic and modern maritime gateway.

From adrenaline-filled water adventures to rich cultural experiences and a fascinating maritime legacy, Khorfakkan perfectly showcases Sharjah's diverse tourism offering, making it an unforgettable escape for travellers seeking both adventure and relaxation.



Finland's Midsummer 2026

Everything Indian Travellers Need to Know

Travel Mail Desk

For Indian travellers looking to beat the summer heat this year, Finland offers a refreshingly different escape through its Midsummer celebration, or juhannus. Falling on 19–20 June 2026, this unique festival unfolds under near-endless daylight, as the country slows down and moves closer to nature.

From lakeside retreats to midnight sun experiences, it presents a rare opportunity to experience summer in a way that is calm, immersive, and distinctly different from the usual crowded getaways. With direct connectivity from Delhi to Helsinki on Finnair, planning a trip around fixed Midsummer dates has become far more seamless.

The meaning of juhannus

At its core, Juhannus celebrates light, togetherness, and the peak of summer, as Finns retreat to lakeside cottages for sauna, swims, and long meals under a sky that barely darkens. Anchored by the traditional kokko (bonfire), along with music, dance, and seasonal food, the festival is less about spectacle and more

about slowing down, offering a rare sense of stillness, nature, and uninterrupted light.

Where to experience it the best? Lakeside cottages (Lakeland)

The most traditional setting to spend Midsummer is at quiet lakes, private saunas and unhurried evenings. Regions around Lake Saimaa and Lake Päijänne define the experience. If you're looking to disconnect, this is where Juhannus feels most authentic.

Rovaniemi & the Arctic Circle

For a more social atmosphere, Rovaniemi hosts public celebrations right on the Arctic Circle, where the sun doesn't set at all. Bonfires, music and riverfront gatherings make this one of the easiest ways to experience Midsummer without a private cottage.

Lapland (Ivalo, Kittilä)

Further north, the midnight sun becomes more dramatic. The landscape stays lit

around the clock, with late-night hikes, wildlife sightings and a deeper sense of stillness.

Helsinki

The capital takes on a rare calm. With locals leaving, the city slows down noticeably. Parks and waterfronts like Kaivopuisto and Pihlajasaari become the centre of low-key gatherings.

Experiences to plan around

Across the country, Midsummer is marked by a mix of traditional and contemporary gatherings. In Helsinki, the Seurasaari Midsummer Bonfires (19 June) bring together folk music, dancing and a classic heritage setting, while in Rovaniemi, the Ounaskoski celebration offers a more informal riverside atmosphere with live music and bonfires. Further north, the Solstice Festival in Kuusamo blends art and music under the midnight sun, while the Midnight Sun Film Festival in Sodankylä runs nearly around the clock, pairing cinema with the surreal rhythm of endless daylight.



DZT Campaigns 2026

Focus on Culture, Culinary Experiences, Cities, and Nature

With four global campaigns and three thematic priorities, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is promoting Germany as a travel destination in the international market, including India in 2026. Germany's strong position as a cultural and city travel destination, as well as the high demand for authentic experiences, gastronomy, and nature, are at the centre of this effort.

Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the GNTB, said *"Germany as a travel destination is excellently positioned with its pronounced hospitality culture and outstanding brand image as a service-oriented quality destination. Our campaigns and thematic priorities deliberately leverage these strengths to inspire potential travellers to Germany in key markets. This allows us to reach new customers from growth markets while also giving returning visitors reasons to travel to Germany again. In 2025, international tourists in Germany contributed €78.5 billion in travel expenditure to economic value creation. This, in turn, supports the medium-sized tourism sector."*

City Campaign **"Your Next Stop: Travel Destination Germany"**

City trips rank among the top three interests of international travellers worldwide, according to an exclusive

Appinio study conducted for the DZT. With its cosmopolitan and rich cultural scene and diverse urban life, Germany is the number one city travel destination for travellers. To further boost inbound tourism for hotels, gastronomy, and retail, the DZT is running an inspiring, sales-oriented campaign, highlighting both the lifestyle in major cities and the unique charm of smaller towns.

"Culinary Germany" Campaign

Experiencing local cuisine is the second most frequently cited activity among international city and cultural travellers—after exploring cultural heritage and sightseeing—according to the Appinio study for the DZT. The "Culinary Germany" campaign aims to position Germany worldwide as a versatile and attractive culinary travel destination with a strong hospitality culture.

The core message emphasizes that unique cultural experiences emerge from the close connection between gastronomy, cuisine, and hotels. As an inspirational campaign, "Culinary Germany" showcases the country as a land of culinary and cultural delights, highlighting seasonal specialities and regional products. Food is always presented in the context of its region and the experience itself.

At the heart of the campaign is a widget that takes users on an inspiring culinary journey through Germany. Based on individual interests and preferences, it recommends regions and specific attractions from the DZT Knowledge Graph, including points of interest, restaurants, hotels, food events, and wine festivals. The campaign is complemented by a new campaign film, social media, programmatic advertising, newsletters, influencer and journalist trips, as well as press and B2B communications.

"Feel Good – Experiences That Stay"

A central goal of the DZT's sustainability strategy is to position Germany as a travel destination with a wide range of certified sustainable offerings. The internationally acclaimed campaign "Simply Feel Good" demonstrates how varied vacations can be enjoyed in harmony with the environment, both in nature and in the city. In 2026, the DZT will present the campaign under the new tagline: "Feel Good – Experiences That Stay."



FICCIFLO Launches its 22nd Chapter in Raipur, Chhattisgarh

Travel Mail Desk

FICCI Ladies Organisation, the apex body of businesswomen in the country, under the dynamic leadership of the 43rd National President, Puja Garg, and guided by her vision of strengthening women-led growth across India, launched its 22nd Chapter in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

Speaking on the occasion, Puja Garg emphasised that the expansion into Raipur is a significant step in FLO's mission to empower women across India. She highlighted that FLO is dedicated to equipping women with the resources, mentorship, and networks needed to thrive as entrepreneurs and professionals, thereby contributing meaningfully to both regional and national growth. She further reiterated FLO's commitment to supporting aspiring entrepreneurs as well as established women leaders in scaling their ventures.

Dr. Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals, underscored the broader context of women's



empowerment, noting that while women today have equal access to education, their participation in the workforce remains disproportionately low. She highlighted that the unpaid care economy continues to go unrecognised, financial inclusion remains limited, and access to assets for entrepreneurship is still a challenge. She described this gap as an opportunity and stated that with the dynamism of FLO and the addition of the

Raipur Chapter, there is immense potential to unlock women's leadership in India's rapidly evolving knowledge economy.

Smt. Meenal Choubey, Mayor of Raipur, described the occasion as a historic moment for the city and the state, emphasising that women's empowerment is the foundation of inclusive and sustainable development. She noted that the launch of the FLO Raipur Chapter will open new pathways for leadership, entrepreneurship, and economic progress in Chhattisgarh.

Poonam Agrawal, and Founder Chairperson of the FLO Raipur Chapter, stated that this marks the beginning of a strong and supportive ecosystem for women in the region. She expressed her commitment to building a platform that enables women to connect, collaborate, and access the resources needed to grow and scale their ventures, fostering meaningful impact and long-term development.

PATA and Macao Partner to Accelerate Business Opportunities at PTM 2027

Travel Mail Desk

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is delighted to announce that PATA Travel Mart 2027 is going to be organised in Macao, China, from September 20–22, 2027. The event will be hosted by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), one of the Association's longest-standing collaborators.

"For the first time in a decade, the Association's flagship Travel Mart will be organised in Macao, China," said **PATA CEO Noor Ahmad Hamid**.

"We had the opportunity to experience the destination's world-class hospitality in 2010 and 2017 during the first and second PATA Travel Marts held in Macao, and most recently in 2024 during the PATA Annual Summit. Furthermore, MGTO has also been a longstanding supporter of the PATA Gold Awards for more than 30 years. With this strong partnership and Macao's exceptional capabilities as a host destination, we are confident that this Travel Mart will further showcase the city's excellence and hospitality on the global stage."



He added, *"We look forward to jointly working with MGTO in preparation for the travel mart, as well as bringing our global network of leading exhibitors and buyers to the destination next year."*

MGTO Director Maria Helena de Senna Fernandes said, *"We are looking forward to welcoming PATA Travel Mart delegates once again next year for a firsthand update on the dynamic developments of Macao as a world centre of tourism and leisure, with an emphasis on diversification. PATA has always been an important*

platform for Macao's tourism industry to connect with peers in the Asia Pacific and beyond. By hosting this PATA flagship event, we are also pleased to offer delegates the opportunity to fully leverage our city's unique advantages in connecting the Chinese mainland with the world."

PATA Travel Mart is one of Asia Pacific's longest-standing international travel trade exhibitions. Structured as a three-day event, PTM 2027 will feature networking and contracting opportunities to help travel and tourism organisations gain access to influential decision-makers across the Asia Pacific. Buyers and exhibitors will expand their professional network and strengthen existing business partnerships to reinforce their foundation and ensure robust growth.

Alongside the main travel trade show, PTM 2027 will offer delegates access to a full-day insight forum on the latest tourism trends, the PATA Gold Awards 2027 celebration, and additional social functions across the three-day programme.

POWERING CRUISE GROWTH

How Int2Cruises' Partner Hub is Reshaping India's B2B Cruise Ecosystem

Travel Mail Desk

As India's appetite for experiential travel continues to rise, the cruise segment is emerging as a high-potential growth avenue—particularly within the B2B space. However, despite strong demand, the ecosystem remains fragmented, posing operational challenges for travel agents and limiting scalability. In this exclusive interaction, Ms. Akansha Agarwal, Co-founder and CMO of Int2Cruises, shares insights on how the newly launched Partner Hub is streamlining cruise distribution, enhancing agent efficiency, and unlocking new opportunities across metro as well as Tier II and III markets. She also discusses evolving industry dynamics, early adoption trends, and the roadmap for building a more integrated, technology-driven cruise booking ecosystem in India.

How do you see the B2B cruise segment in India evolving over the next 12–18 months, and what role will travel agents continue to play in driving growth?

