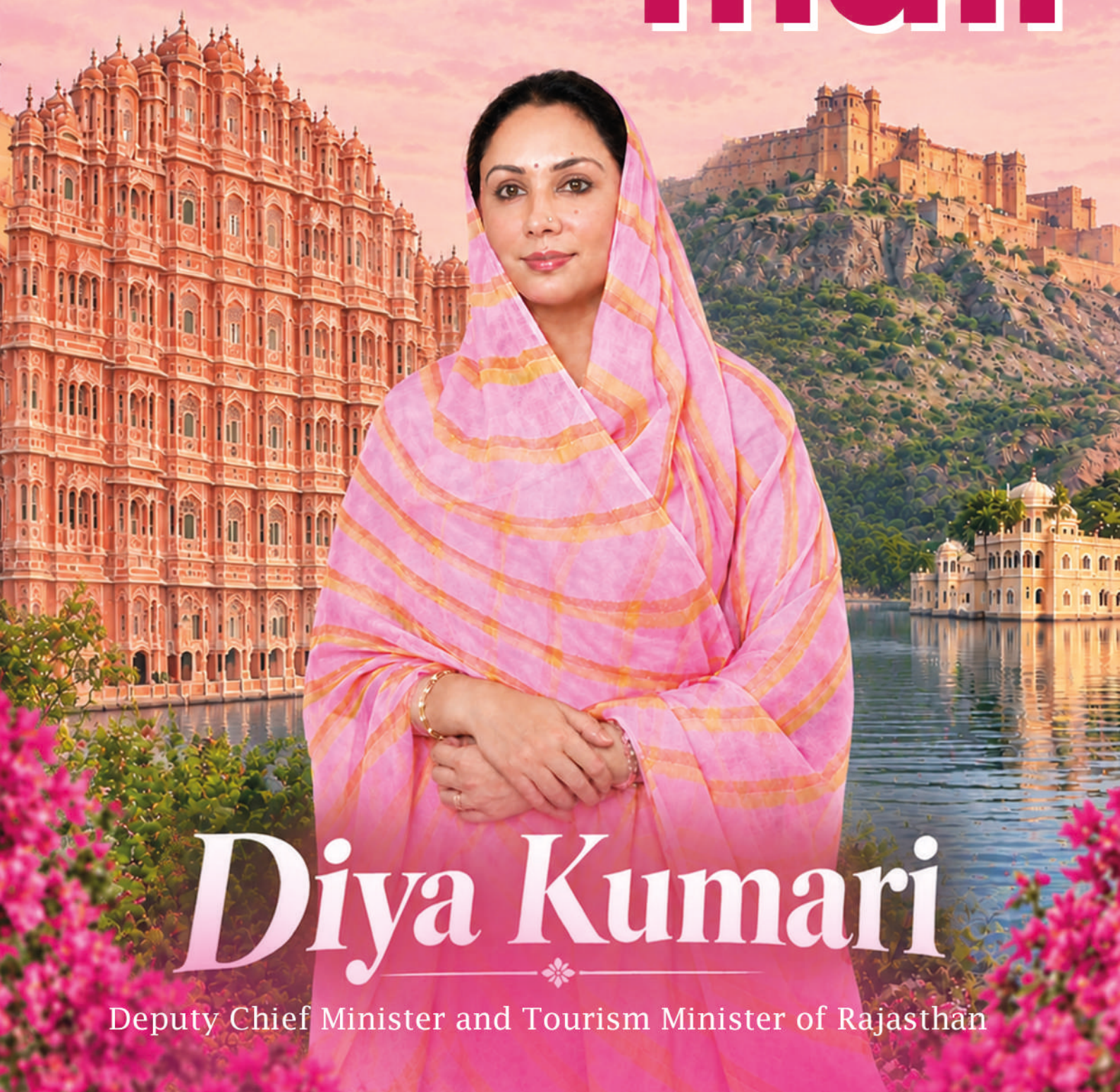


India's Leading International Travel Magazine

travel mail

September 2026 Issue
Vol. 34 No. 9
Rs. 200/-



Diya Kumari

Deputy Chief Minister and Tourism Minister of Rajasthan



THE
BAYAN

GROUP OF HOTELS & RESORTS

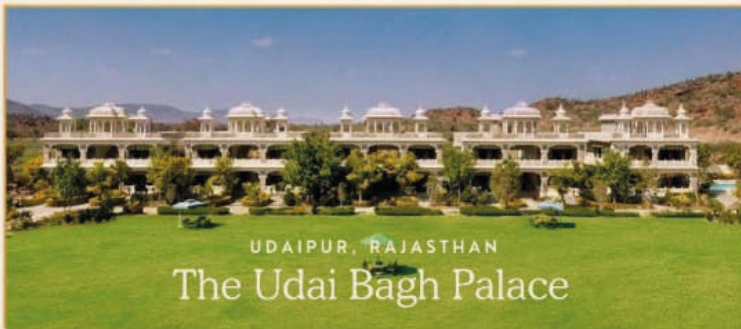
ROOTED LUXURY HOSPITALITY • RAJASTHAN, INDIA

HERITAGE
NATURE
LUXURY
ALWAYS

PALACES
RESORTS
CULTURE
EXPERIENCES

Rooted in Rajasthan, Crafted for Timeless Living

A collection of heritage-led stays across Rajasthan.



The Neel Bagh
PUSHKAR, RAJASTHAN
COMING SOON

The Bayan Elegance Hotel Hadi Rani Palace
JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

RESERVATIONS
+91-8306300609 • +91-8306300610

EMAIL
crs@thebayanhotels.com

WEB
www.thebayanhotels.com

@bayanggroupofhotelsandresorts

Editors note

Dear Reader,

There is a growing sense that Indian tourism is entering a different phase.

For years, we spoke about India's enormous tourism potential. Today, the conversation is increasingly about how that potential can be converted into stronger destinations, better connectivity, deeper experiences, and a more organised tourism ecosystem.

This issue of Travel Mail reflects that transition.

From the Jaipur Declaration adopted by the BRICS Tourism Ministers to the Government's continued focus on developing tourism in the North-East, the direction is clear: tourism is being viewed not simply as a source of visitors, but as an important driver of economic growth, employment, culture and regional development.

Technology is becoming an equally important part of this transformation. The Ministry of Tourism's partnership with Netflix highlights the growing power of storytelling in shaping destination perception, while developments such as Digi Yatra, RailOne and multimodal travel platforms are making the journey itself increasingly seamless.

Rajasthan offers an especially interesting example of this changing approach. With Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari giving renewed momentum to tourism, the state is looking beyond its established icons and strengthening its engagement with the travel trade. The Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart and the first Marwar Travel Mart are important steps in bringing destinations, businesses and the wider tourism community together. Our special coverage in this issue looks at this evolving Rajasthan story in greater detail.

Elsewhere, destinations across India and the world continue to compete for the attention of the Indian traveller. New visa initiatives, expanding air connectivity, experiential travel, destination weddings, luxury hospitality and the growing demand for meaningful journeys are creating new opportunities for the industry.

But opportunity also brings responsibility.

As tourism grows, we must ensure that destinations grow with it. It helps protect their character, empower local communities, improve infrastructure and deliver experiences that travellers remember for the right reasons.

The next chapter of Indian tourism will not be defined by numbers alone. It will be defined by how intelligently we grow.

At Travel Mail, we will continue to follow that journey closely, bringing you the people, ideas, destinations and developments shaping the industry.

Welcome to this issue.

Happy Reading!

Warm Regards,

Ajay Gupta
Managing Editor – Travel Mail

travel mail

India's Leading Travel Magazine

Managing Editor

Ajay Gupta

Associate Editor

Siddharth Gupta

Sub Editor & Creative Head

Rishika Gupta

Creative Designer

Amit Yadav

Marketing

Sharad Varshney

Circulation

Mukesh Kumar

Accounts

Mukesh Gupta

199, First Floor, CM - 1, Office Complex, Jhandewalan, New Delhi - 110055



Disclaimer and Publishing Information

All information published in Travel Mail is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is provided to our readers without any responsibility on the part of the publisher or the editorial team. Opinions or views expressed by third parties, whether in interviews, features, or abstracts, are not necessarily shared by Travel Mail or its publishers.

Material appearing in the magazine may not be reproduced, wholly or partly, without prior written permission from the publisher.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for material lost or damaged in transit. All advertisements must comply with applicable laws and regulations. The publisher reserves the right to accept, reject, or edit any advertisement or editorial submission without explanation. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy,

Travel Mail accepts no responsibility for any effects arising from errors or omissions.

All rights reserved throughout the world.

Published by:

MMG Publications

Address: 199, CM-1, Office Complex, Jhandewalan, New Delhi - 110055

Editor: Ajay Gupta

For Press Release:
editorial@travelmail.in

To reach editor:
editor@travelmail.in

To Advertise:
advertise@travelmail.in

Phone no. 8448985513, 9810148601, 011-4513 2048

RNI. NO. 65222/96

Content

03 Ministry of Tourism

BRICS Tourism Ministers adopt Jaipur Declaration (Ministers' Communique)

05 Ministry of Railway

Indian Railways Approves Extension of Daily Ludhiana-Jakhal Passenger Train up to Jind to Strengthen Regional Rail Connectivity

07 Ministry of Aviation

Civil Aviation Minister Shri Ram Mohan Naidu witnesses Pawan Hans MoU with Norway's Noemi Aerospace

09 Tourism

Rajasthan Tourism Unites for a Stronger 2026: Mewar Royalty Invited to RDTM and First Marwar Travel Mart

17 Travel

RAJASTHAN, IN MOTION

29 Association

RDTM 2026: Jaipur to Host Rajasthan's First-Ever Night Polo Match as Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh Joins the Celebration

33 Interviews

Gaurav Shiva on Leadership, Sustainable Luxury and the Future of The Orchid Hotel Mumbai

37 Hotels & Resorts

Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Unveils Shore Temple Dialogues, an Exclusive Forum Celebrating Luxury Weddings in Mahabalipuram



43 Restaurant

Makhan Restaurant

44 Trade Events

Stories, Journeys, Smiles: One State. Two Marts. Endless Opportunities

47 Cruise

Scenic Tours APAC and STIC GSA Services Announce a Strategic Partnership for Scenic and Emerald Luxury River Cruises in India

49 Airlines

Etihad Airways and Africa World Airlines sign strategic partnership agreement

53 Aviation

Hong Kong Air Cargo Launches Freighter Service from Mumbai with Aeroprime Group

55 Railways

Uber Partners with ixigo to Offer Train Ticket Booking on the Uber App

61 Appointments



RAJASTHAN BEYOND THE POSTCARD

How Deputy Chief Minister Smt. Diya Kumari is deploying state capital, targeted policy reform, and heritage conservation to reshape Rajasthan's tourism economy.

By Travel Mail

Travel Mail Desk

For decades, the mechanics of Rajasthan's tourism trade moved to a familiar cadence. A traveller landed in Jaipur, spent an afternoon along the lakes of Udaipur, scaled the ramparts of Mehrangarh in Jodhpur, and closed the loop atop a camel across the Sam dunes of Jaisalmer. It was reliable, globally recognised and immensely profitable.

For Deputy Chief Minister Smt. Diya Kumari, who holds the state's Tourism, Finance and Public Works portfolios, that classic circuit is no longer the ceiling. It is merely the baseline.

Rajasthan's contemporary tourism challenge is not about proving that the state is majestic; the world recognised that long ago. The core strategic test is converting a hurried, three-day city stopover into an extended regional journey. The priority is to steer more domestic and international visitors towards the cultural landscapes of Shekhawati, Hadoti and Marwar.

Under Kumari's stewardship of finance and tourism, that vision is increasingly being backed by public investment, policy and destination development. The broader objective is straightforward: decentralise visitor traffic, create more local economic opportunities and turn Rajasthan's heritage and regional diversity into a deeper tourism proposition.



Deputy Chief Minister
Smt. Diya Kumari

The Open-Air Canvas of Shekhawati

Nowhere is this shift more evident than across the semi-arid merchant towns of Shekhawati. In June 2026, the Painted Haveli Towns of

Shekhawati were submitted to and added to UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List. The serial nomination covers 14 historic towns, including Mandawa, Nawalgarh, Fatehpur, Ramgarh and Churu.

For Rajasthan, the significance goes beyond the prospect of future UNESCO recognition. Shekhawati represents a coherent cultural landscape shaped by mercantile wealth, frescoed havelis, historic baoris (stepwells), bazaars and distinctive town planning. The region's nomination itself highlights the relationship between architecture, art, trade, water management and community life.

To build on that heritage, the Tourism Department is reviewing the draft Shekhawati Haveli Conservation Scheme 2026, focused on scientific conservation of frescoes in privately owned havelis and the development of the region as an "Open Art Gallery."

It is an important shift in thinking. Heritage is not simply something to preserve behind a plaque. Properly conserved and responsibly opened to visitors, it can become part of a living tourism economy.

Capital Allocation and Policy Framework

Kumari's Finance portfolio gives tourism an important connection to the state's wider fiscal machinery.





desert adventures, luxury hospitality and rural tourism.

This is destination development through the trade: giving buyers more Rajasthan to sell and travellers more Rajasthan to discover.

Connectivity is another piece of the equation. The state's plans for nine greenfield expressways, alongside new tourism circuits and regional infrastructure, have the potential to reduce the friction of reaching destinations beyond the established tourist corridors.

For Rajasthan, the next chapter of tourism cannot depend entirely on repeat visits to familiar fort ramparts and palace courtyards.

The opportunity lies in experiential depth, from the frescoed lanes of Mandawa and the wilderness of Jawai to the artisanal heritage of Marwar and the cultural landscapes of southern Rajasthan.

The state's greatest tourism asset may ultimately be the sheer variety within its borders.

The task now is to connect that variety to infrastructure, investment, conservation and the travel trade.

Rajasthan does not need another campaign telling travellers that it is beautiful.

The world already knows that.

The bigger opportunity is to convince them that they haven't seen enough of it yet.

The Rajasthan Tourism Infrastructure and Capacity Building Fund was established to support large-scale tourism development, while the state has continued to allocate significant resources to tourism infrastructure.

The private sector is responding. According to the Tourism Department's latest review, Rajasthan has received 2,094 tourism MoUs representing proposed investments of ₹1,79,465 crore. Land allocation has been completed for 1,359 MoUs, while 332 projects have reached the groundbreaking stage.

The significance of those numbers lies beyond the headline investment figure. A new resort creates demand for transport, guides, restaurants, experiences, local products and destination services. A new tourism circuit can distribute that economic activity across several towns rather than concentrating it in established centres.

The opportunity, therefore, is not simply to build more hotels. It is to build tourism ecosystems.

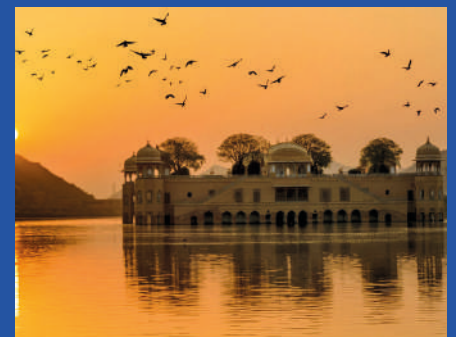
Trade Infrastructure and Corridors

Policy and capital alone do not move travellers; the commercial travel trade remains the force multiplier.

That is where Rajasthan's growing trade infrastructure becomes significant.

The sixth edition of the Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM) in Jaipur, from 17–19 September, and the inaugural Marwar Travel Mart (MTM) in Jodhpur, from 20–22 September, are designed to connect the state's tourism products with buyers and travel professionals.

The Marwar Travel Mart is particularly telling. Its focus extends beyond the familiar desert safari to heritage tourism, destination weddings, cultural and experiential travel,



BRICS Tourism Ministers adopt Jaipur Declaration (Ministers' Communique)



Addressing the meeting, **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** said that tourism has an important role in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat by 2047 and has the unique ability to take growth beyond major economic centres to towns, villages and remote regions. He said tourism creates opportunities for hotels and homestays, taxi operators, guides, artisans, weavers, farmers, entrepreneurs and millions of families whose livelihoods are directly or indirectly connected with the sector.

Travel Mail Desk

The BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting under India's Chairship concluded in Jaipur with the adoption of the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Communiqué 2026 (Jaipur Declaration), providing a framework for strengthening tourism cooperation among BRICS Member States.

The meeting was chaired by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. It marked the culmination of the BRICS Tourism Track under India's Chairship in 2026, being taken forward under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

The meeting saw participation from nine BRICS Member States. Ministerial participation included Mr. Gustavo Costa Feliciando, Minister of Tourism, Brazil; Mr. Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Iran; Ms. Patricia De Lille, Minister of Tourism, South Africa; and H.E. Abdulla Bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy and Tourism, United Arab Emirates, along with Heads of Delegation from China, Ethiopia, Indonesia and Russia. The Indian delegation included Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, and Shri Harikishore S., Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, among other officials.

The Jaipur Declaration reflects the work undertaken through the BRICS Tourism Working Group during India's Chairship around four thematic priorities — Artificial Intelligence and Tourism; Sustainability and Responsible Tourism; Tourism Skilling and Capacity Building; and Tourism Exchanges and Seamless Travel Facilitation.



The Ministers' Communique adopted by consensus by BRICS Tourism Ministers recognises the transformative potential of responsible, safe and human-centred Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies in tourism and supports cooperation in tourism planning, destination management, visitor services, multilingual communication and travel facilitation.

It further places emphasis on sustainable and community-centred tourism, protection of natural and cultural heritage, tourism investment and infrastructure, development and promotion of diverse tourism products, continuous skilling and upskilling, industry-academia partnerships, exchange of tourism data and statistics, sharing of best practices and stronger people-to-people connectivity among BRICS Member States.

The Minister highlighted India's efforts to build a tourism ecosystem that is economically prosperous, environmentally responsible, technologically enabled and culturally authentic. He further remarked, *"Tourism ultimately connects people. It creates opportunities for communities, enables cultural exchange and allows citizens of our countries to understand one another beyond the formal relationships between governments."*

On the sidelines of the Tourism Ministers' Meeting, India held bilateral meetings with Brazil, Iran, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. The engagements provided an opportunity for interaction with the respective Ministerial delegations and for taking forward tourism cooperation.

A press conference was also held on the BRICS Tourism Track under India's Chairship, highlighting the outcomes of the Tourism Ministers' Meeting and the adoption of the Jaipur Declaration.

Alongside part of Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Jaipur, curated experiences spotlighting traditional arts, crafts and community-based tourism initiatives were showcased to Ministers and delegates.

On 22 August 2026, the Ministers and delegates will undertake a visit to some of Jaipur's iconic heritage attractions, including Hawa Mahal, City Palace and Amber Fort, providing them an opportunity to experience the city's rich architectural, cultural and tourism heritage.

Ministry of Tourism and Netflix Partner to Showcase India's Tourism Experiences Through the Power of Storytelling

Travel Mail Desk

The event brought together **Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** and **Netflix Co-Chief Executive Officer Mr. Ted Sarandos** for a fireside conversation at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi. The discussion explored how authentic storytelling can inspire travel, foster deeper cultural understanding and strengthen India's global soft power by showcasing the country's unique destinations and traditions.

As part of the collaboration, the Ministry of Tourism has integrated "As Seen on Netflix" with the Incredible India digital platform, enabling travellers to discover destinations across India that have been featured in popular Netflix titles. The initiative celebrates India's breathtaking landscapes, vibrant festivals, rich cultural heritage, diverse wildlife and iconic locations, while encouraging audiences to transform their on-screen experiences into real-world journeys.

Addressing the gathering, **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Tourism and Culture** said, "Cinema is more than entertainment; it is a bridge to culture, heritage and tourism. Every Indian story has the potential to inspire someone, somewhere in the world, to experience India."

Our partnership with Netflix, including the 'As Seen on Netflix' integration on the Incredible India portal, reflects our shared vision of



showcasing India's rich cultural diversity and strengthening its global soft power through authentic storytelling.

Together, we look forward to taking India's stories even farther and inspiring the world to visit the incredible destinations behind them."

Speaking on the occasion, **Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism**, underscored the growing significance of

storytelling in shaping destination appeal and influencing travel choices. He emphasized that strategic partnerships between the Government and the creative industry, supported by new-age technologies and digital platforms, are transforming the way destinations are discovered and experienced. He noted that authentic narratives have the power to inspire travellers, promote sustainable tourism and create meaningful economic opportunities for local communities.

The event also showcased a destination film on India's wildlife, developed jointly by the Ministry of Tourism and Netflix, highlighting the country's extraordinary biodiversity and wildlife tourism experiences. A separate film celebrating India's rich cultural heritage was presented as part of the Ministry of Culture's collaboration with Netflix.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to leveraging the universal appeal of storytelling to position India as a preferred global tourism destination. By connecting audiences with the places, people and traditions that inspire stories on screen, the partnership seeks to encourage experiential travel while showcasing the country's unparalleled cultural and natural diversity to the world.

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE NORTH-EASTERN REGION

Travel Mail Desk

Ministry of Tourism, as part of its ongoing endeavour, promotes various tourism destinations and products of India, including the states of the North Eastern region, holistically, through various initiatives including promotional events, assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for organising fairs and festivals, participation in exhibitions, websites, social media etc.

The Ministry of Tourism has been organising the International Tourism Mart (ITM) in the North Eastern Region since 2013. The ITM is an annual event designed to highlight the tourism potential of the North Eastern region for both domestic and international audiences. This event serves as a vital platform, bringing together tourism businesses and entrepreneurs from the eight North Eastern States—Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim—to foster collaboration and interactions among buyers, sellers, media, government agencies, and other stakeholders. The latest ITM was held at Gangtok, Sikkim, from 13-16 November 2025. In addition to this, the following steps, including the initiatives under various central schemes, are as follows:

(i) **Incredible India Digital Platform**—The Ministry of Tourism revamped the Incredible India website as IIDP in September 2024 to engage



visitors across web and social media platforms. The content on the Incredible India Website is available in Hindi, English and UN languages. The website features tourism destinations in the North East States to promote tourism in NER.

(ii) The Ministry of Tourism promotes various tourism sites and products in the North East Region in the domestic and international markets. Creative posts, Live sessions, tweets, etc., on North East destinations are posted on a regular basis on the social media handles of the Ministry of Tourism. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism also produces promotional material showcasing the tourist destinations and products in North Eastern States.

(iii) **Central Financial Assistance (CFA)** support for organizing fairs & festivals—Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State Governments/UT Administrations for organising fairs/festivals and tourism-related events under the DPPH scheme. The list of North East States to which the financial support for organising fairs and festivals has been extended is at Annexure-II.

(iv) Ministry of Tourism under the schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan', 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)', 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' provides financial assistance to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations/Central Agencies, Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI Scheme), Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) for the development of tourism-related infrastructure and facilities at various tourism destinations in the country, including the North Eastern Region. The Ministry of Tourism has now revamped the Swadesh Darshan Scheme as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD 2.0) with the objective of developing sustainable and responsible tourism destinations, following a destination- and tourism-centric approach. The details of projects sanctioned under the above-mentioned schemes in the North Eastern region are given at Annexure-III.

Indian Railways Approves Extension of Daily Ludhiana-Jakhal Passenger Train up to Jind to Strengthen Regional Rail Connectivity



Travel Mail Desk

In a significant step towards improving regional rail connectivity, Indian Railways has approved the extension of Train No. 54053/54054 Ludhiana-Jakhal Daily Passenger up to Jind station under Northern Railway. The decision will provide direct rail connectivity between Ludhiana and Jind, benefiting daily commuters, students, office-goers, traders and passengers travelling between Punjab and Haryana.

Direct Ludhiana-Jind Passenger Connectivity

With the approved extension, Train No. 54054 will now operate from Ludhiana to Jind, while Train No. 54053 will run from Jind to Ludhiana, replacing the earlier Ludhiana-Jakhal operation.

The train's journey distance will increase from 128 km to 200 km, providing uninterrupted passenger connectivity between the two important cities.

Commercial Stoppages at All Stations Between Jakhal and Jind

The extended portion of the service will include commercial stoppages at all stations between Jakhal and Jind, ensuring improved accessibility for passengers residing in towns and villages along the route.

The extension is expected to strengthen regional mobility by providing better rail connectivity to intermediate stations while improving access to employment, education, healthcare and commercial centres.

Enhanced Passenger Convenience Across Punjab and Haryana

The extended service will improve travel convenience by eliminating the need for passengers to change trains at Jakhal for onward journeys to Jind. The project will facilitate smoother and more seamless rail travel across the region while enhancing connectivity between important urban and rural centres.

The approval reflects Indian Railways' continued commitment to improving passenger services and expanding regional rail connectivity through demand-based operational enhancements that deliver greater convenience and accessibility for passengers.

Indian Railways Approves Provision of Kavach Version 4.0 on 660 Route Km of Izzatnagar Division of North Eastern Railway at ₹295 crore

Travel Mail Desk

Indian Railways has approved the provision of Kavach Version 4.0 on 660 Route Km of the Izzatnagar Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) at an estimated cost of ₹295 crore.

The work has been approved under the umbrella work "Provision of Kavach with communication backbone of Long-Term Evolution (LTE) on balance sections of Indian Railways."

Kavach is India's indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system designed to prevent Signal Passed at Danger (SPAD) incidents and train collisions through continuous monitoring of train movements. The system automatically applies brakes whenever required, enables trains to safely operate at maximum permissible speeds, improves operational reliability and supports safe train operations even during adverse weather conditions such as dense fog.

The approved work covers the balance sections of the Izzatnagar Division of North Eastern Railway. The provision of Kavach Version 4.0 will further strengthen the safety infrastructure on the identified railway sections.



RailOne App Reaches 4.76 Crore Downloads, Records 10 Lakh Daily Average Ticket Bookings

Travel Mail Desk

With a view to expand digital mode of procurement of reserved as well as unreserved tickets Railways has launched RailOne App on 01.07.2025. This App enables passengers to book reserved as well as unreserved tickets on mobile phone. This App combines all the public facing services of Indian Railways like reserved ticketing, unreserved ticketing and platform ticketing, train enquiry, PNR enquiry, Railmadad, etc. into a single platform. This, in effect, brings the Passenger reservation system facility to passenger's palm. The App facilitates users to access multiple services through Single-Sign-On (SSO) facility eliminating the necessity of downloading multiple Applications of Railways & remembering several passwords.

The National Train Enquiry System (NTES), implemented in the year 2000, provides passengers with near real-time train running information, including arrival/departure status and train schedules through multiple interfaces such as enquiry counters, the NTES website, mobile applications (Android & iOS) and the nationwide Rail Enquiry Number 139. Its key features include Spot Your Train, Live Station, Train Schedule, and Trains between Stations,



enabling passengers to access authentic and reliable information conveniently. The NTES mobile application, launched in October 2014 (Android) and October 2015 (iOS), has recorded more than 4.5 crore downloads on Android and 16 lakh downloads on iOS as on 01.08.2026. At present, NTES handles about 80,000 concurrent users and processes over 6 crore enquiries daily. It has been generally appreciated by the passengers.

The deployment of the National Train Enquiry System (NTES), which provides passengers with

easy access to authentic and near real-time train running information through multiple digital platforms including the website, mobile applications and Rail Enquiry Number 139, has significantly reduced the need for passengers to visit railway enquiry counters. Consequently, this has helped in reducing queues and waiting time at enquiry counters.

In cases of train cancellation, the online e-ticketing system NGeT (Next Generation E-ticketing) automatically initiates the process of refund immediately after the scheduled time of departure of the train and the applicable refund is credited to the passenger's bank account. Automatic refunds linked to train cancellation are presently available only for e-Tickets booked online and are not available for counter tickets in which case the passenger holding counter ticket is required to visit nearest PRS counter.

RailOne is the Official App of Indian Railways which provides integrated platform for all public facing services of IR. It offers reserved, unreserved and platform ticketing, journey plan, train information, passenger support and allied railway services through a single, seamless mobile application.

Cabinet approves four multitracking projects covering Eight Districts in West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, increasing the existing network of Indian Railways by about 410 Kms

Travel Mail Desk

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today has approved Four projects of Ministry of Railways with total cost of Rs. 9,450 crore approximately. These projects include:

Kharagpur – Bhadrak (Ranital) 4th Line – 173 km (West Bengal and Odisha)
Bhadrak – Haridaspur 4th Line – 75 km (Odisha)
Gummidipundi – Gudur 3rd and 4th Line – 90 km (Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu)
Cuttack – Paradeep (Badabandha) 3rd and 4th Line – 72 km (Odisha)

The increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion. The projects are in line with the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Vision of a New India which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way

of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities.

The projects are planned on PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan with focus on enhancing multi-modal connectivity & logistic efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations. These projects will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods, and services.

The 04 (Four) projects covering 08 Districts across the states of West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 410 Kms. The proposed multi-tracking projects will enhance connectivity to approximately 6,448 villages, which are having a population of about 60 lakhs.

The proposed capacity enhancement will improve rail connectivity to several prominent tourist destinations across

the country, including Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhitarkanika National Park, Maa Bhadrakali temple, Maa Dhamarai temple, Panchalingeswar Temple, Talsari-Udaypur and Chandipur Beach, Pulicat Lake, Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, Lord Veeraraghava Perumal Temple, Gada Kujanga Jagannath Temple, Sarala Temple, Dhableswar Temple, Lalitgiri (a Buddhist site), etc.

The proposed projects are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as coal, iron ore, cement, iron and steel, container, automobile, food grains, etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 76 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum). The Railways being environment friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, will help both in achieving climate goals and minimizing logistics cost of the country, reduce oil import (~13 Crore Litres) and lower CO2 emissions (~65 Crore Kg) which is equivalent to plantation of 2.60 crore trees.



Civil Aviation Minister Shri Ram Mohan Naidu witnesses Pawan Hans MoU with Norway's Noemi Aerospace

Travel Mail Desk

Pawan Hans Limited (PHL), a Government of India enterprise under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, today signed a Non-Binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Noemi Aerospace (Elfly AS), Norway to explore opportunities for collaboration in next-generation sustainable aviation technologies, including electric seaplane solutions.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu and Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Shri Samir Kumar Sinha.