The B2B cruise segment in India is set for strong growth over the next 12–18 months, driven by rising demand for experiential travel and increasing awareness of global cruise offerings. As the market evolves, there is a clear shift towards more structured and technology-led distribution models. However, the current ecosystem remains fragmented, with travel agents often relying on multiple tools to complete a single booking, impacting efficiency and scalability. Addressing this challenge is key to unlocking the segment's full potential. At Int2Cruises, our Partner Hub is a strategic priority aimed at simplifying this process by bringing together 12+ global cruise lines on a single, tech-enabled platform, thereby enhancing access, speed, and ease of booking for our partners. Travel



Ms. Akansha Agarwal
Co-founder and CMO of Int2Cruises

agents will continue to play a pivotal role in driving growth, and our focus is to empower them with the right tools—putting the power back in the hands of those who are actually selling cruises while enabling a more efficient and scalable ecosystem.

Despite strong demand potential, cruise distribution in India remains fragmented. What are the biggest inefficiencies agents face today, and how do these impact booking conversions?

Despite the strong demand potential, cruise distribution in India continues to face structural inefficiencies due to its highly fragmented nature. Travel agents

today are required to navigate multiple platforms and supplier systems to access inventory, generate quotes, and complete bookings. This fragmented workflow not only increases turnaround time but also limits visibility, consistency, and ease of comparison—critical factors in a high-involvement category like cruises.

These inefficiencies have a direct impact on booking conversions. Delays in sharing accurate, real-time information with customers, coupled with a complex booking process, often lead to drop-offs or missed opportunities. In many cases, the lack of a unified system restricts an agent's ability to respond quickly and confidently, which is crucial in converting intent into confirmed bookings.

Addressing these challenges is central to unlocking growth in the B2B segment. At Int2Cruises, our focus is on enabling a more streamlined, efficient ecosystem that empowers travel agents with the tools needed to improve productivity and drive higher conversions.

What was the strategic thinking behind launching the Partner Hub, and how does it fundamentally improve the way agents discover, compare, and book cruise products?

The launch of the Int2Cruises Partner Hub is driven by a key industry insight: travel agents remain central to cruise sales, accounting for nearly 60% of bookings, as highlighted in our recent Cruise Trends Report. This reinforced the need for a dedicated B2B platform to address persistent inefficiencies in cruise distribution.

Historically, agents have relied on multiple systems to search, compare, and book cruise products, leading to fragmented

workflows, inconsistent information, and slower turnaround times. The Partner Hub streamlines this process by bringing together over 12 global cruise lines on a single platform, supported by real-time inventory and transparent pricing. This enables agents to seamlessly move from search to booking without switching tools.

Additionally, the platform simplifies decision-making by allowing quick comparisons, helping agents serve clients more efficiently and confidently. Our current focus is on building a reliable, high-impact solution, with growth expected to follow as adoption increases.

Early adoption often determines the success of such platforms—what has the initial response from agents been, and what insights have emerged so far?

We have already seen encouraging results in terms of early adoption. Most notably, we have received highly positive feedback from travel agents on the product – an expected outcome, yet nonetheless gratifying. One of the first key insights was the clear demand for a platform dedicated exclusively to cruise distribution.

The second insight highlights the relief among partners at being able to operate on a single, unified platform, rather than navigating multiple systems to access different cruise lines. Previously, agents had to rely on several platforms to obtain real-time quotes or complete bookings. With 12+ leading global cruise lines now integrated into the Partner Hub, this complexity has been significantly reduced.

Finally, our agent-first approach to designing the platform has resonated strongly with partners. Unlike many existing solutions that focus primarily on end customers, Partner Hub is built around the needs of travel agents, making it both intuitive and highly effective.

How many travel agents are you planning to onboard in the first phase, and which markets—especially across Tier II and Tier III cities—are you prioritising?

At this stage, our priority is not to achieve a specific onboarding target, but to bring in the right set of travel agents—those who are committed to the cruise segment and can create meaningful value through the platform. In the early phase of the Partner Hub launch, the quality of adoption is far more critical than scale.



From a market perspective, metro cities are a natural starting point, given their established travel ecosystems. However, what is equally encouraging is the strong demand emerging from Tier II and III cities, where interest in cruise holidays is steadily gaining momentum among consumers.

This presents a significant growth opportunity. Our objective is to extend the reach of Partner Hub beyond metros, enabling agents in Tier II and III markets to access and sell global cruise inventories with the same level of pricing transparency, efficiency, and convenience as their counterparts in larger cities.

Are there defined targets in terms of bookings or revenue contribution from this segment, or is the current focus more on building scale and agent adoption?

At this stage, our strategic focus is firmly on driving meaningful adoption, rather than anchoring our approach to predefined targets for bookings or revenue contribution. As underscored in our recent Cruise Trends Report, nearly 60% of cruise bookings are facilitated through the B2B channel, highlighting the critical role of travel agents within the ecosystem.

Given that Partner Hub is still in its formative phase, it would be premature to establish definitive performance benchmarks in terms of bookings or revenue. Our immediate priority is to build a robust, agent-centric platform that effectively addresses longstanding industry challenges, including a fragmented technology landscape, a lack of real-time pricing, and inefficient booking experiences.

By delivering an integrated, end-to-end solution that brings together 12+ global cruise lines, Partner Hub is designed to enhance agent productivity and operational efficiency. At this juncture, our objective is to ensure that agents derive tangible value from the platform, with sustained growth expected to follow organically as adoption deepens.

With 12+ cruise line integrations already in place, how do you plan to expand the platform further, and what can partners expect in terms of future capabilities or inventory?

With 12+ cruise line integrations already in place, our next focus is on further strengthening inventory depth and enhancing booking capabilities. Currently, the platform integrates leading global ocean cruise lines—from discovery through to booking— including Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Disney Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, MSC Cruises, Silversea, Viking, Celebrity Cruises, and Carnival, among others. This ensures that agents have access to a comprehensive global inventory within a single, unified platform.

Looking ahead, we plan to onboard additional cruise lines, with a strong emphasis on enabling smoother checkouts and faster confirmations. This will not only expand discovery opportunities for agents but also make the booking process more seamless, efficient, and reliable.

Beyond inventory expansion, we are continuously investing in platform enhancements, including advanced search and comparison tools and more intuitive integrations. Our overarching vision is to build a future-ready cruise booking platform that evolves in tandem with the industry and its growing demands.

Balitrip Wisata Expands DMC Hub Concept, Sees Strong Outbound Growth for 2026



Mr. Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar, Founder & Director of DMC Hub, Balitrip Wisata

Travel Mail Desk

In an exclusive conversation, **Mr. Dheeraj Ranjan Kumar, Founder & Director of DMC Hub, Balitrip Wisata**, shared insights into the company's unique DMC Hub concept, its expansion into new destinations, and the strong demand expected from the Indian outbound travel market in 2026.

We heard about new destinations being added. What is the idea behind these expansions?

DMC Hub is a very unique concept. It is not just about offering multiple outbound destinations. The idea is to connect multiple destinations through one central hub, which in our case is Bali.

Traditionally, travellers go from India to one international destination and return. But with the DMC Hub model, we create a travel circle. Travellers can visit multiple destinations and eventually connect back to Bali as the hub.

This concept allows us to combine experiences across destinations such as Vietnam, Dubai, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines while keeping Bali at the centre of the network.

This circular travel model is something new, which is why we call it the DMC Hub.

How has 2025 been so far, and what are your expectations for 2026?

2025 has been a very good year for us. However, since December, we have already started seeing strong traction for 2026 bookings.

In particular, travel for the second quarter – April, May, and June – is already getting booked quickly, which is a very positive sign for the outbound travel industry.

Another important factor is the increase in airline capacity. New airlines are entering the market, and flight inventories are expanding. At the same

time, corporates are allocating larger budgets for MICE travel and incentive groups. All of this is creating strong momentum for outbound travel in 2026.

Why should travel agents choose Balitrip Wisata as their network partner?

The most important factor in the travel agency fraternity is trust. Over the years, we have built a reputation as one of the most trusted brands among travel agents across India.

This year also marks our 10th anniversary, which reflects the strong relationships we have built with our partners.

Personally, I have also represented the Bali Tourism Board for three years, which further strengthened our understanding of the destination and the travel trade.

Our goal has always been to support travel agents with reliable partnerships, innovative concepts like the DMC Hub, and strong destination expertise.

OPO Hotels Expands Across Spiritual Destinations, Targets 50 Alliances by Year-End



Mr. Sandeep Basu, CEO of OPO Hotels and Resorts

Travel Mail Desk

As India witnesses a surge in spiritual tourism and destination weddings, hospitality brands are strategically expanding into pilgrimage hubs and culturally significant locations. In this interaction with Travel Mail, **Mr. Sandeep Basu, CEO of OPO Hotels and Resorts**, shares insights into the company's asset-light model, rapid expansion plans, and its growing footprint across key destinations including Ayodhya, Jaipur, and emerging pilgrimage circuits.

Can you introduce yourself and tell us about OPO Hotels and Resorts? Why should one stay at OPO Hotel?

OPO operates on an asset-light model and began its journey nearly a decade ago with OPO Rooms. Over the years, we have evolved into a hospitality management company and currently operate around 16 hotels.

Our presence initially was concentrated in the Delhi-NCR region, but we have now expanded into destinations such as Jaipur and Khatu. We are also entering markets like Greater Patna, Kolkata, and Ayodhya, where we have recently signed a 150-key property. Additionally, we are establishing a footprint in the Northeast, including Itanagar, Guwahati, and Ziro Valley.

At present, we have 25 alliances, out of which 15 hotels are operational, while the rest are in pre-opening stages. We are operating 457 keys, with an additional 1,000 keys in the pipeline. Our target is to reach 50 alliances by the end of the year.

You mentioned expansion into Khatu. Are you focusing on spiritual destinations?

Yes, absolutely. Our current focus is on spiritual and pilgrimage destinations. After Khatu, we are planning to expand into Pushkar, Ajmer, Ayodhya, and Varanasi,

with ongoing discussions for Shirdi as well. This segment is a key differentiator for us and forms our core USP.

How has the market been so far, and what trends are you observing this year?

The market is performing very well. With our expansion into Jaipur, we are also targeting the MICE and weddings segment. Destination weddings are gaining popularity, not just in Jaipur but also in Ayodhya, which is emerging as a new hotspot.

Our upcoming property in Ayodhya will feature large wedding lawns and a swimming pool, catering to this growing demand. We are also expanding into Ranthambore and Udaipur, both of which are strong destinations for weddings and leisure travel. Overall, it is a very promising market with strong growth potential.

Sun Siyam Resorts Unveils Major Rebrand, Introduces Unique Guest Experiences for Indian Travellers



Mr. Rakesh Gupta, Regional Account Director – India at Sun Siyam Resort

Travel Mail Desk

In an exclusive interaction, **Mr. Rakesh Gupta, Regional Account Director – India at Sun Siyam Resorts**, spoke about the brand's major rebranding initiative, new experiential offerings, and its focus on the Indian market showcased at SATTE.

What's new with your brand and its offerings for the Indian market in 2026?

We recently completed a major rebranding of Sun Siyam Resorts, which was officially launched in September 2025. The focus of this transformation is primarily for 2026 and beyond.

This rebranding is far more than a cosmetic change. It's not just about a new font, colours, or visuals. Over the past three and a half years, we have worked extensively behind the scenes to redesign the entire guest experience.

As part of this transformation, we have introduced 10 unique experiences at each of our resorts. These experiences are exclusive and not available anywhere else in the Maldives. Our goal was to create something truly unique and out-of-the-box for guests.

We also focused heavily on training and refining service standards, improving even the smallest elements of the guest journey to elevate the overall hospitality experience.

Could you tell us about the different resorts under Sun Siyam and how they cater to various travellers?

Currently, Sun Siyam Resorts operates five resorts, which are now categorised under three collections.

Under the Luxury Collection, we have Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, which is a truly exceptional luxury resort.

The Privé Collection focuses on highly personalised and private island experiences. This includes Sun Siyam Iru Veli, a premium five-star all-inclusive property, and Sun Siyam Vilu Reef.

The Lifestyle Collection, which is extremely popular with Indian travellers, includes Sun Siyam World and Sun Siyam Olhuveli.

These resorts cater to a wide range of travellers, from luxury seekers to families and lifestyle-focused guests.

How does Sun Siyam differentiate itself in the Maldives market?

One of our biggest differentiators is that all five Sun Siyam resorts operate on a 24-hour all-inclusive concept. Our bars never close, which is quite unique in the Maldives, where most resorts typically close their bars late in the evening.

Another strong advantage is our family-friendly policy. At three of our resorts, up to two children under the age of 15 stay complimentary. If the resort is accessible via speedboat, the transfer is also complimentary for them. For seaplane transfers, charges apply according to airline regulations.

Additionally, all our resorts are located on natural islands. Many newer developments in the Maldives are built on reclaimed sandbanks, which are beautiful in their own way, but natural islands offer a very different and authentic experience.

Are there any special initiatives or offers for travel agents and guests this year? Yes, we have launched several attractive packages across our resorts.

For example, guests booking Sun Siyam Iru Veli can enjoy complimentary floating breakfast, a 60-minute spa treatment, and up to three excursions included in their stay. These packages offer extensive inclusions designed to enhance the guest experience.

In fact, the inclusions are so comprehensive that even a four-night stay may not be enough to experience everything that's included.

KERALA TRAVEL MART 2026 to Spotlight Leisure, MICE and Destination Weddings

Travel Mail Desk

In an exclusive interaction, **Mr. Rajkumar K, Chief Executive Officer of the Kerala Travel Mart Society**, shared insights into Kerala's tourism growth and the preparations for the upcoming 13th edition of the Kerala Travel Mart.

How has Kerala grown as a tourism destination, and what are your expectations from SATTE this year?

As everyone knows, Kerala entered the tourism sector slightly later compared to destinations like Delhi, Rajasthan, and Goa. However, over the years, Kerala has witnessed tremendous growth in both inbound and domestic tourism.

According to the latest statistics for 2024, the total tourist footfall to Kerala has reached around 1.5 crore visitors, reflecting the increasing popularity of the destination among travellers.

Events like SATTE provide an important platform for us to connect with travel trade partners, promote Kerala's diverse tourism offerings, and strengthen relationships with the global travel industry.

Could you tell us more about the upcoming Kerala Travel Mart?

The 13th edition of Kerala Travel Mart will be held in September this year. The inaugural function is scheduled for 24 September, and the business sessions will take place from 24 to 27 September.

We expect over 1,000 domestic buyers from across India and around 400 to 500 international hosted buyers to participate in the event. In addition to these, we anticipate 1,500 to 2,000 non-hosted buyers as well.

The registration process has already begun, and we have already crossed 1,000 registrations from both domestic and international participants. The response so far has been very encouraging.



Mr. Rajkumar K, Chief Executive Officer of the Kerala Travel Mart Society

What will be the key focus areas at this year's Kerala Travel Mart?

Leisure tourism will remain the main focus for Kerala, as the state offers a wide range of experiences, including nature, backwaters, wellness, and cultural tourism.

At the same time, we have been actively promoting MICE and destination weddings over the past few years. Destination weddings, in particular, have emerged as an important segment for Kerala Tourism.

On 5 August 2025, we organised the first-ever Wedding and MICE Conclave in Kochi, which was a significant success. It was one of the first dedicated events in India focused specifically on these segments.

Building on this momentum, we plan to further strengthen these verticals at the upcoming Kerala Travel Mart. We will invite corporates, wedding planners, and MICE operators, and there will be a dedicated platform for them during the event.

Crown & Champa Resorts Appoints Think Strawberries as its Official Representative in India

Travel Mail Desk

Crown & Champa Resorts has announced the appointment of Think Strawberries as its official representative in India, reinforcing its commitment to strengthening its presence in one of its most important and rapidly growing source markets. Through this strategic partnership, the renowned Maldivian hospitality group aims to further engage with the Indian travel trade, media, and consumers to showcase its diverse portfolio of island resorts.

"India has emerged as one of the most influential and resilient source markets for the Maldives in recent years, with Indian travellers showing a deep appreciation for the country's unique island experiences," said **Ahmed Shaheen, Chief Commercial Leader, Crown & Champa Resorts.** *"Across our resorts, from ultra-luxury private island retreats and wellness sanctuaries to vibrant family-friendly escapes, we have consistently welcomed a growing number of Indian guests celebrating honeymoons, special occasions, and*



Mr. Ahmed Shaheen
Chief Commercial
Leader, Crown &
Champa Resorts.



**Ms. Munnamm
Marwah**
COO, Think
Strawberries

leisure holidays. We are delighted to partner with Think Strawberries, whose strong understanding of the Indian travel landscape and established relationships with the trade will help us further strengthen our presence and connect more Indian travellers with the diverse experiences offered across our resorts."

Commenting on the partnership, **Munnamm Marwah, COO, Think Strawberries,** said, *"We are delighted to represent Crown & Champa Resorts in India, a collection that beautifully showcases the diversity and charm of the Maldives. Each resort offers a distinctive experience, from intimate luxury and wellness retreats to vibrant family-friendly island escapes, making the portfolio highly appealing to Indian travellers. We look forward to working closely with the travel trade and media to further strengthen the brand's presence in India and inspire more Indian guests to discover these exceptional island experiences."*

IHG Hotels & Resorts to bring luxury hospitality to the heart of Delhi with the signing of InterContinental Eros New Delhi Nehru Place

Travel Mail Desk

IHG® Hotels & Resorts, one of the world's leading hotel companies, has announced the signing of a management agreement with Eros Group (Nehru Place Hotels Pvt Ltd) to open InterContinental Eros New Delhi Nehru Place. Slated to open under the InterContinental brand post renovation, which is expected to be completed in 2029, the new addition is in line with IHG's strategy to expand its luxury and lifestyle portfolio across key locations in India.

Commenting on the announcement, **Sudeep Jain, Managing Director, South West Asia, IHG Hotels & Resorts,** said, *"We are delighted to once again partner with Eros Group (Nehru Place Hotels Private Limited) to bring our global luxury brand, InterContinental, to the national capital. South Delhi's blend of corporate offices, embassies, and landmark attractions makes it an ideal location for a hotel of this calibre. Further strengthening our existing association*



with Eros Group, we look forward to creating a destination that supports both business and leisure demand while offering a luxury hospitality experience to our discerning guests."

He further added, *"Delhi is one of the most stable hospitality markets in the country and is characterised by a robust occupancy and ADR. With InterContinental*

Eros New Delhi Nehru Place, we will be positioned to strengthen our presence in one of India's most vital economic hubs and deliver world-class hospitality."

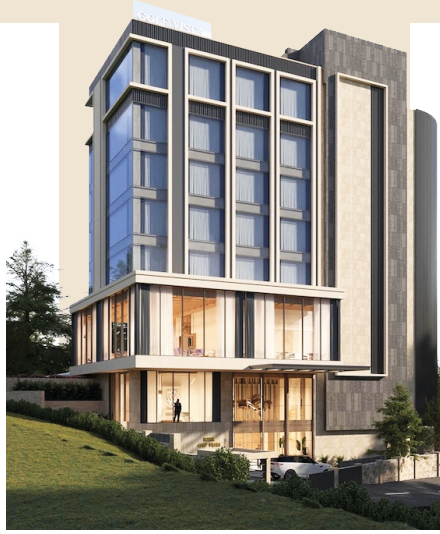
Mr Satish Sood, Managing Director, Eros Group (Nehru Place Hotels Pvt Ltd) added, *"We are proud to further strengthen our existing relationship and again partner with IHG Hotels & Resorts to bring the InterContinental brand back to this iconic site. We are confident the hotel will be a great success – InterContinental Hotels & Resorts is a true industry leader in luxury hospitality that resonates with discerning travellers all over the world. Additionally, we are certain that leveraging IHG's enterprise systems and loyalty program will maximise returns and strengthen our competitive advantage. This partnership aligns with our long-term vision of developing landmark hospitality assets in India's most dynamic cities, and we look forward to welcoming our guests as we open doors as the "InterContinental Eros" hotel.*

Atmosphere Core strengthens Northeast India presence with entry into Shillong

Travel Mail Desk

Atmosphere Core is pleased to announce its strategic collaboration with Shri Rocky Dhar to launch an upscale boutique hotel in the picturesque northeastern hill station of Shillong, Meghalaya. Slated to open in 2027, DHAR GOLF VISTA by Atmosphere Shillong will be ideally located in Meghalaya's capital city, only an hour from Shillong Airport and right beside the prestigious 18-hole Golf Link Arena.