The agreement was signed by Shri Sunil Kumar Nagdawné, Chairman & Managing Director, Pawan Hans Limited, and Shri Eric François Lithun, Chief Executive Officer, Noemi Aerospace (Elfly AS), Norway.

The proposed collaboration seeks to establish a framework for exploring potential cooperation in the areas like Electric seaplane technologies, Skill development and capacity building, Technical knowledge sharing and workshops, Feasibility studies.

The initiative aligns with the Government of India's vision of promoting regional connectivity, green aviation, innovation-led growth, island connectivity and emerging aviation technologies.



Speaking on the occasion, **Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu** said, "This collaboration reflects our broader vision of encouraging strengthening indigenous capabilities and exploring emerging technologies in the civil aviation sector."

Shri Ram Mohan Naidu further said, "Our vision is not limited to operating seaplanes in India; we also want to build them in India guided by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Make in India vision. Further the Union Budget 2026 strongly puts forward the government's vision for Seaplane promotion. It proposes to give incentives to indigenize manufacturing of seaplanes. A Seaplane VGF Scheme will be also be introduced to provide support for operations. If we combine global technology partnerships with Indian manufacturing

capability, then we can cater to the local and regional demand for Seaplanes."

The Minister further stated, "Over the last two years, the Government of India has taken several concrete steps to promote seaplanes in the country. We launched dedicated Seaplane Operations Guidelines, simplified the regulatory framework and also conducted a demonstration flight across the country to encourage the stakeholders."

Noemi Aerospace (Elfly AS), headquartered in Bergen, Norway, is engaged in the development of next-generation electric seaplane technology and is supported by funding from the Government of Norway for its development programme.

The MoU is exploratory in nature and does not involve any financial commitment, procurement commitment, investment obligation or exclusive arrangement. Any future collaboration arising from these discussions will be subject to separate definitive agreements and the requisite approvals of the competent authorities, in accordance with applicable laws and Government of India procedures.

The initiative reflects Pawan Hans Limited's continued commitment to innovation, operational excellence and supporting India's evolving aviation ecosystem through strategic international partnerships.

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu flags off Transshipment Cargo Operations at Delhi's IGI Airport

Travel Mail Desk

Union Minister for Civil Aviation Shri Ram Mohan Naidu flagged off the scaled-up phase of India's transshipment (TP) cargo reform at Delhi International Airport Limited's (DIAL) Transshipment Excellence Centre (TEC), IGI Airport, Terminal 2.

Speaking on the occasion, **Shri Ram Mohan Naidu** said, "Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, we are continuously working to strengthen Ease of Doing Business in the aviation sector. Based on industry feedback, we identified the long-standing requirement of mandatory re-screening of transshipment cargo as a key bottleneck. By doing away with it, we can significantly reduce turnaround time, handling costs and congestion at cargo terminals. And a Proof of Concept exercise on the Chennai-Delhi-Frankfurt route has successfully established that by reducing average end-to-end transit time from 60 hours to just 20 hours". Proof of Concept for Domestic-to-International transshipment commenced on 20 June 2026 on the Chennai-Delhi-Frankfurt sector using DIAL's TEC, with Air India operating the service end-to-end. Since its launch, the PoC transshipped 280 MT of cargo, with aircraft capacity utilization rising from 75% to nearly 100%.



Based on the success of the PoC, the network was today expanded to four additional domestic origin stations: Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad, along with two new international destinations: London and Copenhagen. The expanded network is projected to increase Air India's monthly cargo carriage on these lanes from 1,763 MT to 3,183 MT, an increase of nearly 80%.

The event was attended by Shri Samir Kumar Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation; Shri Vipin Kumar, Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI); Shri Asangba Chuba Ao, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation; Ms. Pratibha Ambedkar, Joint DG, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS); and senior officials from MoCA, AAI, BCAS, DIAL, Air India and other stakeholders.



6TH
RAJASTHAN
DOMESTIC TRAVEL MART
17-18-19 SEPTEMBER 2026
B.M. BIRLA CONVENTION CENTRE, JAIPUR



20-21-22 SEPTEMBER 2026
AMRITAM PALACE, JODHPUR
IN COLLABORATION WITH

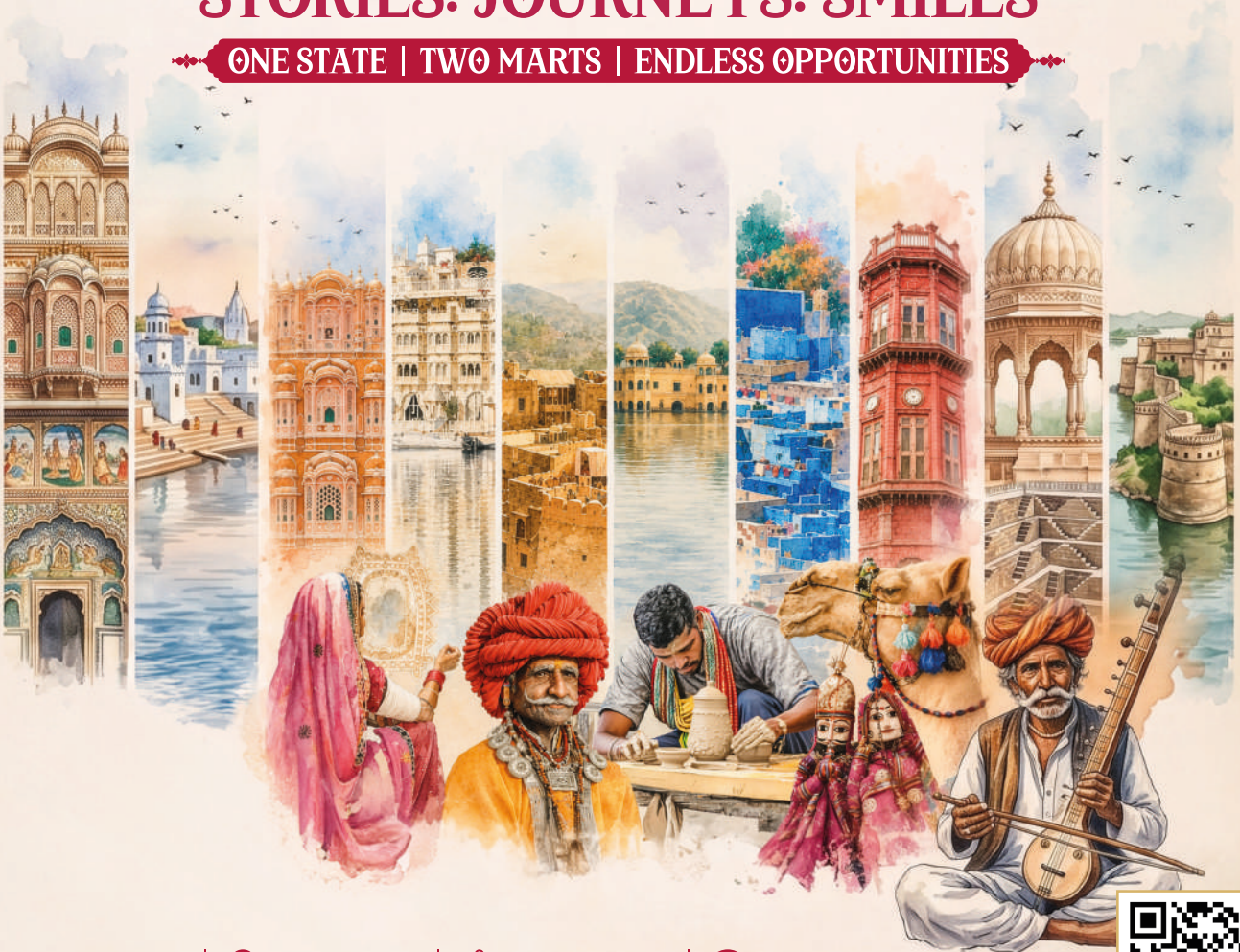


RAJASTHAN
The Incredible State of India!
HOST STATE

THEME

STORIES: JOURNEYS: SMILES

ONE STATE | TWO MARTS | ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES



MEET

Leading Hospitality & Tourism Partners - Engage with Hotels, Heritage Hotels, Palaces, Tour Operators, and Travel Service Providers.



EXPLORE

New Destinations & Unlock Exclusive Deals.



CONNECT

With Travel Agents, Event Managers, Wedding Planners & Influencers.



EXPERIENCE

Curated Travel & Cultural Experiences at Jaipur & Jodhpur.



Please scan the QR code to fill out the Buyer Interest Form.

HIGH-IMPACT B2B NETWORKING | BUILD PARTNERSHIP | GROW YOUR BUSINESS

SUPPORTED BY

SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

KNOWLEDGE PARTNER

DIGITAL MEDIA PARTNER

MEDIA PARTNER



RAJASTHAN TOURISM UNITES FOR A STRONGER 2026

Mewar Royalty Invited to RDTM and First Marwar Travel Mart

RDTM 2026 and the first Marwar Travel Mart bring Rajasthan tourism's fraternity together, with Mewar royalty invited and new responsible tourism initiatives unveiled.

Travel Mail Desk

Shreeji Huzoor Dr. Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar was cordially invited by Shri Surendra S. Shahpura, President, FHTR; Shri Rajendra S. Pachar, Senior Vice President, FHTR; Shri Tarun Bansal, Secretary General, FHTR; and Shri Rajendra Singh Jodha, Treasurer, FHTR to attend 6th RDTM 2026, Jaipur (17–19 September) and 1st Marwar Travel Mart 2026, Jodhpur (20–22 September).

The delegation shared the vision and new initiatives planned for both marts, including responsible tourism projects such as stepwell cleaning, along with details of industry participation and buyer engagement.

Also present were Shri Jitendra Singh Kelwa, Area VP, FHTR – Mewar Region; Shri Rajesh Agarwal, President, Hotel Association of Udaipur; Ms. Usha Sharma, Vice President, HAU; Shri Rajnikant Sharma, Founder, Rajasthan Hoteliers Club; Shri Karan S. Champawat, President, Rajasthan Hoteliers Club; Shri Anand Singh, Secretary, Travel Agents Association of Udaipur; Shri Luv Kush, Vice President, TAAU; and Chef Vimal Dhar, President, Royal Rajasthan Chef Society.

Organised by FHTR, with the support of the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, and stakeholder associations HRAR, RATO and JHARA, both marts aim to create meaningful momentum for Rajasthan's tourism growth.

Two marts. One shared vision — taking Rajasthan tourism forward.

Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM) 2026

Dates: 17 to 19 September 2026

Venue: B.M. Birla Auditorium &
Convention Centre in Jaipur

Marwar Travel Mart (MTM) 2026

Dates: 20, 21, and 22 September
2026

Venue: Amritam Palace, Jodhpur,
Rajasthan



Goa Tourism Joins 56th FHRAI Annual Convention Inauguration



Travel Mail Desk

Goa Tourism joined the inauguration of the 56th FHRAI Annual Convention, which brought together distinguished leaders, policymakers, hospitality professionals and tourism stakeholders from across India and abroad. The gathering highlighted the growing importance of collaboration, innovation and sustainable development in strengthening India's hospitality and tourism ecosystem.

The inauguration was graced by several eminent dignitaries, including H.E. Mrs. Vithaya Xayavong, Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to India; Shri Satish Mahana, Hon'ble Speaker, Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly; Shri Ravindra Jaiswal, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Stamps and Registration, Government of Uttar Pradesh; Shri Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha; and Shri Rohan A. Khaunte, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Government of Goa.

Also present on the occasion were Shriji Huzur Dr. Lakshyarj Singh Ji Mewar of Udaipur, Patron of the 56th FHRAI Annual Convention, and Shri Surendra Kumar Jaiswal, President, FHRAI, along with several other distinguished leaders, industry representatives and stakeholders.

The convention provided an important platform for industry leaders to exchange perspectives on emerging opportunities and challenges facing the hospitality and tourism

sector. Discussions centred on the need for greater cooperation between government and industry, adoption of innovation and technology, responsible tourism practices, and sustainable growth.

The gathering concluded with a strong emphasis on building collaborative strategies that can contribute to a more resilient, innovative and sustainable future for India's hospitality and tourism industry.



Andhra Pradesh Invites Travel Trade to Unlock Its Next Tourism Growth Story at 41st IATO Convention



Mr. Sunil Mishra, Honorary Secretary, IATO, informed that the convention has already received over 350 registrations, with registrations continuing to come in. He said the strong response reflects the growing interest of the travel trade in Andhra Pradesh as an emerging tourism destination.

Mr. Sanjay Razdan, Vice President, IATO, said the convention programme has been designed around key issues shaping the future of Indian tourism, including AI and technology, sustainable tourism, high-growth tourism opportunities and partnerships for tourism growth. He also highlighted the cultural evenings featuring prominent artists showcasing the rich heritage of Andhra Pradesh.

Mr. Rajnish Kaistha, Senior Vice President, IATO, emphasised the importance of Government-industry collaboration in converting tourism potential into actual visitor growth and thanked the Government of Andhra Pradesh for its strong support to the convention and thanked the Hon'ble Minister for joining for the important interactive meet and the press conference.

Travel Mail Desk

Andhra Pradesh has invited the Indian travel trade to partner with the State in unlocking its enormous tourism potential and positioning it as one of India's next major tourism growth destinations.

Shri Kandula Durgesh, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism, Culture & Cinematography, Government of Andhra Pradesh, extended the invitation while addressing IATO members and the media in New Delhi in connection with the 41st IATO Annual Convention, was held at Novotel Visakhapatnam Varun Beach from 10th to 12th September 2026.

"I have not come merely to invite you to the convention. I have come to invite you to partner with Andhra Pradesh in building India's next major tourism success story," Shri Durgesh said.

Describing Andhra Pradesh as "a destination waiting to be discovered," the Minister highlighted the State's unique combination of spiritual, heritage, coastal, nature, adventure, tribal, culinary and cultural tourism. From Tirumala-Tirupati, Srisailem and Lepakshi to Gandikota, Araku, Rajahmundry and the Godavari, he said Andhra Pradesh offers experiences that can significantly enrich international tourism itineraries.

He called upon IATO members to develop and promote new tourism circuits and products covering pilgrimage, Buddhist tourism, coastal tourism, heritage, rural and tribal tourism, adventure, cruise and river tourism, MICE, weddings, cuisine, crafts and handlooms.

Highlighting the Godavari Pushkaralu 2027, Shri Durgesh said the once-in-twelve-years event offers a major opportunity to showcase Andhra Pradesh's spiritual and cultural heritage to millions of visitors.



Mr. Ravi Gosain, President, IATO, thanked the Hon'ble Minister for personally engaging with the travel trade and said IATO was committed to working with Andhra Pradesh Tourism to take the destination to international markets.

"Andhra Pradesh has all the ingredients to become a major international tourism destination. Our objective through this convention is not only to showcase the State, but to enable our members to create new products and take Andhra Pradesh into the itineraries of overseas travellers," Mr. Gosain said.

The 41st IATO Annual Convention and IATO-Andhra Pradesh Travel Mart 2026, was held from 10th to 13th September 2026, brought together leading inbound tour operators and tourism stakeholders from across India to explore new business opportunities and promote Andhra Pradesh to domestic and international markets.

IATO and Andhra Pradesh are now joining hands with one clear objective — to take Andhra Pradesh from a destination waiting to be discovered to a destination the world wants to experience.

Auckland Convention Bureau appoints BRANDit as its India market representative

Travel Mail Desk

Auckland Convention Bureau, part of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited – the region's cultural, events and destination agency – has appointed BRANDit as its India market representative to strengthen Auckland's visibility and consideration within India's outbound meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) market.



Auckland Convention Bureau

For Indian planners, Auckland offers a compelling mix of MICE capability and destination appeal. As Aotearoa New Zealand's largest city and economic gateway, it brings together strong event infrastructure, quality accommodation, an established dining scene, waterfront venues and easy access to nature-led experiences. A business programme in Auckland can easily move from a meeting room to a harbour sailing experience, from views across the city from the Sky Tower to a vineyard lunch on Waiheke Island or from premier sporting events such as cricket at Eden Park to the volcanic landscape of Rangitoto Island. For the Indian market, this range creates an opportunity to position Auckland as more than an entry point to New Zealand and as a multi-day MICE destination where programmes of

four nights or more can combine business, incentive experiences, and time to explore the wider region.

The Auckland Convention Bureau plays a key role in helping planners bring business events to the city. Its support includes destination advice, venue and supplier recommendations, incentive itinerary ideas, bid support, accommodation guidance and access to local expertise. With the New Zealand International Convention Centre, the country's largest purpose-built convention, exhibition and entertainment venue, further strengthening Auckland's business events infrastructure, the city is well positioned to host a wider range of meetings, incentives and conferences from international markets, including India.

Speaking on the appointment, **Ken Pereira, Head of Business Events at Tātaki Auckland Unlimited, the home of Auckland Convention Bureau**, said, "India is a market we see strong potential in, especially as planners look for destinations that can deliver a meaningful business event experience, not just a venue. Auckland has a compelling offer for meetings, incentives and conferences, but we also recognise the importance of building familiarity in-market. Through our partnership with BRANDit, we want to work more closely with India's MICE trade and help planners better understand the breadth of Auckland's offering and how the city can fit into their future programmes."

Lubaina Sheerazi, CEO and Co-founder, BRANDit, said, "For Indian planners, Auckland offers the appeal of a destination that feels fresh, yet structured, reliable and high-quality. It brings together the strength of a modern business events city with the wider pull of New Zealand's nature, culture, food and outdoor experiences. We see strong potential to grow Auckland's consideration among corporates and MICE planners in India who are looking for destinations that deliver both business value and a memorable delegate experience."

Egypt Introduces Digital Visa-on-Arrival System to Streamline Entry for International Travellers

Travel Mail Desk

Egypt has taken a major leap in digitising its border entry procedures with the launch of a Digital Visa-on-Arrival System, aimed at making the arrival process faster, more efficient, and hassle-free for international travellers.



Introduced by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities, the pilot phase of the new system officially commenced on August 1, 2026, across all arrival terminals at Cairo International Airport. The initiative marks the beginning of a nationwide rollout, with additional Egyptian airports expected to adopt the system in phases.

The new digital platform replaces the traditional paper visa sticker with a Visa QR Code, enabling travellers to secure their visa quickly and complete immigration formalities with minimal waiting time.

Travellers can obtain the Visa QR Code through the official online portal, a dedicated mobile application, or self-service kiosks installed in the arrival halls at Cairo International Airport. The online portal is

expected to become operational 48 hours before the pilot launch.

The QR code can be generated before departure, during the flight, or immediately upon arrival by either the traveller or an authorised travel agency. At immigration, officers will simply scan the QR code alongside the traveller's passport to complete the entry process. The QR code can be presented digitally via email or as a printed copy and will remain valid for 48 hours from the time of issuance.

The digital visa will cost USD 36, comprising the existing USD 30 visa fee and a USD 6 issuance fee.

During the pilot phase, travellers will continue to have the option of obtaining the traditional paper visa-on-arrival. However,

once the trial period concludes successfully, the paper visa sticker will be phased out entirely, with the QR code becoming the standard visa-on-arrival format for eligible international visitors.

Following the successful implementation at Cairo International Airport, the Egyptian

government plans to extend the Digital Visa-on-Arrival System to airports across the country, with rollout schedules to be announced in due course.

The Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities has also urged airlines, travel agencies, tour operators, and other travel industry stakeholders to educate travellers about the new digital visa process ahead of its wider implementation.

The launch of the Digital Visa-on-Arrival System underscores Egypt's commitment to embracing digital innovation, strengthening border management, and enhancing the overall visitor experience. The initiative is expected to simplify arrivals, reduce processing times, and support the country's growing tourism sector by offering a seamless gateway for international travellers.

Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority Appoints Intrepid Marketing and Communications as Its Official Trade Representation Partner in India

Travel Mail Desk

The Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) has appointed Intrepid Marketing & Communications as its official India Sales and Representative Agency to lead its market development, trade engagement and strategic partnerships across the country.

Under the mandate, Intrepid Marketing will spearhead BTEA's trade representation in India, market outreach, and strategic partnerships across India and increase visitor arrivals to the Kingdom of Bahrain. The collaboration aims to further position the island nation as a compelling destination for Indian travellers, focusing on leisure tourism, the rapidly growing MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) segment, destination weddings and bespoke group travel.

India continues to be a strategically important source market for Bahrain, driven by increasing outbound travel, air connectivity and a growing appetite for experiential, premium and short-haul international holidays. Through this partnership, Intrepid Marketing & Communications will work closely with the travel trade, corporate sector, wedding planners, event organizers and key stakeholders to enhance awareness, foster meaningful partnerships and drive visitor arrivals from India.



Ms. Dana Osama AlSaad

Commenting on the appointment, **Ms. Dana Osama AlSaad, Deputy CEO for Projects and Resources, Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority**, said "India remains one of Bahrain's most high-potential source markets, and we are delighted to appoint Intrepid Marketing & Communications as our representative in the country. Their strong understanding of the shifting Indian travel landscape, extensive industry relationships and proven destination marketing expertise make them an ideal partner as we continue to expand our footprint. Together, we'll reinforce Bahrain's tourism appeal amongst Indian leisure travellers, event organisers, wedding planners and corporate groups across India."



Mr. Sunil Mathapati

Speaking on the appointment, **Mr. Sunil Mathapati, Director, Intrepid Marketing & Communications**, said "Having had the privilege of working with the Bahrain Tourism & Exhibitions Authority for over six years, it is truly a pleasure to be back, representing a destination that we know and believe in. Over the years, we have built a strong relationship with the BTEA team – founded on shared values, mutual trust and a common vision for tourism growth. We look forward to deepening our engagement with the travel trade to unlock new opportunities across leisure tourism, MICE and the destination wedding segment. This renewed partnership offers Intrepid another chance to reset benchmarks in Indian visitor arrivals to the Kingdom of Bahrain."

Known for its rich heritage, vibrant culinary scene, luxury hospitality and state-of-the-art event infrastructure, Bahrain is positioning itself as a must-visit destination for Indian

experiential travellers seeking authentic cultural experiences, premium short-haul holidays, incentive travel, international conferences and destination weddings.

Picture-perfect Georgia captures filmmakers' hearts with locales & incentives

Travel Mail Desk

One of Georgia's biggest strengths is its incredible variety of landscapes. Within just a few hours, filmmakers can shoot in historic streets, alpine mountains, lush valleys, ancient monasteries, or along the Black Sea coast. Combined with experienced local production teams and the government's "Film in Georgia" incentive programme, which offers international productions a cash rebate of 20-25% on eligible local expenses, the country has become an attractive destination for film shoots.

In world cinema, Georgia is growing as a sought-after filming destination. Its diverse landscapes have featured in major global productions such as *Extraction 2*, *F9: The Fast Saga*, *Ali and Nino*, and *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, with iconic locations including Tbilisi, Kazbegi, Mtskheta, Batumi, and Borjomi serving as spectacular backdrops. The country's versatility allows filmmakers to recreate everything from bustling European cities to dramatic mountain landscapes, making it a favourite among international productions.

Georgia has also built a strong connection with Indian cinema. The Tamil action film *Billa II* was one of the first mega Indian films



to be shot in the country, featuring stunning locations across Tbilisi, Borjomi, and Rustavi. Since then, several Indian productions have chosen Georgia for its cinematic landscapes, including the Telugu historical epic *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy*, the web series *Inside Edge*, and *Special Ops 2*, showcasing different sides of the destination to Indian audiences.

Beyond the camera, these locations offer unforgettable experiences for travellers. Walk through the colourful streets of Tbilisi, enjoy the dramatic mountain views of Kazbegi,

relax by the seaside in Batumi, or explore the vineyards of Kakheti. Every destination has its own story, making visitors feel as though they have stepped into a movie.

As film tourism continues to grow, Georgia is proving to be much more than just a filming location. It is a destination where cinema, culture, history, and nature come together, inviting travellers to experience the same stunning landscapes that have captured the imagination of filmmakers and audiences alike.

Abu Dhabi launches travel programme offering free entry visa for Indian tourists

Travel Mail Desk

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) has introduced a new travel trade initiative that enables participating partners to offer complimentary UAE entry visas to Indian passport holders booking holidays in Abu Dhabi.

Running from 1 August to 31 October 2026, the programme applies to bookings that include a minimum three-night stay in Abu Dhabi. Under the initiative, DCT Abu Dhabi will cover the full cost of UAE entry visas for eligible bookings, reducing the upfront cost of travelling to Abu Dhabi while enabling travel partners to create greater value for their customers.

The programme has been developed exclusively for participating travel partners and online travel agencies. Travellers booking a three-night Abu Dhabi package through participating partners will receive their UAE entry visa at no additional cost.

Abdulla Yousuf, Director of International Operations at the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, said “India continues to be one of our most important international markets, and we remain committed to working closely with our travel partners to make Abu Dhabi even more accessible for Indian travellers. By covering the cost of



UAE entry visas, we are making it simpler for Indian travellers to choose Abu Dhabi while giving our travel partners another compelling reason to recommend the destination. We look forward to welcoming more visitors as they spend longer exploring Abu Dhabi's culture, entertainment, hospitality and natural attractions.”

The programme is available to Indian passport holders departing from India who book an Abu Dhabi holiday through participating travel partners. Eligible bookings must include a minimum stay of three consecutive nights in an Abu Dhabi hotel and a return flight from India.

Participating travel partners can choose between two programme options. They may either work through a DCT-appointed Destination Management Company (DMC), with DCT Abu Dhabi covering visa costs directly, or continue using their existing DMC partners, with DCT Abu Dhabi reimbursing AED 285 for each visa issued.

The programme will initially support up to 20,000 visas during the pilot period and is part of DCT Abu Dhabi's continued engagement with the Indian market. It follows recent initiatives to strengthen air connectivity, expand travel trade partnerships and create new opportunities for Indian visitors to experience Abu Dhabi.

Sharjah Extends “Sharjah Summer Promotions 2026” Until 15 September



Travel Mail Desk

Summer may not traditionally be the first season Indian MICE planners associate with the UAE, but Sharjah is changing that narrative. With its Summer Promotions 2026 bringing together attractive offers across hotels, shopping, dining and leisure, the emirate is presenting Indian corporates with a timely opportunity to plan incentive trips, offsites and business gatherings with added value.

The Sharjah Summer Promotions 2026 bring together more than 55 partners, offering 60+ tourism packages and experiences, over

700 prizes and discounts of up to 75% across participating retail outlets. For MICE planners, this opens opportunities to create itineraries that combine business with memorable experiences without making the programme feel overly formal.

Sharjah's growing MICE infrastructure further strengthens its appeal. Venues such as the Al Jawaher Reception and Convention Centre provide flexible spaces for conferences, meetings, exhibitions and corporate events, while the emirate's cultural and leisure attractions offer opportunities to build engaging pre- and post-event experiences.

For Indian corporates and MICE planners, Sharjah's summer proposition comes down to value, variety and experiences. The current promotions allow planners to make the most of accommodation, retail and leisure offers while introducing delegates to a destination that combines business facilities with culture, entertainment and relaxation.

So, here's the best chance for MICE travellers to make the most of the opportunity. Sharjah is making a strong case for taking business beyond the boardroom and turning a corporate trip into an experience worth remembering.

A Historic First: Jordan's Aqaba Marine Reserve Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Travel Mail Desk

The Aqaba Marine Reserve has officially been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, recognising one of the world's most remarkable marine ecosystems and reinforcing Jordan's commitment to protecting its natural heritage for future generations. The inscription was approved during the 48th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in July 2026.

For travellers, this recognition is more than just another UNESCO listing — it is an invitation to discover an extraordinary underwater world that has long been cherished by divers, marine scientists, and nature lovers alike. Nestled at the northern tip of the Red Sea, Aqaba Marine Reserve is home to crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs, colourful marine life, and seagrass meadows that create one of the region's richest and most resilient marine habitats.

What makes Aqaba truly special is its remarkable resilience. Scientists have long recognised its coral reefs for their ability to withstand warmer sea temperatures better than many reefs around the world, making the reserve an important site for global marine conservation and climate research. The reserve supports an extraordinary diversity of marine life, including more than 500 species of fish, numerous reef-building



corals, and several endangered marine species, all thriving within a relatively small stretch of coastline.

The UNESCO recognition also reflects years of conservation efforts led by Jordan to protect this exceptional ecosystem while promoting sustainable tourism. By safeguarding its coral reefs and marine biodiversity, Aqaba Marine Reserve demonstrates how responsible tourism and environmental conservation can work hand in hand, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy this extraordinary natural treasure.

For travellers exploring Jordan, Aqaba offers the perfect complement to the country's iconic cultural landmarks. After wandering

through the ancient city of Petra, floating in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea, or experiencing the dramatic desert landscapes of Wadi Rum, visitors can head south to discover a completely different side of the Kingdom — one where colourful coral reefs, diverse marine life, and tranquil beaches create unforgettable memories.

As the Aqaba Marine Reserve joins the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List, Jordan continues to showcase the remarkable diversity of experiences it offers. From world-renowned archaeological treasures to breathtaking natural wonders, the Kingdom invites travellers to experience a destination where history, culture, adventure, and nature come together in magical ways.

Familiarisation trip for local tourism industry representatives organised to Garabagh and East Zangezur

Travel Mail Desk

Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) organised a familiarisation trip to Garabagh and East Zangezur, bringing together 50 representatives of the local tourism industry. The two-day programme took participants to the cities of Khankendi, Shusha and Lachin, showcasing the regions' tourism potential.

The trip was designed to highlight the regions' cultural and historical heritage, natural attractions and diverse tourism offerings to local tourism industry representatives.

Built around an experience-based concept, the programme enabled participants to visit local tourism facilities, experience the destinations' hospitality traditions and discover a variety of tourism experiences.

The familiarisation trip provided participants to gain first-hand insight into the region's tourism offerings and identified potential opportunities for future cooperation, with additional familiarisation trips for local tourism industry representatives planned across Azerbaijan.