Mr. Salil Panigrahi, Co-Founder & Managing Director of Atmosphere Core, stated, "As part of our dynamic expansion across India, a key focus is our approach towards developing premium experiences in hill station destinations, particularly in the beautiful northeastern region. This upcoming boutique property at Shillong, Meghalaya, is being thoughtfully designed to cater to a diverse range of travellers—from leisure seekers and corporate guests to curated events and social get-togethers".



Speaking on this latest venture destination, **Mr. Souvagya Mohapatra, Managing Director Atmosphere Core India, Bhutan, Nepal & Sri Lanka,** added, "The Northeastern state's hill stations have always been central to our vision

of creating iconic luxury experiences. Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya, with its awe-inspiring cultural heritage backdrop and timeless appeal, is a natural choice for our expansion. As plans to enter this extraordinary destination unfold, I am confident that this collaboration will redefine hospitality in the region".

Shri Rocky Dhar, owner of DHAR GOLF VISTA by Atmosphere, concluded, "Atmosphere Core's distinguished legacy of excellence aligns perfectly with our vision to unveil a transcendent world-class hotel in Shillong. With our vision and focused approach, we are committed to manifesting inspiring, bespoke hotels and resorts that embody the pinnacle of sophistication. This illustrious partnership will not only elevate Shillong's hospitality landscape but will also set an unrivalled benchmark for elegance and impeccable service in this breathtaking and scenic Northeastern state of India."

The Peninsula's 2026 Global "Art in Resonance" Programme Launches During Hong Kong Arts Month with Commissioned Works That Celebrate Craftsmanship and Culture



Travel Mail Desk

The latest iteration presents three site-specific commissioned works by contemporary artists Angel Hui, Albert Yonathan Setyawan, and Dr. William Lim to grace the iconic façade and The Lobby, with an artist takeover of The Verandah Café from now to 5 May. The Peninsula Hotels launches the 2026 edition of its global 'Art in Resonance' programme during Hong Kong Arts Month at its iconic flagship hotel. This edition features commissioned works by Hong Kong artist Angel Hui and architect-artist Dr. William Lim, alongside Tokyo-based Indonesian ceramicist Albert Yonathan Setyawan in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). Visionary new works adorn The Peninsula Hong Kong's façade and The Lobby, with an immersive

artist takeover of The Verandah Café. Reaffirming The Peninsula's enduring commitment to cultural patronage, Art in Resonance offers guests and visitors captivating contemporary art encounters across the hotel.

"The latest iteration of The Peninsula's global arts programme exemplifies our enduring commitment to fostering artistic innovation and cultural exchange in the cities we call home," said **Benjamin Vuchot, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of The Peninsula's parent company, The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited.** "Together, in partnership with the V&A, we continue to commission exceptional works by contemporary artists of immense talent, supporting their journey towards international recognition and acclaim.

Through these works, we endeavour to actively contribute to Hong Kong's stature as Asia's cultural hub, enriching the city's dynamic arts landscape and spotlighting its creative energy to a global audience."

"The V&A's involvement in 'Art in Resonance' underscores our global mission to champion creativity, advance cultural understanding, and ignite inspiration among communities worldwide," said **V&A curator, Dr. Louis Copplestone.** "Providing support to mid-career artists by giving them a platform to present significant new works is an exciting opportunity for artistic growth. At the core of our partnership lies a shared commitment to thoughtful interpretation and global engagement, weaving together narratives that transcend boundaries and cultures."

Grand Continent Hotels Strengthens Presence in Spiritual Tourism with Rameshwaram Launch

Travel Mail Desk

Grand Continent Hotels Limited has announced the launch of its new property in Rameshwaram, one of India's most significant pilgrimage destinations, marking the brand's 31st hotel. Located on Pamban Island, the contemporary four-star vegetarian hotel reflects the company's continued focus on expanding in high-demand spiritual and leisure travel markets across India.

The launch underscores the brand's strategic emphasis on destinations witnessing consistent year-round footfall driven by pilgrimage tourism, apart from key Business Cities. With Rameshwaram attracting a steady influx of domestic travellers, families, and spiritual seekers, the property is positioned to offer a comfortable, hygienic, and well-connected stay experience close to key landmarks.

Speaking on the occasion, **Mr. Ramesh Shiva, Founder & Managing Director, Grand Continent Hotels Limited**, said, "The launch of our Rameshwaram property marks an important milestone



as our 31st hotel and reinforces our focus on high-potential pilgrimage destinations. South India continues to be a strong growth market for us, and we see sustained demand in destinations like Rameshwaram, where travellers seek reliable, comfortable, and well-located accommodation.

Going forward, we are coming up at Somnath, Varanasi and Ayodhya as we aim to expand across key high-demand micro-markets as we work towards building a 3,000-key portfolio over the next few years, while continuing to focus on operational consistency and guest experience."

IHCL signs a Gateway resort in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh

Travel Mail Desk

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), India's largest hospitality company, today announced the signing of a resort in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh. This greenfield project will be branded as Gateway.

Ms. Suma Venkatesh, Executive Vice President – Real Estate and Development, IHCL, said, "Kasauli, with its serene surroundings and colonial charm, is a sought-after leisure destination in North India. Its proximity to key urban centres makes it an ideal getaway for travellers seeking respite in the hills. We are delighted to partner with Vasuki Hospitality Private Limited for this project."

The 96-key Gateway Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, offers panoramic views of the surrounding hills and a curated selection of dining options, including an all-day dining restaurant, a speciality restaurant and a bar. Guests can enjoy a range



of facilities including a heated swimming pool, fitness centre and a spa. The resort also features banqueting facilities, including a venue spanning over 4,000 sq ft, making it an ideal destination for social gatherings, weddings and corporate retreats.

Mr. Anshul Singla, Director, Vasuki Hospitality Private Limited, stated, "We are happy to foray into the hospitality industry with a partner like IHCL. Kasauli's scenic beauty and growing popularity as a holiday destination offer immense potential for development in the region."

Nestled in the foothills of the Shivalik range in Himachal Pradesh, Kasauli is a charming hill station known for its heritage and scenic landscapes. The destination is popular for nature walks, trekking trails, and landmarks like the historic Christ Church and the picturesque Gilbert Trail.

Courtyard by Marriott Debuts in Andhra Pradesh with the Opening of Courtyard by Marriott Tirupati



Travel Mail Desk

Courtyard by Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of over 30 extraordinary hotel brands, today announced the opening of Courtyard by Marriott Tirupati, bringing the brand's intuitive hospitality to one of India's busiest pilgrimage destinations. This will be the first Courtyard by Marriott in Andhra Pradesh. Home to the sacred Tirumala Venkateswara Temple, the city welcomes millions of visitors annually. Courtyard by Marriott Tirupati, easily accessible via road, a 15-minute drive from the railway station and a 20-minute drive from the Tirupathi Airport, is thoughtfully designed for discerning pilgrims and modern travellers alike, blending timeless styles with contemporary comfort, creating an atmosphere that is both peaceful and inviting.

"This opening represents an important milestone in our growth strategy in India, as we continue to expand our footprint in high-demand destinations and enter newer markets with strong travel potential". Kiran Andicot, Senior Vice President – South Asia, Marriott International, commented, "Tirupati is one of the country's most prominent spiritual destinations, drawing significant year-round footfall, and establishing a presence here is a meaningful achievement for us. It reflects our ambition to serve a broader spectrum of guests and to bring trusted, high-quality hospitality to destinations where travel demand is both substantial and evolving. Courtyard by Marriott is well-positioned to serve a destination like Tirupati, where travellers are looking for comfort,

connectivity, and a stay experience that is both seamless and relevant."

Speaking on the opening, **Samata Danday Chand, General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Tirupati**, shared, *"We are delighted to introduce Courtyard by Marriott to Tirupati, a city that holds immense cultural and spiritual significance. The hotel is aimed at creating an environment where great things can happen, enabling our guests to focus on their journeys or simply relax. Connecting travellers through comfortable and innovative spaces, intuitive service, and a commitment to personal fulfilment is at the foundation of what we offer at Courtyard by Marriott Tirupati, while also creating a vibrant destination for memorable gatherings."*

The Leela Mosaic 2026 Showcases Unified Luxury Vision Across Six Cities

Travel Mail Desk

Marking four decades of Indian luxury hospitality, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has rolled out the third edition of The Leela Mosaic, a multi-city showcase designed to bring together its portfolio, people and evolving brand philosophy under one cohesive platform.

Mosaic spanning six cities Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, New Delhi and Gurugram, the initiative connects key travel trade, corporate partners and event planners with the brand's expanding universe of experiences. Each stop offers a closer look at The Leela's approach to hospitality, rooted in Indian heritage while adapting to the expectations of modern luxury travellers.

In a conversation with Travel Mail, **Megha Ajaonkar, Vice President – Sales**, described the concept as a reflection of the brand itself. *"Just like a mosaic brings together different pieces to create a complete picture, this initiative brings together the uniqueness of all our hotels*



and our initiatives under one roof. It allows our partners to truly learn, engage and build stronger conversations with us."

According to Ajaonkar, Gurugram continues to be a critical business and demand hub, with a strong mix of corporate, social and leisure segments. The presence of The Leela Ambience Gurugram & Residences further

strengthens this positioning, offering a distinctive environment within the city's fast-paced urban landscape.

"We're fortunate to see demand across segments – from corporates and events to leisure and long stays. What truly defines us is our ability to create personalised experiences for every guest, depending on their needs," Ajaonkar added.

OPO Hotels & Resorts Announces Launch of OPO Premier Marvel in Jaipur's Mahindra World City SEZ

Travel Mail Desk

OPO Hotels & Resorts proudly announces the launch of its new upscale property, OPO Premier Marvel, strategically located at Ajmer Road, Omaxe City, within the rapidly growing Mahindra World City SEZ in Jaipur. This development marks a significant milestone in the brand's expansion journey, reinforcing its commitment to building a strong presence in high-growth business and hospitality destinations across India.

The hotel features 56 well-appointed rooms complemented by a comprehensive suite of amenities, including an all-day dining restaurant with 44 covers, banqueting facilities, a boardroom, gymnasium, spa, swimming pool, home theatre, library, and a dedicated kids' zone. This integrated offering positions the property as a preferred destination for corporate stays, meetings, events, and leisure experiences within the SEZ ecosystem.

Commenting on the launch, **Amit Kumar Singh, Managing Director and Founder,**



OPO Hotels & Resorts, said "The launch of OPO Premier Marvel in Jaipur marks a pivotal step in our growth strategy. Mahindra World City SEZ represents a dynamic and underserved business hub with strong demand fundamentals. With this property, we are not only expanding our footprint in Rajasthan but also introducing the OPO Premier brand in a high-impact location. Our focus is to deliver a well-rounded hospitality experience that seamlessly blends business efficiency with lifestyle comfort, while creating a scalable model for future expansion across similar corporate corridors in India."

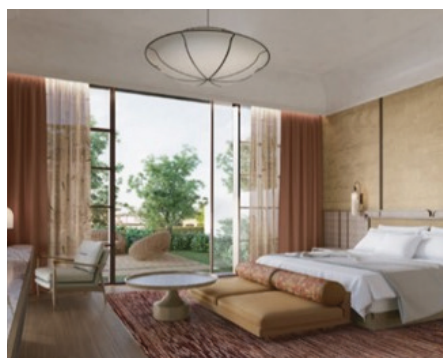
With this launch, OPO Hotels & Resorts continues to accelerate its vision of becoming a dominant player in India's midscale and upscale managed hotel segment, focused on high-growth business destinations and emerging markets.

Marriott International Signs Agreement with Espire Hospitality Limited to Bring JW Marriott to the spiritual town of Kosi Kalan in Mathura

Travel Mail Desk

Marriott International, Inc. has signed an agreement with Espire Hospitality Limited to bring the JW Marriott brand to the quiet and serene town of Kosi Kalan, a growing destination in Mathura, that serves as a key transit and commercial gateway along the Delhi -Agra corridor. Anticipated to open in January 2029, JW Marriott Kosi Kalan Resort & Spa will span 14 acres of verdant landscape and is slated to be a haven for travellers who seek an authentic escape paired with highly personalised service and engaging experiences.

"The expansion of Marriott's luxury portfolio reflects our long-term conviction in India's evolving travel landscape," said **Kiran Andicot, Senior Vice President – South Asia, Marriott International.** "The introduction of the JW Marriott brand in Kosi Kalan is a strategic move that strengthens our presence in an emerging market while responding to growing demand for elevated, experience-led hospitality beyond traditional gateway cities. This signing not only deepens our



luxury footprint but is also expected to contribute meaningfully to the region's tourism and economic momentum. We look forward to working with Espire Hospitality Limited to introduce the brand's legacy of mindful hospitality and enriching well-being experiences to the beautiful calm of Kosi Kalan".

Commenting on this signing, **Mr. Gagan Oberoi, Group CEO,** said, "This collaboration with Marriott International

is a testament to our strategic focus on expanding the portfolio with iconic, high-impact developments. JW Marriott Kosi Kalan Resort & Spa has been envisioned as a sanctuary of mindful luxury, where contemporary elegance meets nature, culture, and memorable experiences. This signing marks a significant step in strengthening our luxury portfolio, and we are proud to bring yet another landmark project to life, reinforcing the momentum of our rapid growth trajectory"

The JW Marriott Kosi Kalan Resort & Spa will be situated along the Delhi -Agra highway, in the culturally significant Braj region, a landscape deeply rooted in heritage and tradition. The town enjoys close proximity to Mathura (approx. 45-minute drive), the birthplace of Lord Krishna and an important spiritual and cultural centre and Vrindavan (approx. 50-minute drive), revered for its timeless temples and devotional legacy. This strategic location places Kosi Kalan at the intersection of cultural richness and regional connectivity.

Beyond the Beach: Bintan Regatta 2026 Blends Sport, Culture and Coastal Experiences



Travel Mail Desk

Bintan Resorts hosted the 4th edition of the Bintan Regatta, alongside the Festival Jong, bringing together international sailors and offering travellers a unique mix of sport and culture just a short ferry ride from Singapore.

A key highlight this year was the introduction of the Passage Race, a cross-border sailing leg from Singapore

to Bintan. For Indian travellers, this adds a compelling dimension—making Bintan an easy extension to a Singapore itinerary while offering a distinctly different experience.

Running alongside the regatta, the Festival Jong added a cultural layer to the event, featuring traditional wind-powered wooden boats that reflect the region's maritime heritage. Together, the regatta and festival offer something beyond a

typical island getaway, bringing together active experiences, cultural insights and a setting that feels both accessible and different from conventional Southeast Asian destinations.

Adding to the overall experience, this year also marked the first turtle release of 2026 at Laguna Beach, held alongside the Jong Festival. Visitors witnessed hatchlings making their way to the South China Sea, offering a rare and memorable moment that brought together nature and conservation within the broader event.

Commenting on this, **Mr. Abdul Wahab, Chief Operating Officer, Bintan Resorts**, said *"Bintan Regatta and Festival Jong highlight how travel today is shifting towards more engaging and diverse experiences. The combination of international sailing and local maritime traditions already offers something distinctive, and moments like witnessing turtle hatchlings at Laguna Beach add a more personal and memorable dimension to the visit. With our proximity to Singapore and expanding Events Calendar, Bintan continues to provide an accessible yet different option for travellers exploring the region."*

Polo Hotels & Resorts Announces Brand Architecture, Unveils Bold New Growth Vision



Travel Mail Desk

Polo Hotels & Resorts officially announced its brand architecture at an exclusive media showcase at Meghalaya House, New Delhi, marking the beginning of a new chapter for Northeast India's largest hospitality group.

Now, Polo Hotels & Resorts is entering its most ambitious phase of expansion yet, with multiple new hotels planned across nearly every state in Northeast India, along with the upcoming launch of Planters Lodge in the Dooars, West Bengal, an all-bungalow resort with serene views of the surrounding "chai bagan" where

guests can immerse themselves in experiences that celebrate indulgence, authenticity, and the planter lifestyle.

At the event, Polo Hotels & Resorts introduced its renewed vision as a curator of enriching travel experiences that combine modern comfort with the boundless spirit of the Northeast and beyond.

The event also showcased Polo's newly curated portfolio of signature experiences across properties, including scenic breakfasts, wellness rituals, cultural immersions, destination dining, and local explorations designed to connect guests more meaningfully with each destination.

Speaking on the occasion, the leadership team shared that this rebrand is not a reinvention, but a revelation — a clearer expression of a brand that has always known its identity and is now ready to share it with a wider audience.



Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya: India's Leadership Museum Blending History, Democracy and Technology



Travel Mail Desk

The Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya stands as a one-of-its-kind museum dedicated to all Prime Ministers of India since Independence, presenting over 100 years of the nation's political and democratic journey. Showcasing key events from the lives of all 15 Prime Ministers, the museum highlights their contributions to India's growth and development through engaging and technology-driven displays.

Located within the historic Teen Murti Bhavan—the former residence of Jawaharlal Nehru, the site was converted into a Nehru Memorial Museum in 1948. Inspired by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it evolved into the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya in April 2022, creating a more inclusive narrative of India's leadership legacy.

The Sangrahalaya features diverse galleries, including the Constitution Gallery, which showcases the finer

points of India's vibrant democracy and highlights the collective efforts of the Constituent Assembly. The Toshakhana offers a curated display of gifts received by Prime Ministers, providing insights into India's diplomatic engagements. The museum extensively uses the latest technologies in its experiential displays, continuously covering major advancements in India's growth journey.

Among its key attractions is the National Security (Virtual Security) experience, which offers an immersive understanding of the roles and sacrifices of India's Armed Forces. The Artificial Intelligence-powered Holobox allows visitors to engage in lifelike conversations with 3D avatars of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. "Bhavishya ki Jhalkiyan" provides a simulated helicopter ride showcasing India's future development through virtual reality.

Interactive installations such as "Selfie with PM" and "Walk with PM" enable visitors to connect with their favourite

leaders through augmented reality, while the Unity Chain symbolically celebrates togetherness among citizens. A unique robotic installation allows visitors to receive a personalised handwritten letter from their chosen Prime Minister.

The complex also includes a Library & Archives with over 4 lakh books and extensive document collections for research in modern and contemporary Indian history. The Nehru Planetarium offers immersive 2D and 3D shows, providing a breathtaking glimpse of the solar system. Adding historical depth, the Kushak Mahal—an ASI-protected 14th-century monument built by Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq—enhances the cultural significance of the site. Visitors can also experience Light and Sound shows, including "Veeranganaon ki Mahagatha" and "India in Space".

Speaking on the significance of the museum, Mr. Ashwani Lohani, Director of the Prime Minister's Museum and Library (PMML), described it as a unique institution that showcases India's leadership, democracy, and evolving journey. He emphasised that the serene lawns, planetarium, and immersive galleries make it a destination that every Indian and international tourist should visit.

The Sangrahalaya welcomes approximately 1,000 to 1,500 visitors daily and continues to emerge as a key cultural landmark in the capital.

With its blend of heritage, innovation, and immersive storytelling, the Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya invites visitors to explore India's past, understand its present, and reflect on its future.

Come for the history. Stay for the ideas.

Visitor Information:

- **Museum Timings:**
 - 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Closed on Mondays)
- **Nehru Planetarium Timings:**
 - 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM (Closed on Mondays)
- **Nearest Metro Stations:** Lok Kalyan Marg and Udyog Bhawan (Yellow Line)
- **Shuttle Service:** Museum bus service available from the nearest metro stations between 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM

'THE GREAT INDIAN TRAVEL BAZAAR 2026' CONCLUDES ON A HIGH NOTE

Travel Mail Desk

The 15th edition of the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) 2026 concluded successfully at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC), Sitapura, amid euphoria from the travel trade. This edition was focused on promoting inbound tourism. During the event, both buyers and sellers expressed satisfaction over extensive networking opportunities and meaningful business interactions.

Around 195 leading inbound foreign tour operators (FTOs) from nearly 50 countries participated as international buyers. The exhibition effectively showcased a diverse range of tourism products and services across heritage, wellness, spiritual, wildlife and experiential tourism, attracting significant interest from international buyers. Participants also expressed positive intent to promote the showcased destinations and offerings in their respective markets.

Over the two days of the exhibition, pavilions from the host state Rajasthan, along with Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Punjab, drew considerable attention from buyers. These states presented their unique cultural identities and experiential tourism offerings compellingly. Additionally, the active participation of luxury and heritage hotel chains, resorts, adventure and wildlife operators, wellness centres, and travel technology companies made the platform instrumental in fostering new business opportunities, investment prospects, and long-term partnerships.