INDIA TRAVEL
MART (ITM)



ITM - AHMEDABAD GUJARAT



02 - 03 - 04 OCT, 2026



AHMEDABAD, GUJARAT

B2B & B2C TOURISM EXPO & CONCLAVE

Travel to the World & India
From **AHMEDABAD (GUJARAT)**



Meet Domestic
Tourism Boards



Meet International
Tourism Boards



Meet Hotels
& Resorts



Meet DMC's
Companies



Networking
Opportunities



B2B Travel
Packages

BOOK YOUR STALL



Note: Entry to Expo is Restricted to Participating Exhibitors & Registered Buyers Only.

At the
Heart of
New Opportunities

Supporting Associations



Contact
for Stalls & Sponsorships



9310476639, 8448985513,
8448985514, 8448985515.



branding@itmindia.in
exhibition@itmindia.in



www.itmindia.in

Yatra Marks 20 Years of Transforming Travel in India with Milestone Anniversary Film

Travel Mail Desk

Yatra Online Limited ("Yatra"), India's largest corporate travel services provider and one of the country's leading online travel companies, today unveiled a milestone film celebrating 20 years of innovation, growth and transformation. The film traces Yatra's journey alongside the evolution of India's travel landscape, from the early days of online booking to today's AI-led travel experiences.

Since its founding in 2006, Yatra has introduced a series of technology-led innovations for Indian travellers, including SMS-based bookings in 2007, cash-on-delivery payments in 2010, and the low-bandwidth "Yatra Mini" application in 2016. In 2024, Yatra built India's largest corporate travel platform and introduced voice search, culminating in the launch of its Gen-AI assistant, RECAP.

As per Yatra's Annual Report for FY 2024-25, Yatra recorded 106 million visits, a 97.3% booking success rate, and a network of approximately 80,000 hotels and homestays across approximately 1,497 Indian cities. 59% of Yatra's business in FY 2024-25 was derived from repeat customers, and 81% of Yatra's traffic was direct or organic. These metrics reflect the brand equity Yatra has built over the last two decades.

yatra

WE KNOW.
SINCE 2006.



20

The anniversary film brings these milestones together through a visual narrative reflecting the people, partnerships and purpose behind Yatra's journey.

Commenting on the milestone, **Dhruv Shringi, Co-founder & Chairman, Yatra Online Limited**, said "Twenty years ago, we set out with a simple belief that technology could transform the way India travels. Since then, Yatra has grown alongside a new generation of Indian travellers, adapting, innovating, and earning their trust every step of the way. This film celebrates not just our past, but the people who made it possible and the foundation they have helped us build for the future."

Siddhartha Gupta, Chief Executive Officer, Yatra Online Limited, said, "This milestone is an opportunity to celebrate the remarkable journey of Yatra and the people who have built it over the years. While this film looks back on our story so far, it also marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter – one that we believe will create even greater opportunities for our customers, employees and partners."

As Yatra enters its third decade, Yatra remains focused on technology-led innovation and on strengthening its position in both consumer and corporate travel in India and globally.

Emmvee Group Launches Roamiyo: Your Travel Companion, Targets 1 Million+ Downloads in First Year

Travel Mail Desk

Roamiyo announced the launch of its travel app, designed to serve as a travel companion throughout the journey from creating an itinerary and coordinating plans to managing changes while on the move.

With the global travel app ecosystem continuing to expand, Roamiyo sees an opportunity to support travellers across the full journey from deciding what to do and coordinating with fellow travellers to managing plans once a trip is underway. Following a private beta with more than 2,000 users that recorded a 0% uninstall rate, the company is targeting 600,000 downloads in its first three months and more than 1,000,000 downloads within its first year across its launch markets. Its immediate focus will be user adoption, product refinement and building a strong base of recurring users.

Bringing planning, collaboration and on-trip tools into one place, Roamiyo aims to reduce the fragmentation travellers experience when switching between multiple apps before and during a journey.

Roamiyo brings together three core experiences across the travel journey: Personalised Itinerary Planning, Group Mode and Trip Mode.

Roamiyo

Swipe right on the world

Roamiyo will offer subscription-based access, with new users receiving a 30-day free trial.

"Roamiyo was born from a frustration I experienced personally—the need to move constantly between different apps while planning and managing a trip. We saw an opportunity to bring those scattered moments together. Our vision is simple: to create a travel companion that helps

people plan with confidence, stay connected and adapt easily as their journey unfolds," said Sumanth Donthi, Director at Emmvee Technologies Private Limited (ETPL).

Roamiyo, a part of Emmvee Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (ETPL), is available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store for both iOS and Android users. New users can access the platform through a 30-day free trial.

Cleartrip Launches Bus 2.0, Connecting 6.5 Lakh Routes Across 6,000+ Cities, Strengthens Multi-Modal Platform

Travel Mail Desk

Cleartrip, a Flipkart company, launched Bus 2.0, a significantly expanded road travel experience that connects travellers to more than 6.5 lakh routes across 6,000+ cities, including destinations that lie beyond the reach of air and rail networks. With deeper network penetration, an intuitive booking journey and access to one of the country's largest road travel inventories, Bus 2.0 enables travellers to seamlessly book buses alongside flights, trains and hotels, all on a single platform.

The category has emerged as an important touchpoint for Gen Z travellers. Today, more than 55% of bus bookings on Cleartrip come from Gen Z travellers. Students, solo travellers and first-job professionals increasingly choose buses for affordable weekend getaways, homebound trips and spontaneous travel. It offers a reliable alternative during times of high demand for train travel, making road travel more accessible than ever.

Cleartrip brings together leading private operators alongside state transport corporations, offering travellers choice across intercity and regional routes. With access to nearly 95% of the country's private



cleartrip

A Flipkart Company

bus inventory and a growing network of government-operated services, Bus 2.0 gives travellers the depth of choice typically available only at physical bus terminals, now accessible from a phone.

Commenting on the launch, **Gaurav Patwari, Chief Business Officer – Air, Cleartrip**, said, "Buses connect more parts of India than any other form of transport, and for many young travellers, booking a bus is often their first experience with travel arrangements. Bus 2.0 is designed with this traveller in mind, offering flexibility, extensive coverage, and

the assurance that their chosen route will be available when needed. With this launch, we are a step closer to our vision of making Cleartrip a comprehensive multi-modal travel platform."

Bus 2.0 marks the latest step in Cleartrip's platform build, following the expansion into trains and the deepening of international hotel supply, toward a single destination for every way Indians travel. With flights, hotels, trains, buses, and holidays now available on one platform, Cleartrip continues to reduce the friction for a traveller on their next journey.

Digi Yatra Adds Driving Licence as a Verified Identity Credential

Travel Mail Desk

Digi Yatra Adds Driving Licence as a Verified Identity Credential Digi Yatra, India's decentralised digital identity platform and a Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI)-based ecosystem for contactless and seamless passenger processing at airports, has introduced Driving Licence (securely accessed through DigiLocker) as an additional verified identity credential in the Digi Yatra App.

The Driving Licence is securely accessed through DigiLocker with the user's consent, remains encrypted, and is stored only on the passenger's device. No personally identifiable information (PII) is stored in any central repository, and use of the platform remains entirely voluntary, reinforcing Digi Yatra's privacy-by-design framework.



Suresh Khadakhbavi
CEO, Digi Yatra
Foundation



Suresh Khadakhbavi, CEO, Digi Yatra Foundation, said, "Giving passengers the choice to use either Aadhaar or Driving Licence is another step towards making digital air travel more inclusive, convenient and accessible. Digi Yatra is designed to support multiple trusted identity credentials, allowing government-issued identity documents to be securely used while keeping users in complete control of their personal information. Whether passengers choose Aadhaar or Driving Licence, our core principles remain

unchanged – privacy by design, user consent and decentralised identity. Data stays on the user's device, sharing happens only with consent, and the travel experience remains seamless from Airport entry to boarding gate."

Digi Yatra will continue expanding its digital identity ecosystem in line with its international roadmap, including support for passport-based verifiable credentials, while maintaining its privacy-first architecture.

RAJASTHAN, IN MOTION

How administrative reform, emerging regional circuits, and an expanding cultural calendar are turning Rajasthan into a year-round travel proposition.

By Travel Mail



Smt. Shuchi Tyagi, IAS
Secretary of Tourism



Smt. Rukmani Riar, IAS
Commissioner of Tourism and Managing
Director of RTDC

Travel Mail Desk

For generations, the formula for Rajasthan tourism moved to a remarkably potent cadence: the sandstone palaces of Jaipur, the reflective waters of Udaipur, the cobalt alleys of Jodhpur, the golden dunes of Jaisalmer, and the sacred congregation of Pushkar. Together, they established Rajasthan as one of global tourism's most resilient brands.

Yet a state with this depth of heritage cannot survive indefinitely on its greatest hits.

The strategic test facing Rajasthan today is not simply attracting visitors, but deepening where and when they travel. The ambition is to turn brief, three-day stopovers into longer regional journeys, transforming the state

from a static sightseeing checklist into a continuous series of cultural encounters.

When the Festival Becomes the Destination

Nowhere is this shift more immediate than in the state's autumn and winter cultural calendar. A monument is permanent, but a festival creates urgency—a compelling reason to be somewhere now.

Heading into the festive season, the calendar decentralizes visitor traffic away from the usual metro circuits. East of the capital, the Abhaneri Festival in Dausa (12–13 October) places regional festivities around Chand Baori, the ancient stepwell engineered over a millennium ago. Initiated by Rajasthan Tourism, the festival activates an

architectural treasure that might otherwise remain a brief roadside excursion, animating it with vibrant Langa-Manganiyar folk performances, puppet traditions, and village craft bazaars.

The historic water palaces of Deeg provide another prime example, with the Deeg Festival scheduled for 10–11 October. Set against the backdrop of Mughal-Rajput pleasure gardens and intricate monsoon fountains, the celebration brings the forgotten royal legacy of Bharatpur alive.

Further west across the desert belt, the autumn calendar gathers momentum. Kota's historic Dussehra Fair (20 October–6 November) spans more than two weeks, weaving regional commerce, agricultural trade, and civic pageantry together. In



Marwar, the Marwar Festival in Jodhpur (24–25 October) honors regional folk legends against the ramparts of Mehrangarh, followed directly by the Thar Festival in Barmer (26–27 October), which puts the deep desert's indigenous crafts, turban traditions, and folk balladeers under the national spotlight.

The strategy is clear: the festival is no longer incidental to the destination; it is becoming the commercial anchor of the visit.

From Jaipur Outwards

This cultural momentum aligns directly with a broader geographic expansion. Rajasthan's tourism inventory extends far beyond its established circuits—spanning the stepwells of Bundi, the terracotta craft of Alwar, the river canyons of Jhalawar, the leopard wilderness of Jawai, and the painted merchant havelis of Shekhawati.

The Rajasthan Tourism Policy 2025 provides the broader roadmap for developing these diverse regional assets, focusing on district-level planning across heritage, wellness, ecotourism, and rural experiences. Rather than leaving remote destinations vulnerable to logistical friction, the policy prioritizes essential groundwork: clean roadside amenities, standardized interpretive signage, parking, and last-mile road connectivity.

Equally vital is the formalization of rural accommodation. The Rajasthan Homestay (Paying Guest House) Scheme, 2026 creates an accessible registration and classification framework for properties where owners or caretakers reside on-site. Crucially, the scheme enables temporary registration within seven working days of a complete application, stripping away bureaucratic inertia.

The future of Rajasthan travel will not rely exclusively on 300-room luxury resorts. Increasingly, sustainable growth will be anchored in ancestral homes, boutique havelis, craft hamlets, and agricultural homestays—offering modern travellers personal connection without compromising safety or comfort.

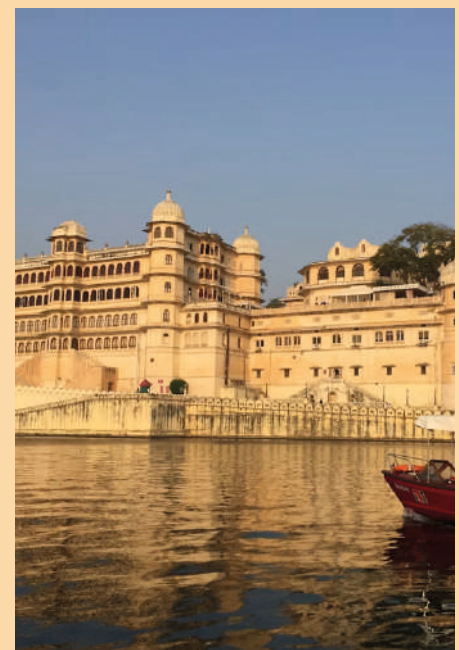
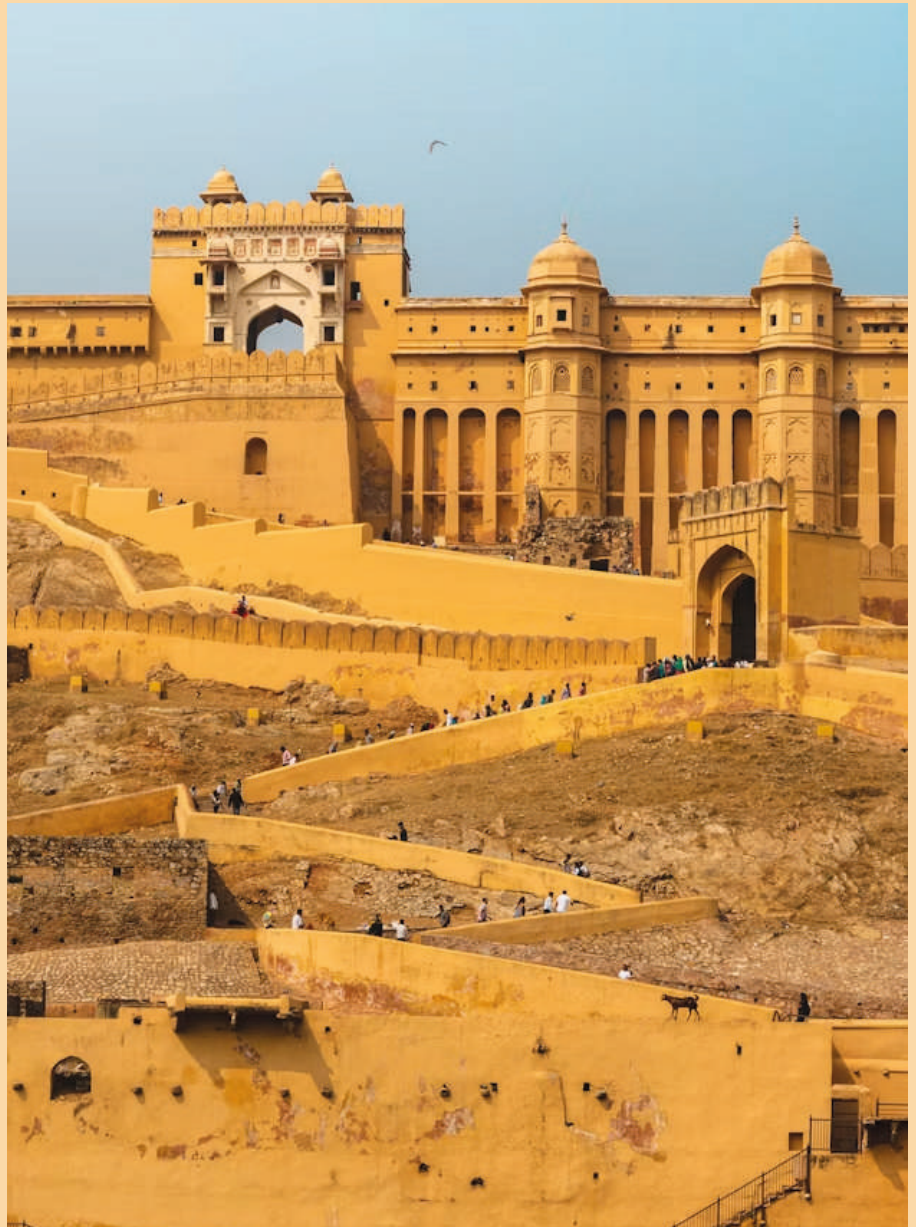
The Administrative Engine

Behind this expanding tourism proposition is a coordinated administrative structure turning policy blueprints into operational reality.