On the final day of GITB, the globally renowned luxury train 'The Palace on Wheels' was showcased for foreign tour operators at Khatipura Railway Station of Jaipur. A large number of



Commissioner Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Ms. Rukmani Riar said, "This edition of GITB hosted meaningful meetings with 195+ foreign tour operators and domestic tourism stakeholders despite geopolitical challenges. GITB has effectively showcased Rajasthan as an experience-driven and investment-oriented tourism destination on the global stage."

Co-Chair of FICCI Rajasthan, Shri Surendra Singh Shekhawat, said, "The 15th edition of the GITB witnessed great satisfaction among both buyers and sellers. It has been informed to me by many delegates that the B2B meetings have been enriching and successful for them. This edition of GITB has proved once again that this mart catalyzes the growth of tourism in the country, and this despite the current global disturbance."



international tour operators observed the train in detail and appreciated its grandeur, royal décor and world-class amenities. The Rajasthani heritage-inspired interiors, luxury cabins, dining facilities and onboard services left a strong impression on the visitors. Several tour operators expressed interest in including 'The Palace on Wheels' in their future travel packages, indicating a boost for Rajasthan's luxury tourism segment.

President of Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators, **Shri Mahendra Singh Rathore**, informed that following GITB, familiarisation (FAM) tours were also organised for foreign tour operators to experience various popular tourist destinations across Rajasthan. The tours departed from Hotel Lalit, with around 90 foreign tour operators taken on specially curated itineraries across the state, including Jaipur. This year, three itineraries were planned. The first tour was 'Jaipur – Kota – Udaipur – Deogarh – Jaipur'. The second tour was 'Jaipur –

Abhaneri – Sariska – Sawai Madhopur – Ranthambore – Jaipur'. Similarly, the third tour was 'Jaipur – Pushkar – Jodhpur – Jaisalmer – Bikaner – Mandawa – Jaipur'.

During the event, a traditional 'Badhai' folk dance from the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh was presented, captivating the audience with its vibrant and rhythmic performance. Artists from Sagar showcased the spirit of celebration and cultural richness through their performance.

It is to be noted that GITB is jointly organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan; the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The event is supported by prominent national and regional associations, including the Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Hotel & Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR).



Int2Cruises launches a limited-period Singapore cruise offer with savings of up to ₹20,000

Travel Mail Desk

Int2Cruises, Asia's cruise-first online travel platform, has announced an exclusive limited-period offer on Singapore cruise bookings, making it welcome news for anyone planning a cruise vacation in the near future. Travellers can now avail savings of up to ₹20,000 on their bookings, positioning it as one of the most attractive cruise deals available this summer.

The offer spans three popular cruise experiences – Disney Adventure, Genting Dream, and Navigator of the Seas by Royal Caribbean, each catering to distinct traveller preferences. Disney Adventure, operated by Disney Cruise Line, features 3 and 4-night sailings available through August 2027, making it an ideal choice for families with children. Genting Dream by Dream Cruises offers 1 to 5-night sailings through April 2027, providing flexibility for those seeking shorter getaways. Meanwhile, Navigator of the Seas delivers Royal Caribbean's signature

cruise experience, with 2 to 5-night sailings scheduled between October 2026 and March 2027.

Apart from its cruise offerings, Int2Cruises is also offering Singapore land packages that include curated hotel stays, sightseeing, and a range of on-ground experiences. Travellers can combine a cruise voyage with a city break, enjoying the best of both worlds – all seamlessly booked through a single platform.

Currently, Int2Cruises provides access to over 25 international cruise lines across 300+ destinations. Designed for discerning travellers seeking real-time pricing, expert guidance, and comprehensive end-to-end booking support, the platform delivers a seamless and efficient booking experience, further eliminating the need to navigate multiple websites or intermediaries. Whether for a first-time cruise or a repeat voyage, the journey from discovery to booking is intuitive, streamlined, and reliable.

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE® MARKS MAJOR CONSTRUCTION MILESTONE WITH THE FLOAT OUT OF NORWEGIAN AURA™

Travel Mail Desk

Norwegian Cruise Line® (NCL), the innovator in global cruise travel, together with its longtime shipbuilding partner Fincantieri S.p.A, celebrated the float out of Norwegian Aura™, marking a construction milestone for the cruise company's largest and most illuminating vessel to date.

The float out, which took place at Fincantieri's shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy, marks the first time Norwegian Aura touched water, signifying the completion of the ship's external hull construction. Following this milestone, the ship's interior development will continue progressing to the next phase ahead of her debut in the spring of 2027. To commemorate the occasion and honor maritime tradition, two ceremonial coins were welded into Norwegian Aura's hull during a traditional coin ceremony, symbolizing good fortune and safe passage for the ship, her crew and future guests.

"Norwegian Aura's float out is a proud and meaningful moment for our entire team," said **Marc Kazlauskas, President of Norwegian Cruise Line.** "She builds on the legacy of our award-winning Prima Class while taking our commitment



to thoughtfully designed guest-first experiences even further. Created in close partnership with Fincantieri, the ship is purposefully constructed to deliver an elevated, multi-generational vacation experience, with expansive outdoor spaces like Ocean Heights™, that bring families and friends together for fun-filled days. With her flexible, open-air design, Norwegian Aura is exceptionally well suited for Caribbean itineraries, offering

the perfect balance of high-energy fun, relaxation and an effortless escape for guests of all ages."

"Norwegian Aura's float out marks a highly symbolic and operationally significant milestone in our shared journey with Norwegian Cruise Line," said **Luigi Matarazzo, General Manager of Fincantieri's Merchant Ships Division.** "This vessel reflects the strength of a long-standing partnership and our ability to turn design vision and innovation into tangible solutions, helping to redefine onboard experience for future generations of guests."

Norwegian Aura will set sail on her maiden voyage on May 21, 2027, with a seven-day Mediterranean voyage departing from Trieste, Italy and calling at iconic ports in Italy and Malta, before embarking on a 14-day transatlantic crossing to the United States. Beginning June 10, 2027, she will homeport in Miami and offer a variety of seven-day voyages to the Eastern Caribbean and Western Caribbean with visits to the Company's resort-style island destinations Great Stirrup Cay in the Bahamas and Harvest Caye in Belize through March 2028.

Executive Management Changes at Turkish Airlines

Travel Mail Desk

Turkish Airlines has implemented changes in its executive management structure. In line with the airline's corporate objectives, new appointments have resulted in the Board of Directors and the CEO position.

Prof. Murat Şeker, who has served for many years in critical roles such as finance, treasury, and investor relations positions as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the national flag carrier, has been appointed as Chairman of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of Turkish Airlines.

As part of this executive management change at Turkish Airlines, Ahmet Olmuştur, who has been responsible for the company's strategic sales and marketing operations for many years as Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Turkish Airlines.

Throughout his career, Mr. Olmuştur has made significant contributions in many strategic areas at Turkish Airlines,

including route network planning, revenue management and pricing strategies, sales and marketing operations, customer experience, and the Miles&Smiles loyalty program. Simultaneously, he serves as a Board Member and Audit Committee Member

of SunExpress, Board Member of Turkish Technic, and a member of the IATA Distribution Advisory Council.

As Turkish Airlines, we wish Prof. Murat Şeker and Ahmet Olmuştur success in their new roles.



Ahmet Olmuştur



Prof. Murat Şeker

Singapore Airlines to launch daily services to Western Sydney International Airport in November 2026

Travel Mail Desk

Singapore Airlines (SIA) will launch daily non-stop flights between Singapore and the new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport (WSI) on 23 November 2026, subject to regulatory approvals. The Airline will operate its Airbus A350-900 medium-haul aircraft, which features 303 seats in two cabin classes: 40 in Business Class and 263 in Economy Class.

The inaugural flight, SQ201, is scheduled to depart Singapore at 1130hrs (local time) on 23 November 2026 and arrive at 2220hrs (local time). The return flight, SQ202, is scheduled to depart Western Sydney International Airport on the same day at 2355hrs (local time) and arrive in Singapore at 0505hrs (local time) on 24 November 2026.

Mr Dai Haoyu, Senior Vice President Marketing Planning, Singapore Airlines, said "Singapore Airlines' services to



Australia's newest gateway at Western Sydney will deliver more choice and strengthen connectivity to this popular destination for our customers. Western Sydney's late-night departure capacity will enable a seamless travel journey and connections through Singapore Changi Airport, to more than 130 global destinations served by the SIA Group."

Mr Simon Hickey, WSI, Chief Executive Officer, said "Western Sydney International Airport is thrilled to be partnering with Singapore Airlines, bringing more of its Skytrax certified 5-Star service to the people of Greater Sydney. Our 24-hour capacity, coupled with Singapore Airlines' extensive global connectivity, will open our city to the world in new and exciting ways. From Sydney to Singapore and beyond, we are pleased to help herald this new era of aviation that will ultimately give Australian travellers more choice and flexibility on when, where, and how they choose to fly."

Maldivian Celebrates 18 Years of Operations in India



Travel Mail Desk

Maldivian proudly marked 18 years of operations to India with a special commemorative event celebrating the airline's longstanding presence in one of its most strategically important markets.

For nearly two decades, India's operations have remained a key pillar of the Maldives' regional connectivity and growth.

Maldivian currently flies 5 times every week to both Thrivananthapuram and Cochin. Over the past eighteen years, these routes have played an important role in strengthening access to essential markets and enhancing connectivity between the Maldives and major Indian cities. The network has also supported tourism, trade, education, and medical travel, further reinforcing the close ties between the two neighbouring countries.

The special event brought together key stakeholders, partners, and team members to reflect on the airline's journey in the Indian market and to recognise the contributions of those who have helped shape this success over the years. As part of the celebration, long-serving staff and valued partners were presented with commemorative awards in recognition of their dedication, loyalty, and longstanding support throughout Maldivian's 18 years of operations in India.

Maldivian's continued service to India underscores the airline's commitment to maintaining strong regional links and delivering greater convenience for travellers journeying between the Maldives and India. As one of the airline's most important international markets, India continues to contribute significantly to Maldivian's broader vision of connecting the Maldives to key destinations across the region.

"India has been an integral part of Maldivian's international journey for the past 18 years," said Ibrahim Iyas, Managing Director of Maldivian. "This milestone is not only a celebration of our operations, but also a tribute to the dedicated staff, trusted partners, and loyal customers who have supported us throughout the years. We remain committed to strengthening this important market and further enhancing connectivity between the Maldives and India."

Thales and Air India sign 10-year FlytCARE agreement for IFE maintenance

Travel Mail Desk

Thales announced that Air India, India's leading global airline, has signed a 10-year agreement with Thales for its FlytCARE services package. This agreement provides a full turn-key maintenance approach, covering line maintenance, spares, repairs and logistics management support for Thales' inflight entertainment (IFE) systems on 57 Airbus and Boeing aircraft.

Under the FlytCARE agreement, repair and maintenance will be delivered from Thales' locations at Delhi and Mumbai airports in India, to expedite services and support Air India's customer-centric modernization journey.

This agreement covers Air India's 12 new widebody aircraft equipped with Thales' AVANT UP in-flight entertainment system. AVANT UP features a vast catalogue of content showcased on stunning 4K HDR touchscreens, along with 60W USB-C and USB-A fast charging for customer devices, and the ability to simultaneously pair two Bluetooth connections. Air India is the first carrier in the Asia Pacific region to fly with Thales' AVANT Up solution.



Jeremy Yew, Senior Vice President – Engineering & Maintenance, Air India, *"Ensuring the highest levels of reliability and uptime for our in-flight entertainment systems is critical to delivering a world-class experience for our guests. Our partnership with Thales under the FlytCARE programme strengthens Air India's engineering ecosystem with faster turnaround, deeper technical support, and enhanced component availability. This collaboration directly supports our fleet*

modernization and our commitment to engineering excellence."

"Thales is grateful to Air India for their trust in awarding us a 10-year FlytCARE service contract for IFE equipment, which plays a key role in ensuring an exceptional passenger experience. We are honoured to strengthen our long-standing partnership with Air India as they transform their in-flight entertainment experience," Thomas Got, Vice President, Aviation Global Services, Thales.

Malaysia Airlines and Visa Malaysia Partner to Drive Travel Demand and Deliver Seamless Payment Experiences

Travel Mail Desk

Malaysia Airlines and Visa have signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing customer experiences and driving global travel demand across Malaysia Airlines' global network.

The three – year partnership brings together Visa's global leadership in digital payments and Malaysia Airlines' expertise in delivering premium travel experiences, with a shared ambition to create more seamless, personalised and rewarding journeys for travellers.

Bryan Foong, Chief Executive Officer of Airline Business from Malaysia Aviation Group, said, "Today's travellers expect journeys that are not only seamless, but also personalised and rewarding. Our partnership with Visa reflects our commitment to delivering more integrated travel experiences – combining connectivity, convenience and value across every touchpoint of the journey. Together, we are unlocking new opportunities to engage travellers more meaningfully while driving demand across our network."

Previn Pillay, Country Manager, Visa Malaysia, said, "Travel plays a vital role in how Malaysians connect with the world,



and we continue to see strong momentum in overseas travel and spending. Through our partnership with Malaysia Airlines, we are unlocking Malaysia Airlines Berhad 201401040794 (1116944- X) meaningful value for Visa cardholders beyond payments – from rewarding offers and exclusive privileges to smoother booking and travel journeys. Together, we are proud to support the continued growth of international travel and tourism, while helping Malaysians explore the world with

greater ease and confidence through secure, seamless and globally accepted payment experiences."

The MoU, effective for 3 years, establishes a strong foundation for long –term collaboration, with both parties exploring further opportunities across marketing, digital innovation and customer engagement. Specific campaigns and initiatives will be rolled out progressively under separate agreements.

Vietjet leads Southeast Asia in Emissions Efficiency on Regional Routes



Travel Mail Desk

Vietjet has been recognised as the most emissions-efficient airline for intra-Southeast Asia operations, according to the 2025 Flight Emissions Review by Cirium, a leading global aviation data

and analytics provider. This achievement reinforces Vietjet's position among the region's most efficient and sustainable airlines.

The airline recorded 64.5 grams of CO₂ per Available Seat Kilometre (CO₂/ASK), making it the top performer in Southeast Asia's intra-regional ranking by Cirium. The ranking is based on Cirium's EmeraldSky methodology, which evaluates how efficiently airlines operate relative to passenger capacity. Achieving the lowest emissions intensity in a region dominated by shorter routes—where fuel optimisation is more complex—highlights Vietjet's strong operational efficiency.

This recognition additionally builds on Vietjet's growing global sustainability credentials, including being named among the Top 7 global airlines for sustainability in 2025 by AirlineRatings.

The airline has also received ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) recognition in markets such as Taiwan.

A key driver behind this performance is Vietjet's modern, fuel-efficient fleet, primarily comprising Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft, including the "NEO" variants that deliver up to 20% fuel savings. The airline also leverages advanced technologies such as SkyBreathe and fuel optimisation initiatives to enhance operational efficiency.

For Indian travellers increasingly seeking affordable yet sustainable international travel options, this milestone positions Vietjet as a compelling choice for routes connecting India to popular Southeast Asian destinations and beyond. The airline currently connects Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, two of Vietnam's top destinations.

LOT Polish Airlines added Bologna in Italy to its network

Travel Mail Desk

Star Alliance member and fully integrated Miles & More partner LOT Polish Airlines has added a fourth city in Italy to its growing route network: Bologna. The city in the Emilia-Romagna region is highly attractive for business travellers and tourists alike, and is now only a short flight away from Warsaw, LOT Polish Airlines' global hub. To offer passengers a maximum of flexibility, there are two different departure times:

- Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday departure with LO-327 from Warsaw at 8:35h, arrival in Bologna at 10:45h
- Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday departure with LO-329 from Warsaw at 15:15h, arrival in Bologna at 17:25h

Guests from India, who'd like to make Bologna their first stop on their European itinerary, travel, for example, from Delhi to Bologna via Warsaw in less than 13 hours:

- Departure from Delhi at 8:00h every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday; arrival in Bologna at 17:25h local time after 12:55 hours total travel time



The new flights to Bologna are operated by modern Boeing B737MAX8 and Embraer aircraft with two service classes onboard, LOT Business Class and LOT Economy Class.

"For many years, we have been seeing a rising demand for flights to Italy," says **Amit Ray, Director India, DACH**

Markets, Italy + Malta and Head of Global Corporate and Strategic Sales at LOT Polish Airlines. "We are therefore delighted that, in addition to Rome, Venice and Milan, we can now offer our passengers a fourth Italian city. Bologna is a great destination, combining economic strength with Italian traditions and is the gateway to Tuscany."

TransNusa Strengthens Domestic Network Connection with New Route Launch and Increased Scheduled Flight Frequency

Travel Mail Desk

TransNusa has announced the launch of a new direct scheduled flight connecting Jakarta and Lombok, further strengthening access to one of Indonesia's key tourism and regional travel hubs.

TransNusa Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Bernard Francis, said that the introduction of this new route comes on the back of the airline's focus to increase and strengthen connectivity while boosting domestic tourism. "Lombok is not only rapidly growing as a domestic and international tourist destination, but the island is also the main gateway for tourism in the West Nusa Tenggara region through its Lombok International Airport," **Datuk Francis** said, adding that Lombok attracts more than 1.2 million tourists annually.

"TransNusa will initially operate 14 flights a week or two daily flights with the first scheduled flight departing Jakarta in the morning and the second in the afternoon,"



Datuk Bernard said, adding that the sales of tickets for the new scheduled flight from Jakarta to Lombok started on 16 March 2026, with the inaugural flight scheduled for April 17, 2026.

In addition to this new launch, TransNusa has also increased the frequency of its Jakarta-Yogyakarta route with the aim of enhancing and strengthening domestic connectivity, said **Datuk Bernard.**

Indian Aviation Sector to Handle About 500 MN Passengers Annually by 2030: NMIA Chief

Travel Mail Desk

The Indian aviation sector is estimated to handle about 500 million passengers annually by 2030 and reach nearly 1 billion by 2047, supported by sustained demand and fleet expansion, with over 1,000 aircraft orders in place, a top industry executive said.

Speaking at the Airport 360 Expo 2026, which commenced at Bombay Exhibition Centre, the executive said that India is already among the top three domestic aviation markets globally, with passenger traffic reaching around 412 million in 2025, reflecting strong growth momentum.

"We are already one of the top three domestic aviation markets in the world, and we are continuing to grow rapidly. In 2025 itself, we handled about 4 million passengers and 3.5 million of cargo, which is around 20 percent higher than the pre-COVID levels." **BVJK Sharma, CEO, Navi Mumbai International Airport Ltd**, said at the event.

"The growth would be rapid, but considering that the historical growth has been 10-12 percent, it could taper down to 5.6 percent by 2044," he said.

"But, nevertheless, we will see about 500 million passengers very soon, probably before 2030 and a billion passengers by 2047. Our domestic air travel is expected to grow at 17 percent to start with, year-on-year and also show a steady, very healthy demand," he said. Infrastructure expansion is progressing at a pace, with over 160 operational airports and continued investments under National programmes," he said.

"But, nevertheless, we will see about 500 million passengers very soon, probably before 2030 and a billion passengers by 2047. Our domestic air travel is expected to grow at 17 percent to start with, year-on-year and also show a steady, very healthy demand," he said.

"Infrastructure expansion is progressing at pace, with over 160 operational airports and continued investments under National programmes", he said, adding



that "Aviation contributes nearly USD 54 billion to the economy and supports millions of jobs, with emerging segments, such as MRO, expected to play a significant role in strengthening the ecosystem."

"At Navi Mumbai International Airport, capacity is being developed in phases to reach 90 million passengers by 2032, supported by strong connectivity, digital infrastructure, and integrated planning," he said.

"As demand continues to rise, the focus will remain on building scalable, efficient, and future-ready airport ecosystems to support India's next phase of aviation growth," **Sharma added**.

Addressing the conference, **Sharad Kumar, Chief Advisor, Airports Authority of India**, said, "India's aviation sector is entering a defining phase where growth must be supported by clear strategic choices."

"Globally, the industry is being shaped by digital transformation, sustainability, and deeper integration across aviation, logistics, tourism, and trade. At the same time, recent geopolitical developments have highlighted the sector's vulnerability,

impacting routes, costs, and operational efficiency," he said.

In this context, "India has a strong advantage with rising demand, expanding infrastructure, and a clear vision to scale to around 350 airports by 2047," he said, adding that "Initiatives, such as UDAN, have strengthened regional connectivity, and the next phase will focus on long-term viability, efficiency, and network integration."