Smt. Shuchi Tyagi, IAS, Secretary of Tourism, Art, Culture & Archaeology (and Chairperson, RTDC), alongside Ms. Rukmani Riar, IAS, Commissioner of Tourism and Managing Director of RTDC, anchor the state's administrative apparatus.

Their mandate focuses on closing the gap between policy intent and field execution. From expediting homestay approvals to coordinating district collectors and travel trade bodies, leadership is systematically preparing secondary corridors to receive commercial traffic.

Rajasthan already has the recognition, heritage, and cultural brand equity that destinations spend decades building. The task ahead is making that vast regional inventory accessible, bookable, and commercially viable for the global travel trade.



⑤ Travel Booking Platforms Making Trip Planning Easier in 2026

Travel Mail Desk

With travellers increasingly looking for the best deals, flexible booking options, and seamless travel experiences, online travel platforms have become an essential part of trip planning. Whether it's comparing flight fares, booking hotels, or finding value-for-money travel packages, these platforms help simplify the booking journey. Here are five travel booking platforms that are helping travellers make smarter travel decisions.

1. Wego

Wego is a travel search platform that enables users to compare flight and hotel prices across hundreds of airlines, hotels, and online travel agencies. With transparent pricing, extensive global coverage, and an easy-to-use interface, it helps travellers find competitive deals while planning both domestic and international trips.

2. MakeMyTrip

One of India's leading online travel companies, MakeMyTrip offers comprehensive services including flight, hotel, holiday package, train, and bus bookings. Its extensive inventory and loyalty programmes make it a popular choice among Indian travellers.



3. EaseMyTrip

Known for its competitive pricing and frequent offers, EaseMyTrip provides booking services across flights, hotels, buses, trains, and holiday packages. The platform has gained popularity for delivering value-driven travel options.

4. Cleartrip

Cleartrip offers a clean and intuitive booking experience for flights, hotels, and activities.

Its simple interface and hassle-free booking process appeal to travellers looking for convenience and speed.

5. Yatra

Yatra provides a wide range of travel services, including domestic and international flight bookings, hotels, holiday packages, buses, and corporate travel solutions, catering to both leisure and business travellers.

Agoda Reveals Europe's 2026 Summer Travel Interest in Asia: Searches to India Climb

Travel Mail Desk

Digital travel platform Agoda has unveiled its ranking of European travel interest in Asia, based on accommodation search data from April to June 2026 for travel during July and August. India emerged as the fastest-growing destination, recording a 14 percent year-on-year increase in searches compared to the same period last year.

The United Kingdom was the largest European market driving travel interest to India, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Italy, based on accommodation search volumes.

Across the top 20 destinations, India saw the most notable year-on-year growth in European searches at 14 percent, followed by South Korea at 13 percent and Vietnam at 12 percent. These three markets stand out as the region's fastest-rising European summer travel interest, pointing to a growing appetite for diverse itineraries beyond Asia's traditional hotspots.

Gaurav Malik, Country Director, Indian Subcontinent & Indian Ocean Islands, Agoda, said, "India's growing popularity among European travellers reflects a broader shift in how international visitors are discovering the country. Beyond iconic landmarks, travellers are increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences, wellness retreats, culinary journeys, and nature-led escapes. Strong year-on-year search growth from both established



and emerging European markets highlights India's expanding appeal as a diverse, value-driven destination. At Agoda, we connect travellers to India with great accommodation, flight and activity deals, helping them explore both renowned destinations and lesser-known gems."

In Europe, the top five origin markets of France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Spain remain consistent

from 2025 to 2026, a sign that Europe's most enthusiastic Asia travellers are as keen as ever. However, other European markets have also seen growing interest: Türkiye leads with a 39 percent increase in Asian destination searches, followed by Hungary (22 percent) and the Czech Republic (16 percent). This signals that interest in Asian travel is spreading further across the European continent, with Central and Eastern European travellers increasingly joining the Asia-bound wave.

Chasing the Northern Lights

Experience One of the Arctic's Most Remarkable Natural Phenomena

Travel Mail Desk

The Northern Lights remain one of the world's most sought-after travel experiences, drawing visitors to the Arctic every winter. Visible across northern Finland during the aurora season, the phenomenon has become one of the region's defining attractions. For Indian travellers, Finnair's direct flights from Delhi to Helsinki, together with its extensive domestic network across Finnish Lapland, provide convenient access to some of the world's leading aurora-viewing destinations.

One of Nature's Most Extraordinary Phenomena

Known as the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights occur when charged particles from the sun interact with gases in the Earth's atmosphere, producing displays of coloured light across the night sky. While green is the most observed colour, the aurora can also appear in shades of red, violet and blue, depending on atmospheric conditions. No two displays are identical, making each sighting a unique experience.

When to Visit

The Northern Lights season in Finnish Lapland generally runs from late August to early April, when extended darkness provides favourable viewing conditions. Although sightings depend on solar activity and weather, travelling to areas with minimal artificial light significantly improves visibility. Autumn offers milder temperatures and colourful landscapes, while winter combines aurora viewing with snow-covered scenery and seasonal Arctic experiences.

Exploring Finnish Lapland

Finnair's domestic network connects Helsinki with key Lapland destinations including Rovaniemi, Ivalo and Kittilä, providing access to some of Finland's best-known aurora regions. Alongside Northern Lights excursions, travellers can experience reindeer farms, husky safaris, snowmobile adventures, cross-country skiing and traditional Finnish saunas, making Lapland a destination that extends well beyond the aurora itself.

A Tradition Rooted in Finnish Culture

The Northern Lights have long been part of Finnish folklore. In Finnish, the phenomenon

is known as Revontulet, meaning "fox fires", inspired by a traditional legend that attributes the lights to an Arctic fox sweeping its tail across the snow and sending sparks into the sky. While science explains the aurora today, the stories remain an enduring part of Finland's cultural heritage.

The Northern Lights from a Different Perspective While Finnish Lapland is widely recognised as one of the world's leading destinations for aurora viewing, the phenomenon can occasionally be visible during flights across northern latitudes under favourable conditions. Passengers travelling on select Finnair services may be able to observe the Northern Lights from above the clouds, offering a distinctive perspective before arriving in the Arctic.

Discover the Arctic with Finnair

With direct flights from Delhi to Helsinki and seamless onward connections across Finnish Lapland, Finnair offers Indian travellers an efficient gateway to one of the world's most recognised natural phenomena. Combined with the region's winter landscapes, outdoor activities and cultural traditions, a Northern Lights journey offers a distinctive way to experience Arctic Finland.

Why Young Indians Are Planning Trips Around Experiences, Not Just Destinations

by Pranav Dangi, Founder and CEO of The Hosteller

Travel Mail Desk

Travel in India is undergoing a meaningful shift. For younger travellers, particularly Gen Z and younger millennials, the question is increasingly moving from "Where should I go?" to "What do I want to experience?" The destination remains important, but it is no longer always the starting point of the travel decision.

India's domestic tourism market provides a strong foundation for this transition. According to the Ministry of Tourism, India recorded approximately 2.95 billion domestic tourist visits in 2024, up from around 2.51 billion in 2023. While these numbers represent visits rather than unique travellers, they demonstrate the enormous scale of domestic travel and the growing importance of understanding evolving traveller behaviour.

Traditional tourism has often been destination-led. Travellers selected a city or landmark and then built an itinerary around the major attractions.

Younger travellers are increasingly approaching the process differently. A trek, music festival, food trail, surfing lesson, heritage walk, wildlife experience, or local cultural event can become the reason for choosing a destination in the first place.

Digital discovery partly enables this. Social media has made it easier for travellers to discover experiences previously known mainly to local communities. A short video

showcasing a hidden trail, café, cultural workshop, or adventure activity can create interest in a destination that may not have appeared on a conventional travel itinerary.

For the hospitality industry, this changes the role of accommodation. The property is no longer necessarily the end product; it can increasingly become a starting point for discovering the destination.

For solo travellers, backpackers, and small groups, accommodation can serve as a social environment where they meet people with similar interests. Common areas, community events, local experiences, workshops, and group activities can influence the overall perception of a stay.

India's travel market is becoming more diverse, and younger travellers are playing an important role in that evolution. Their willingness to explore lesser-known destinations, travel in smaller groups, take shorter trips and prioritise experiences is creating new opportunities for the hospitality sector.

As young Indians continue to plan their journeys around experiences rather than destination checklists, the hospitality industry has an opportunity to rethink what a "stay" really means—and make the experience around the stay an equally important part of the product.



Thomas Cook India & SOTC Travel Curate unique experiential Fall & Winter journeys across Europe, North America, Australia & New Zealand



Travel Mail Desk

Fall & Winter are emerging as a strong new travel window for Indian travellers, with growing interest in journeys beyond the traditional summer holiday period and an increasing shift toward a more year-round travel calendar. Following geopolitical uncertainty's impact on summer travel plans to Europe, interest is now returning to experiential journeys to these destinations. Responding to this shift, Thomas Cook (India) Limited, India's leading omnichannel travel services company, and its Group Company, SOTC Travel, have curated a portfolio of Fall & Winter holidays across key international destinations, bringing together seasonal highlights, distinctive experiences and varied travel styles for the Indian traveller.

The Northern Lights continue to remain one of the season's most compelling draws, with Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland offering immersive ways to experience the Arctic. Beyond Aurora viewing, travellers can explore snow-covered landscapes through husky/reindeer sledging, snowmobile excursions and snowshoeing. Travellers are also choosing unique accommodations such as the famous glass-ceilinged igloo houses, snow-hotels, log cabins and Arctic tree houses.

Europe takes on a distinctive character in winter as its cities and towns transition into the festive season. France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the UK and the Czech Republic offer Christmas markets, illuminated streets, seasonal gastronomy and cultural celebrations. For travellers looking beyond the festivities, the Alps bring together scenic rail journeys, mountain stays, winter sports and panoramic landscapes, while distinctive alpine accommodation and local culinary experiences add another layer to the journey.

Across Scandinavia, winter cruises and whale-watching experiences offer another immersive way to experience the season, combining dramatic fjords, Arctic landscapes and wildlife encounters.

North America adds another dimension to Fall & Winter travel, combining dramatic landscapes, outdoor adventure and vibrant festive experiences. Canada's Rockies offer snow-covered mountain scenery alongside skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, wildlife encounters, gondola rides and scenic winter trails, while the USA brings together New York's iconic holiday season with experiences ranging from festive light-ups and seasonal markets to mountain escapes, winter sports, scenic road trips and nature-led adventures.

For travellers who would rather leave the cold behind, Australia and New Zealand offer a completely different seasonal proposition, with spectacular New Year celebrations adding to the appeal. Australia brings together vibrant city celebrations, spectacular coastlines, wildlife encounters and outdoor adventures, while New Zealand offers mountains, lakes, fjords and nature-led experiences. Together, the destinations provide a compelling option for travellers seeking sunshine, adventure, the outdoors and memorable New Year experiences during the months September to January.

Across these destinations, Fall & Winter travel is evolving beyond sightseeing towards more immersive, season-led experiences. From Arctic adventures and festive Europe to North American winter landscapes and sun-filled celebrations in the Southern Hemisphere, Thomas Cook India and SOTC Travel are bringing together journeys that combine destination, season and experience.

Mr. Rajeev Kale, President & Country Head – Holidays, MICE, Visa, Thomas Cook (India) Limited said, "Travel is increasingly being defined by the experience a destination can offer at a particular time of year. Fall and winter open up some of the world's most compelling travel moments, from the Aurora across Arctic skies and snow-covered Alpine landscapes to Europe's festive traditions and the outdoors of the Southern Hemisphere. At Thomas Cook India, we have been offering these diverse seasonal experiences to Indian travellers and bring deep expertise in curating journeys that go beyond conventional itineraries. We are seeing a clear shift towards holidays that are richer, more immersive and built around meaningful experiences, with travellers willing to explore beyond conventional winter destinations. This is reshaping the opportunity for the industry, as seasonal travel evolves from a destination choice into a more experience-led way of discovering the world."

Mr. S.D. Nandakumar – President and Country Head – Holidays and Corporate Tours, SOTC Travel Limited said, "The winter holiday is evolving from a standard itinerary into a carefully curated experience. Travellers are increasingly combining the core destination with experiences that add depth to the journey – whether that is a Northern Lights escape, a scenic rail journey, a unique stay, local gastronomy, wellness or a snow-filled adventure. What is particularly encouraging is the diversity of this demand: couples are seeking immersive and romantic escapes, families are combining festive celebrations with adventure, while younger travellers and groups are actively seeking experiences and destinations beyond the conventional winter circuit. This allows us to create more distinctive, experience-rich journeys that reflect how Indians want to travel today."

From Desert Landscapes to Island Romance

Destination Wedding Locations to Consider for 2026–27



Travel Mail Desk

Destination weddings are no longer only about finding a beautiful venue. The destination itself has become part of the celebration, shaping everything from the ceremony and setting to the experiences guests share over the wedding weekend.

For couples planning their celebrations for 2026–27, these destinations offer very different ways to say “I do”—from desert landscapes and mountain views to tropical beaches and Swahili coastlines.



Ras Al Khaimah

Ras Al Khaimah brings together beaches, desert landscapes and mountains within a single destination, making it an interesting choice for couples who want their wedding to feel like more than just a ceremony and reception. Along the Arabian Gulf, celebrations can unfold by the beach, while the Hajar Mountains and desert offer a very different backdrop for couples looking for something more dramatic.

For a classic celebration, Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah offers elegant ballroom, garden and beachfront settings. At the other end of the spectrum, The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert places couples in the heart of the desert, where outdoor celebrations can be followed by evenings beneath the stars.

The destination also lends itself to celebrations that are a little less conventional. Couples can explore the mountain scenery of Jebel Jais, discover the historic village of Al Jazeera Al Hamra or visit Dhayah Fort, while guests can kayak through mangroves, experience pearl-farming traditions at Suwaidi Pearls or simply spend time by the sea.

With its mix of nature, heritage and luxury, Ras Al Khaimah allows couples to turn the wedding weekend into a shared holiday, giving guests plenty to discover before and after the celebrations.



Kenya

Kenya may be synonymous with safari, but its coastline makes an equally compelling case for a destination wedding. Along the Indian Ocean, powder-soft beaches, Swahili influences, and centuries-old coastal towns offer celebrations that feel romantic without following the usual tropical-wedding script.