"A key priority ahead is to reduce dependence on foreign hubs for international traffic and capture greater value across airlines, MRO, cargo, and airport-led services. Strengthening hub infrastructure, enabling policy frameworks, and leveraging technology will be critical to positioning India as a global aviation hub," he stated.

Organised by Media Fusion, the second edition of the two-day-long Airport360 Expo has brought together over 2,500 industry professionals, more than 70 exhibitors, over 200 aviation experts and decision-makers, and participation from over 10 countries, including Germany, Singapore, Oman, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Thailand.

Vande Bharat's Rising Popularity Drives Demand on New Delhi–Varanasi Route

Travel Mail Desk

Indian Railways has witnessed a remarkable surge in passenger patronage on the Vande Bharat Express network, with approximately 3.98 crore passengers travelling in FY 2025–26 alone, marking a robust year-on-year growth of nearly 34 percent from 2.97 crore passengers in FY 2024–25. This sharp rise highlights the growing preference for fast, comfortable, and modern rail travel among passengers across the country. Since its inception, the Vande Bharat Express has served over 9.1 crore passengers through 1 lakh trips, reflecting widespread public trust and sustained demand.

Indian Railways continues to redefine passenger travel with the Vande Bharat Express, India's first indigenously designed and manufactured semi-high-speed train. Launched on the New Delhi–Varanasi route in February 2019, the

service has evolved into a nationwide network symbolising speed, comfort, and self-reliance under the Make in India initiative.

The New Delhi–Varanasi route remains the busiest, having recorded over 73 lakh passengers so far. The New Delhi–Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra route has served approximately 56 lakh passengers, underlining its importance for pilgrimage travel. In southern India, the Secunderabad–Visakhapatnam route has served more than 48 lakh passengers, while the Puratchi Thalaivar Dr. MGR Central (Chennai)–Mysuru route has catered to over 36 lakh passengers, reflecting strong regional demand. These services have also emerged as vital enablers of tourism, improving access to key religious, cultural, and coastal destinations while boosting local economies and visitor footfall.

Further strengthening long-distance connectivity, Indian Railways introduced the Vande Bharat Sleeper service in January 2026. In just the first three months of operation, the service carried 1.21 lakh passengers across 119 trips, achieving an occupancy rate of over 100 percent, indicating strong demand and increasing passenger confidence in premium overnight rail travel.

The Vande Bharat Express stands as a testament to Indian Railways' commitment to innovation, passenger-centric service, and indigenous manufacturing. With continued expansion connecting metros, pilgrimage destinations, heritage cities, and emerging economic hubs, along with the addition of the Sleeper variant, Indian Railways is steadily advancing towards providing faster, safer, and more comfortable journeys, with the Vande Bharat Express leading the transformation of modern rail travel in India.



Jammu Directly Linked with Kashmir via Passenger Train for the First Time

Travel Mail Desk

For decades, the idea of stepping onto a train in Jammu and arriving directly in Srinagar belonged to the realm of ambition rather than reality. That ambition became history today. Union Minister for Railways Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw flagged off the extended Srinagar–Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Vande Bharat Express service up to Jammu Tawi Railway Station, directly linking Jammu and Kashmir by passenger train for the very first time. A single seamless rail corridor now connects two of the region's most iconic destinations, promising not just faster journeys but a transformation in how people, commerce, and tourism flow across this breathtaking landscape.

High Demand and Enhanced Travel Experience

The Railway Minister highlighted that the Vande Bharat service has witnessed full occupancy since its launch, reflecting its growing popularity among passengers, underlining its importance as a lifeline for Jammu and Kashmir as well as for the rest of the country. He added that today, the 20-coach Vande Bharat Express service between Jammu and Srinagar has been launched, marking a significant enhancement in passenger capacity on this vital route.

The Union Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw stated that this development comes less than a year after the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Jammu–Srinagar rail link on 6th June last year, which laid the foundation for seamless rail connectivity in the region. The introduction of the expanded Vande Bharat service further strengthens this historic corridor, improving travel comfort, meeting rising passenger demand, and reinforcing all-weather connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar. He emphasized that the train has been designed specifically for operations in the region's challenging climatic conditions, including sub-zero temperatures, with specialized systems ensuring uninterrupted functionality of onboard equipment.

Shri Vaishnaw further highlighted that the train incorporates advanced electronics and high-end semiconductor-based systems, making it a highly modern and technologically sophisticated mode of transport. He also pointed out that efforts have been made to integrate regional culture into the passenger experience by introducing Dogri cuisine onboard. Shri Vaishnaw said that passengers travelling



on this route will get exposure to the culture of Jammu & Kashmir, including its landscapes, language, music and culinary traditions, making the journey more immersive.

Boost to Trade and Cultural Linkages

Shri Vaishnaw stated that this is India's first experience with railway operations at such high altitudes, and the learnings gained will guide future infrastructure developments. He added that the railway line has significantly improved cargo movement in the region, reducing transportation costs and ensuring smoother logistics for essential goods such as fertilizers and dairy products like milk. Agricultural produce, including cherries, is also being transported through parcel services, enhancing market access for local farmers.

He further noted that the rail network has simplified logistics and contributed to economic activity in the region. Looking ahead, the focus will be on strengthening maintenance systems and deploying advanced technologies for bridges and tunnels to ensure safety and reliability in the Himalayan terrain.

Rail Freight Integration & Economic Linkages in Kashmir Valley

The completion of the Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) has seamlessly connected the Kashmir

Valley with the rest of India's rail network. It has not only benefited passengers but also boosted the region's business and economic activity. The commissioning of engineering landmarks such as the Chenab Rail Bridge, the world's highest railway bridge, and the Anji Khad Bridge has enabled uninterrupted, all-weather rail connectivity to the region. This transformative infrastructure has paved the way for regular freight movement, significantly reducing transit time, improving reliability, and integrating the Valley more closely with national supply chains.

The Railway Minister boarded the Jammu–Srinagar Vande Bharat Express from Jammu and travelled up to Katra. Speaking to mediapersons onboard the train, he highlighted that nearly 2 crore kilograms of apples have already been transported from Srinagar to the rest of the country through the railway network.

Shri Vaishnaw later conducted an inspection of the Anji Khad Bridge and the Chenab Rail Bridge.

The Minister highlighted that strengthened rail connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir has significantly improved freight operations and helped reduce the cost of essential commodities. He noted that improved logistics efficiency has contributed to making goods more affordable, including cement, which is now being transported at lower costs, with prices falling below ₹50 per bag, reflecting the positive impact of rail-based supply chain improvements in the region.

Appointments



THE BOARD OF INDIGO ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF WILLIAM WALSH AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Board of InterGlobe Aviation Limited (IndiGo) appointed Mr. William Walsh as the Chief Executive Officer, subject to Regulatory approvals. Mr. Walsh's tenure at IATA comes to a close on the 31st of July, 2026, and he is expected to join no later than the 3rd of August, 2026. Mr. Walsh (popularly known as Willie) is currently the Director General of IATA (International Air Transport Association) and was formerly CEO of British Airways and IAG (International Airlines Group, a holding company which owns Aer Lingus, British Airways, Iberia, Level and Vueling).

MAMMOTH LAKES TOURISM ANNOUNCES NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOLLOWING NATIONAL SEARCH

Mammoth Lakes Tourism today announces the appointment of Brian Wright as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, marking an exciting new chapter for the organization and the Mammoth Lakes community. His selection reflects a thoughtful and focused effort to identify the right leader for the future of Mammoth Lakes Tourism.



GODWIN HOTEL HARIDWAR APPOINTS HIMANSHU TYAGI AS GENERAL MANAGER TO STRENGTHEN OPERATIONS

Godwin Hotel Haridwar has announced the appointment of Himanshu Tyagi as its new General Manager, reinforcing its leadership team as the property sharpens its focus on operational efficiency and guest experience in one of North India's key spiritual destinations.

SUMMIT HOTELS & RESORTS APPOINTS DEEPAK BOTHRA AS CORPORATE GENERAL MANAGER

Strengthening its operational leadership as it expands across the Eastern Himalayan region, Summit Hotels & Resorts has appointed Deepak Bothra as Corporate General Manager. With close to three decades of experience in hospitality, Deepak Bothra brings deep expertise across hotel operations, pre-opening projects, quality control, and revenue management. Over the years, he has worked with leading international and regional brands, holding senior leadership roles and contributing to the successful launch and turnaround of multiple properties.



A NEW CHAPTER IN THE HILLS: JW MARRIOTT MUSSOORIE WALNUT GROVE RESORT & SPA WELCOMES GAURAV ISSAR AS GENERAL MANAGER

JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa is pleased to announce the appointment of Gaurav Issar as its new General Manager, effective 9 March. A seasoned hospitality professional with over twenty-five years of experience, Gaurav steps into this role at a time when travel is increasingly defined by meaningful experiences, mindful luxury, and a deeper connection to the destination.

CONRAD BENGALURU APPOINTS AAGMAN BAURY AS HOTEL MANAGER

Conrad Bengaluru is pleased to announce the appointment of Aagman Baury as its new Hotel Manager. With extensive experience across luxury and upscale hospitality, Aagman brings a strong track record of operational excellence, strategic leadership, and guest-centric innovation.



GODWIN HOTELS AND RESORTS STRENGTHENS LEADERSHIP WITH KAMAL KANT NAUGAI AS REGIONAL SALES HEAD

Godwin Hotels and Resorts has announced the appointment of Kamal Kant Naugai as Regional Sales Head, reinforcing its commercial leadership as the group continues to expand across key hospitality segments. With over 25 years of experience in the hospitality and travel industry, Naugai brings strong expertise in leisure, travel trade, and corporate sales. In his new role, he will lead the sales function across the group's portfolio, focusing on driving revenue growth, strengthening partnerships, and expanding market presence.



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OCTOBER, 2026

GOA

31 OCT., 01, 02
NOVEMBER, 2026

JAMMU

21, 22, 23
NOVEMBER, 2026

LUCKNOW

18, 19, 20
DECEMBER, 2026

CHANDIGARH

12, 13, 14
FEBRUARY, 2027

VARANASI

26, 27, 28
FEBRUARY, 2027

DEHRADUN

11, 12, 13
MARCH, 2027



For inquiries regarding Booth/Stall Bookings and Sponsorship Opportunities:

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