Diani Beach is an obvious starting point, with its white sands and turquoise waters setting the scene for ceremonies by the sea. Couples can opt for beach, garden or poolside celebrations at Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort & Spa, while Diani Reef Beach Resort & Spa offers everything from beachfront vows to garden gatherings and larger ballroom receptions.

For something more intimate, there is Lamu. With its carved Swahili doorways, winding lanes, traditional dhows and laid-back island rhythm, it feels made for celebrations that favour character over grandeur. At The Majlis Resort, a beachside wedding can slip effortlessly into a sunset dhow cruise and an evening overlooking the Indian Ocean. Better still, the destination becomes part of the celebration itself; guests can linger afterwards to explore Lamu Old Town, sail through the archipelago or simply spend a few extra days barefoot by the sea.



Bali

Bali has long understood romance. Temple traditions, tropical landscapes, dramatic coastlines and golden-hour sunsets give couples plenty to work with, while Nusa Dua brings a more polished side of the island into the mix—ideal for those looking for a destination wedding with the Indian Ocean always somewhere in the frame.

At The Ritz-Carlton, Bali, couples can make the setting as much a part of the story as the ceremony itself. The glass-walled Majestic Chapel, overlooking Sawangan Beach, creates a dramatic setting for the vows, while beachfront ceremonies and celebrations on the Cliff Lawn make the most of Bali's coastal landscape. Smaller gatherings can move to the Chapel Lawn, Senses Lawn or one of the resort's private villas for something more intimate.

And there is no need for the wedding to end with the reception. The days that follow can unfold at a distinctly Balinese pace—with spa rituals, local cultural experiences and long afternoons by the sea turning the celebration into a holiday for everyone who made the journey.



Thailand

Imagine saying ‘I do’ with sand between your toes, laughter echoing under palm trees, and every day after the wedding feeling like a holiday in paradise—that's Thailand. With stunning beaches, elegant resorts, and warm hospitality, this destination offers couples a setting that feels both magical and effortless. Picture exchanging vows with the sea stretching out behind you in Phuket, celebrating beneath the dramatic limestone cliffs of Krabi, or choosing Koh Samui for its palm-fringed beaches and relaxed island charm. Alongside these, Hua Hin adds a royal coastal elegance with heritage resorts and a relaxed atmosphere, while Khao Lak offers secluded stretches of sand and intimate resorts, perfect for couples seeking privacy and understated romance. Each location brings its own flavour of love, ensuring your wedding feels personal, picturesque, and unforgettable.

Beyond the ceremonies, Thailand unfolds as a journey for guests. Long dinners under the tropical sky, boat rides across turquoise waters, bustling Thai markets, spa afternoons, and culinary adventures make the celebration last well beyond the vows. For Indian couples and their guests, visa-exempt stays of up to 30 days make travelling to Thailand even more convenient. With Bangkok serving as a major hub for international connectivity and offering luxury urban venues for pre-wedding events, Thailand makes for a perfect wedding destination.

From Red Sea Escapes to Desert Adventures ExploRJordan Invites Indian Travellers to Discover Jordan



Travel Mail Desk

As Indian travellers increasingly seek holidays that combine relaxation, adventure, culture and memorable experiences, Jordan is emerging as a destination that offers all of this within one journey. Through ExploRJordan, travellers can discover and plan experiences across the Kingdom, with Aqaba offering an ideal summer starting point for a holiday that can extend from the Red Sea coastline to the ancient city of Petra, the dramatic landscapes of Wadi Rum and the vibrant lifestyle of Amman.

Located on the Red Sea, Aqaba brings a distinctly different side of Jordan to the summer travel experience. With its warm waters, beaches and rich marine life, the destination is well suited for travellers looking to combine leisure with outdoor adventure. From swimming, snorkelling and diving to water-based activities and relaxed beach days, Aqaba offers experiences for families, couples and adventure seekers alike.

For Indian travellers, Aqaba can also serve as more than a standalone beach escape. Its

location makes it a compelling starting point for exploring the wider diversity of Jordan, allowing visitors to combine coastal relaxation with the country's iconic heritage and natural attractions. A journey can move from the Red Sea to Petra, one of the world's most renowned archaeological sites, and onward to Wadi Rum, where vast desert landscapes provide opportunities for jeep tours, camping, stargazing and other immersive experiences.

This combination of experiences is at the heart of the ExploRJordan proposition—encouraging travellers to look beyond a single destination and build a Jordan itinerary that brings together different landscapes, cultures and experiences. Whether it is a summer escape by the sea, a cultural exploration through ancient heritage or an adventure in the desert, Jordan offers travellers the flexibility to create a holiday around their interests.

Beyond Aqaba, Petra and Wadi Rum, Amman adds another dimension to the Jordanian experience. The capital offers a lively blend of contemporary and traditional experiences, from local cafés and restaurants to markets, cultural attractions and neighbourhoods

that showcase the country's evolving lifestyle scene. For travellers interested in food, culture, shopping and urban experiences, Amman provides an engaging contrast to Jordan's archaeological and natural landscapes.

Jordan's appeal extends well beyond the summer months, making it a destination that can be explored throughout the year. The combination of historical landmarks, natural wonders, coastal experiences, culinary offerings and contemporary city life gives travellers multiple reasons to visit across different seasons.

For Indian travellers planning their next international holiday, ExploRJordan provides inspiration and practical direction to explore the Kingdom through a range of experiences from the beaches and underwater world of Aqaba to the heritage of Petra, the landscapes of Wadi Rum and the lifestyle of Amman.

With Aqaba taking centre stage for summer, the wider message remains clear: Jordan is not just one experience, but many journeys waiting to be explored.

From Bollywood Romance to Hollywood Action Czechia in the Frame



A still from *Jab Harry Met Sejal* at the Palace Gardens below Prague Castle.



A still from *Rockstar*, filmed at Prague's Vrtba Garden, featuring Ranbir Kapoor.

Travel Mail Desk

Some destinations are discovered through itineraries. Others begin with a scene.

For Indian audiences, *Rockstar* offered an early introduction to Czechia. Ranbir Kapoor walks through Prague, with Charles Bridge in the background, and the city becomes inseparable from the film's music and mood. Years later, travellers continue to seek out these familiar locations, turning a cinematic memory into a real journey.

Films have a way of making unfamiliar places feel oddly personal. A bridge becomes memorable because a favourite song was filmed there, a street enters the imagination through a scene, an entire city begins to feel familiar before the flight is even booked. This is what gives screen tourism its pull.

Travellers are not only visiting a location, but they are meeting a place cinema introduced to them years earlier!

Czechia has played a memorable role in several Indian productions. Imtiaz Ali filmed

Rockstar across Charles Bridge, Kampa, Malá Strana and the State Opera, while also venturing beyond Prague to castles including Sychrov, Loučeň and Karlštejn.

He later returned with Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma for *Jab Harry Met Sejal*, capturing Prague Castle's Palace Gardens, Nerudova Street, Kampa and the Old Town.

In *Bang Bang!*, the city changed pace. Hrithik Roshan and Katrina Kaif brought action to the Vltava riverfront, Mánes Bridge, the National Museum and the historic streets of Prague.

The country's international screen credits are just as recognisable. *Casino Royale*, *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol*, *The Bourne Identity*, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, *Spider-Man: Far From Home* and *Extraction 2* have all been filmed in Czechia.

Together, these productions reveal the sheer range Czechia offers on screen. Its architecture and landscapes have supported romance, fantasy, espionage and large-scale action, giving filmmakers the freedom to build remarkably different visual worlds within one destination.

Prague can offer Gothic towers, Baroque palaces, cobbled lanes, riverside views and modernist architecture within remarkably manageable distances. Beyond the capital, the possibilities widen: Cesky Krumlov for a preserved medieval setting, Karlovy Vary for old-world spa grandeur, South Moravia for vineyards and chateaux, Kutná Hora for Gothic drama and the Tisá Rocks for a landscape shaped by towering sandstone walls and narrow natural passages.

These are not simply picturesque places. Each carries a distinct visual identity. A period film, contemporary romance, action sequence, fantasy production or music video could find its setting without requiring Czechia to repeat the same postcard version of itself.

What appears effortless on screen is supported by considerable expertise behind the camera. Czechia brings together more than a century of filmmaking experience, skilled local crews, established studios and accomplished production and post-production services. The country also offers qualifying Czech and international projects a rebate between 25–35% on eligible production expenditure.

A traveller may arrive at Charles Bridge with *Rockstar* in mind, but Czechia does not remain confined to that familiar frame. Beyond it are castles, forests, vineyards, spa towns and sandstone landscapes, each carrying the possibility of another story.

The screen may inspire the journey, but it is everything beyond the frame that makes Czechia worth discovering.



STAY IN COMFORT DINE IN LEGEND

Experience Amritsar's Signature Hospitality & Iconic Culinary Heritage



CONTEMPORARY COMFORT IN THE HEART OF THE HOLY CITY

Whether visiting for spiritual solace or leisure, unwind in elegantly appointed rooms featuring modern amenities, banquet spaces, & warm Punjabi hospitality just minutes from the Golden Temple.

No journey to Amritsar is complete without tasting the Legendary AMRITSARI MOST FAMOUS CUISINE

Freshly spiced, perfectly crisp, and perfected over generations

SERVING AUTHENTIC LOCAL FLAVORS SINCE 1962

FOR BOOKING



98157-12741
98091-23451



www.hotelmakhanresidency.com



hotelmakhanresidency@gmail.com



21 A, Majitha Road,
Near Madaan Hospital,
Amritsar

RDTM 2026

Jaipur to Host Rajasthan's First-Ever Night Polo Match as Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh Joins the Celebration



Travel Mail Desk

A delegation of the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR), led by President Mr. Surendra Singh Shahpura, met His Highness Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh. The delegation met him to extend an invitation to the upcoming Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM), scheduled to be held in Jaipur from 17 to 19 September 2026, and the first Marwar Travel Mart (MTM), scheduled to be held in Jodhpur from 20 to 22 September 2026.

The FHTR delegation comprised FHTR President, Mr. Surendra Singh Shahpura; Senior Vice President, Mr. Mahendra Singh Rathore, Vice President, Mr. Rajendra S. Pachar; Secretary General, Mr. Tarun Bansal; Treasurer, Mr. Rajendra Singh Jodha;

Founder Member, Mr. Khalid Khan; Executive Member, Mr. Shailendra Singh and Marketing Consultant, Mr. Gagan Katyal.

During the meeting, the delegation briefed His Highness Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh on the new initiatives being introduced at both travel marts, including responsible tourism projects. Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh expressed his pleasure on being informed that the first-ever night polo match would be organised at the Rajasthan Polo Club. He was delighted to learn that tour operators, travel agents and other tourism stakeholders would be present at the match. He also said that he would participate in the match himself.

The delegation also shared details of the two travel marts, with RDTM expected to see participation from around 300 travel agents

from across the country, along with over 700 properties and tour companies from Rajasthan. While, MTM is expected to bring together approximately 125 travel agents from across India and around 300 properties.

Both RDTM and MTM are being organised by FHTR with the support of the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, along with stakeholder associations including the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO) and Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA).

Release of RDTM poster in Header Image: (L-R) Amrita Nair, Rajendra Singh Jodha, Mahendra Singh Rathore, Khalid Khan, Surendra S. Shahpura, HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh, Tarun Bansal, Rajendra Singh Pachar, Shailendra Singh and Gagan Katyal.

FHTR promotes RDTM and MTM at 41st IATO Annual Convention in Visakhapatnam



Travel Mail Desk

A delegation of the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) participated in the 41st Annual Convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), held in Visakhapatnam. On the occasion, the posters of the upcoming Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM) and Marwar Travel Mart (MTM) were unveiled by FHTR. The delegation also invited travel trade representatives from across the country to participate in both events.

The FHTR delegation shared information about the various opportunities available in Rajasthan's tourism sector as well as the upcoming travel marts. FHTR was represented at the convention by FHTR Vice

President and IATO Co-Chairman, Mahendra Singh Rathore. Also present on the occasion was Senior Additional Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Anand Tripathi.

On the occasion, Mahendra Singh Rathore said that the objective of RDTM and MTM is to take Rajasthan's tourism products to markets across the country. It is also to strengthen business linkages among hoteliers, travel agents, tour operators and other tourism stakeholders in the state.

Also present were: President, IATO, Ravi Gosain; CEO, IATO, Rahul Chakravarti; Past President, IATO, Rajiv Mehra; Senior

Vice President, IATO, Rajnish Kaishta; Vice President, IATO, Sanjay Razdan; Treasurer, IATO, Deepak Bhatnagar; Treasurer, FHTR, Rajendra Singh Jodha; Secretary, IATO, Sunil Mishra and President, TAAJ-Jodhpur, Gajraj Singh.

It is to be noted that RDTM and MTM are being organised by the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan. The sixth edition of RDTM will be held in Jaipur from 17 to 19 September 2026, while the first Marwar Travel Mart (MTM) will be organised in Jodhpur from 20 to 22 September.

Nostalgic & Emotional Moments Mark TAAI's Historic Accomplishment

Travel Mail Desk

It was a day filled with nostalgia, immense pride, emotion and celebration as members of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), TAAI's Managing Committee and Chairpersons from across India, Past Presidents and the Leaders of the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industry gathered to inaugurate TAAI's new office to house TAAI's Secretariat in Mumbai.

The inauguration of the new Secretariat premises, comes at a particularly significant moment in TAAI's history, as the Association celebrates 75 years of service, leadership and contribution to India's Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industry.

The new Secretariat represents more than a new physical space. It is a celebration of TAAI's legacy, a reflection of its present stature and a foundation for its future. As TAAI enters the next chapter of its remarkable journey, its new home stands as a reminder of the institution's enduring spirit.

Speaking on the occasion, TAAI President Sunil Kumar R described the new Secretariat as an important institutional accomplishment



created as part of TAAI's 75 Years of Excellence celebrations.

He dedicated the achievement to every member of TAAI, acknowledging that the members remain the Association's greatest source of strength.

He expressed his appreciation to the Managing Committee and the Chairpersons of TAAI's Regions and Chapters for their continued support and made a special mention of the leadership and members of TAAI Western Region for their contribution towards the memorable occasion.

The new Secretariat is envisioned not merely as an office, but as a permanent institutional space that reflects the growth, stature and future aspirations of TAAI.

The evening brought together generations of the travel industry, current TAAI Leadership, Members, Industry partners and leaders, creating an atmosphere of great celebration.

The gathering witnessed the screening of several specially created videos showcasing TAAI's extraordinary journey, achievements and its vision for the future.

15th Convention India Conclave Brought Together India's and Global MICE Industry at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

Travel Mail Desk

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), the national apex body dedicated to promoting India as a preferred global destination for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE), organised the 15th Convention India Conclave (CIC) 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

The event organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, jointly organised with the support of Delhi Tourism as the Host State Partner and India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) as the Venue Partner.

The 15th Convention India Conclave brought together the complete MICE ecosystem under one platform, including convention centres, hotels, destinations, Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs), Destination Management Companies (DMCs), event management companies, corporates, industry associations, government organisations, tourism boards and leading international and domestic buyers.

The exhibition also received an encouraging response, with over 100 exhibition slots

already booked, reflecting strong industry confidence and participation in the 15th Convention India Conclave. The exhibition floor is expected to bring together a diverse range of destinations, convention centres, hotels, DMCs, PCOs, event management companies, technology providers and other MICE service providers.

Speaking about the Conclave, Mr. Chander Mansharmani, Chairman, 15th Convention India Conclave Organising Committee, highlighted the importance of bringing the entire MICE ecosystem together on a common platform to facilitate meaningful business connections and strengthen India's position in the global MICE landscape.



ADTOI launches 18th Chapter in Karnataka

Travel Mail Desk

The Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) marked another significant milestone with the grand launch of its 18th Chapter in Karnataka at a glittering ceremony held in Bengaluru. The Chief Guest of the function was Mr. M. Srinivas, Chairman, Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC). Other dignitaries present at the launch as Guests of Honour included: Shri Manoj Kumar, IFS, Principal Secretary (Forests), Government of Karnataka, Shri Janardhan H. P., Joint Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka, Mr. K. Shyam Raju, President, South Indian Hotel & Restaurant Association (SIHRA), President, Karnataka Tourism Society (KTS) and Past President, FHRAI, and Mr. Vishweshwar Bhat, Editor-in-Chief, Prawas Prapancha.

In his address, Mr. Srinivas, Chief Guest, appreciated ADTOI's initiative in launching its Chapter in Karnataka State for an overall growth of domestic tourism in the State, which has everything to offer both domestic and international tourists. He assured all possible support to the Chapter team in all its endeavours to boost tourism in the State.

The launch brought together leading members of Karnataka's travel and tourism fraternity, ADTOI's national leadership, industry stakeholders and tourism



Travel Mail | Association

professionals, celebrating the association's expanding national presence and its continued commitment to strengthening domestic tourism across India.

Speaking on the occasion, **ADTOI President Shri Ved Khanna** congratulated the members of Karnataka on the formation of the new Chapter and warmly welcomed them into the ADTOI family. *"The launch of the Karnataka Chapter is a proud and historic moment for ADTOI. With Karnataka becoming our 18th Chapter, we have moved significantly closer to completing*

our PAN-India network. This expansion is not merely about numbers; it reflects our commitment to providing domestic tour operators across the country with a stronger platform to collaborate, grow and contribute meaningfully to the development of Indian tourism."

ADTOI Karnataka Chapter – Office Bearers

1. Chapter Chairman: **Mr. Roshan Pinto**
2. Chapter Secretary: **Ms. Poonam Shetty**
3. Chapter Treasurer: **Ms. Bhavana Jalan**

PATA Announces New Executive Board Members

Travel Mail Desk

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is pleased to announce the appointment of five additional members to its Executive Board, further strengthening the Association's leadership and broadening representation from both the public and private sectors across the Asia Pacific region.

The newly elected and appointed Executive Board members are: Ms. Jennifer Chun, Director of Tourism Research, Hawaii Tourism Authority, USA – Secretary/Treasurer; Mr. Yang Li, Head of Public Affairs, APAC, Booking.com, Singapore – Executive Board Member; Mr. Ibrahim Shiuree, CEO and Managing Director, Visit Maldives Corporation, Maldives – Executive Board Member; Mr. Alhasan Aldabbagh, President, APAC, Saudi Tourism Authority, Saudi Arabia – Non-Voting Executive Board Member; Mr. Suman Pandey, Group Chairman, Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure, Nepal – Non-Voting Executive Board Member. The first three members were elected to the Executive Board, while Mr. Aldabbagh and Mr. Pandey were appointed as non-voting Executive Board members. Together, they bring extensive industry experience, regional perspectives and expertise to further strengthen the Association's leadership.

"We are delighted to welcome Jennifer, Yang, Ibrahim, Alhasan and Suman to the PATA



Executive Board," said Henry Oh, Chairman, PATA. "With the Board now fully constituted, we look forward to drawing on their diverse experience, knowledge and perspectives as we continue to strengthen PATA and support collaboration across our membership and the wider tourism industry."

With the addition of the newly elected members, PATA's Executive Board comprises:

Chairman: Henry Oh, Chairman, Global Tour Ltd

Vice Chair: Ben Montgomery, Corporate Ambassador, Centara Hotels & Resorts

Secretary/Treasurer: Jennifer Chun, Director of Tourism Research, Hawaii Tourism Authority

Executive Board Members

- Jackson Pek, Chief Corporate & Legal Affairs Officer, Amadeus
- Maria Paz Alberto, President, Ark Travel Express, Inc.
- Yang Li, Head of Public Affairs, APAC, Booking.com
- Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, Director-General, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (DASTA)
- Dr Sharzede Salleh Askor, CEO, Sarawak Tourism Board
- Ibrahim Shiuree, CEO and Managing Director, Visit Maldives Corporation
- Alhasan Aldabbagh, President of APAC, Saudi Tourism Authority
- Suman Pandey, Group Chairman, Explore Himalaya Travel & Adventure



Gaurav Shiva
General Manager of The Orchid Hotel Mumbai

Gaurav Shiva on Leadership, Sustainable Luxury and the Future of the Orchid Hotel Mumbai

The first is that people are our greatest asset. We live in an era of AI, automation, and machine learning, and while technology will certainly make us more efficient, hospitality will always remain a people business. No technology can replace the warmth of a genuine smile, a thoughtful conversation, or the feeling of being cared for. At the end of the day, it's our people who create memorable guest experiences.

The second principle is leading by example. I have always believed that you can't expect your team to do something you're unwilling to do yourself. If I want excellence at breakfast, I need to be there. If I expect high standards across the hotel, I have to walk the hotel floors, meet guests, and engage with my teams. Leadership is visible—it isn't exercised from behind a desk.

Another value that has stayed with me is humility. No matter where life takes you, never forget where you started. I began my career on the operational floor, and those experiences continue to shape the way I lead today. Whether it's a doorman, a steward, or a department head, every individual deserves the same respect because every role contributes to the guest experience.

I also believe that consistency beats occasional brilliance. Guests don't remember us because we were exceptional once; they return because we deliver the same warmth, service, and quality every single time. Consistency builds trust, and trust builds loyalty.

Equally important is listening. Some of the best ideas I've come across have come from the people working closest to our guests. Before making any decision, I like to hear different perspectives because leadership isn't about having all the answers—it's about creating an environment where people feel heard.

I've also learnt that challenges reveal character. In hospitality, no two days are the same. Every challenge is an opportunity to understand your people better, support them, and help them grow. That's when leadership truly matters.

And finally, celebrate your people generously. A simple "thank you," a word of appreciation, or recognising someone's effort can have a far greater impact than we often realise. Having

worked my way up through the ranks, I know how meaningful those moments can be.

The hospitality industry is unlike any other. It demands the precision of an engineer, the creativity of an artist, the discipline of the armed forces, the financial acumen of a business leader, and above all, the heart of someone who genuinely enjoys serving others. That's what makes this profession so special, and after all these years, I still feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of it.

The Orchid Hotel Mumbai has long been recognised as Asia's first Ecotel. As sustainability becomes a key expectation rather than a differentiator, how do you plan to evolve this legacy while delivering a world-class luxury experience?

Sustainability has always been at the heart of The Orchid's identity. Since its inception in 1997, the hotel has been a pioneer in environmentally responsible hospitality, and my role is not to change that legacy, but to build on it.

There are already several thoughtful initiatives in place—from water-saving systems such as aerators and flow regulators to rainwater harvesting, abundant natural daylight through our stunning atriums, and beautifully designed spaces like Meadows that maximise the use of natural light. We are also modernizing and upgrading our sewage treatment plant to enhance greywater recycling, further strengthening our water conservation efforts.

What I particularly love about this hotel is that sustainability isn't limited to technology—it's woven into the guest experience. Our lush green spaces, hidden gardens, and thriving bird habitat, where hundreds of parakeets visit regularly, remind us that a hotel can coexist beautifully with nature. These are the little touches that make The Orchid truly distinctive.

Going forward, my focus is to strengthen these initiatives while exploring new and innovative ways to reduce our environmental footprint. Sustainability is no longer just a responsibility; it's an expectation from today's travellers. At The Orchid, we're fortunate that it's been part of our DNA for nearly three decades, and I'm excited to take that journey forward.

Mumbai's hospitality market is witnessing rapid expansion with new luxury and business hotels entering the city. In such a competitive landscape, what do you believe sets The Orchid Hotel Mumbai apart, and where do you see the city's hospitality sector heading over the next five years?

Travel Mail Desk

With nearly three decades of experience across the hospitality industry, Gaurav Shiva brings a wealth of operational expertise and a people-centric leadership philosophy to his role as General Manager of The Orchid Hotel Mumbai. Having worked across hotels, cruise liners, industrial catering and education, Shiva believes that people, consistency and thoughtful service ultimately drive genuine hospitality.

In this exclusive conversation, Mr. Shiva shares his vision for The Orchid Hotel Mumbai, its enduring sustainability legacy as Asia's first Ecotel, and the evolving expectations of today's luxury traveller. He also discusses hyper-personalisation, sustainable luxury, wellness, technology, experiential dining and the hotel's 'Weddings with Orchid' concept, offering insights into the future of hospitality in Mumbai and beyond.

Having worked with some of the world's leading hospitality brands over nearly three decades, what have been the most defining experiences of your career, and how have they influenced your leadership approach at The Orchid Hotel Mumbai?

Over the years, I've been fortunate to work across hotels, cruise liners, industrial catering, and education. Every experience has taught me something different, but a few leadership principles have remained constant throughout my journey.

Over the last few weeks, I have made it a point to visit several hotels across Mumbai—not just for meetings or coffee, but to understand the city's hospitality landscape and experience it through a guest's lens. Every market has its own personality, and Mumbai is no different.

Being the financial capital of India, Mumbai operates at an incredible pace. The guests here are discerning, extremely well-travelled, and have very clear expectations of what a business five-star hotel should deliver. They do not just compare you with the hotel next door; they compare you with the best experiences they have had across India and around the world. That makes this market both challenging and exciting.

For us, that's a great opportunity. It pushes us to constantly raise the bar and pay attention to every detail. Luxury today isn't just about beautiful rooms or great food—it's about consistency, genuine hospitality, and creating experiences that feel personal and memorable.

At the end of the day, guests want to feel that they have received exceptional value for the trust they've placed in us. If we can consistently exceed those expectations, they'll not only return but also become our strongest ambassadors.

Today's travellers seek more than just comfortable accommodation—they value authentic experiences, wellness, exceptional dining, and personalized service. How is The Orchid Hotel Mumbai responding to these changing expectations, and which trends do you believe will have the greatest impact on the industry?

Luxury hospitality in India is evolving rapidly, and I believe a few trends will define its future.

The first is hyper-personalisation. Today, technology and AI help us understand our guests better than ever before—from their preferred room temperature and dining choices to the little details that make every stay feel familiar. The idea is not just to recognise a guest, but to anticipate their needs and create a truly personalised experience.

The second is sustainable luxury, something that has always been at the heart of The Orchid Mumbai. Today's luxury traveller values authenticity as much as comfort. Farm-to-table dining, sourcing local ingredients, reducing food waste, and celebrating regional produce are no longer trends—they are becoming expectations. Sustainability is no longer an option; it's an integral part of luxury.

The third is wellness. Luxury today is increasingly about helping guests feel better—whether that's through better sleep, mindful dining, or creating spaces where they can truly unwind from their busy lives.

We're also seeing the continued growth of bleisure travel, where business travellers extend their stay to experience the local culture, cuisine, and destination. Hotels are

becoming more than places to stay—they're becoming destinations in themselves.

Above all, I believe the future of luxury lies in thoughtful details. I recently came across a wonderful example of a Japanese chef who serves only one dish—biryani. What fascinated me wasn't the biryani itself, but the experience he created around it. Every element, from the way it was cooked and served with an enamel spoon instead of a stainless steel one to the timing of when the beverage was brought to the table at -3 Degrees and consumed at 0 degrees, was meticulously planned to elevate the guest's experience. It reminded me that luxury isn't always about offering more; it's about doing the smallest things exceptionally well. Those are the moments guests remember.

At The Orchid Mumbai, that's the philosophy we believe in—combining sustainability, innovation, and genuine hospitality with thoughtful attention to detail, so that every guest leaves with an experience that's both memorable and meaningful.

Technology, sustainability, and evolving consumer preferences are reshaping hospitality. Looking ahead, what innovations or guest-centric initiatives will define the next phase of growth for The Orchid Hotel Mumbai, and what is your long-term vision for the property?

Technology has undoubtedly transformed the way hotels operate, and we welcome that change. It helps us understand our guests better, remember their preferences, and personalise every stay in a much more meaningful way.

That said, at The Orchid Mumbai, we firmly believe that technology should support hospitality—not define it. The warmth of a genuine welcome, a thoughtful conversation, or a small gesture of care can never be replaced by a screen or a system.

As an Indian home-grown hospitality brand, our greatest strength has always been our people. We use technology to empower our teams, so they can spend less time on processes and more time creating memorable moments for our guests. For us, the perfect balance is when technology works seamlessly in the background, allowing our people and our hospitality to remain at the heart of every guest experience.

I've spent the last few weeks understanding the business, studying our guest mix, and meeting many of our key partners. One thing is very clear—we have a strong foundation, and my focus is to build on that by strengthening relationships with our existing market segments while also exploring new opportunities that can help drive both occupancy and average room rates.

Food and beverage is another area I'm particularly passionate about. Guests today are always looking for something fresh and memorable, so you will see us introducing thoughtful changes across our restaurants—from refreshed menus to elevated dining

experiences and finer details that make every visit special. I firmly believe it is the little touches that guests remember long after they've checked out.

Personalization has always been at the heart of my leadership style. I enjoy spending time with guests, meeting them in the lobby or restaurants, understanding why they're visiting, and whenever possible, creating an unexpected moment of delight—especially if they're celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or another special occasion. Those genuine, unscripted moments often leave the biggest impression.

Beyond that, we have exciting plans across rooms, food and beverage, and our overall guest experience. While many of these initiatives are still work in progress, the vision is simple—to continuously enhance every touchpoint and ensure that every guest leaves with a memorable experience and a reason to return.

With the wedding season approaching, The Orchid Hotel Mumbai is promoting its 'Weddings with Orchid' concept. How are wedding celebrations evolving in India, and what makes your curated, one-stop wedding experience stand out in an increasingly competitive market?

Indian weddings are evolving into highly personalised and experiential celebrations. Couples and families today are looking to move beyond conventional formats and create occasions that reflect their personalities, cultures and individual stories. At the same time, there is a growing preference for a seamless, end-to-end experience, with families looking for a trusted hospitality partner who can take care of the details while they focus on the celebration.

This is the philosophy behind 'Weddings with Orchid'. At The Orchid Hotel Mumbai, we bring together everything a wedding celebration requires under one roof—from versatile venues and curated culinary experiences to accommodation, event support and personalised hospitality. Our diverse spaces and experienced team allow us to tailor celebrations across formats and scale, whether it is an intimate gathering or a larger, multi-event wedding.

What truly sets us apart is our ability to combine personalisation with the strength and consistency of a professionally managed hotel. We understand that a wedding is not just another event; it is one of the most significant milestones in a family's life. Our role is therefore to become an extension of the family—anticipating requirements, managing the details and ensuring that every celebration feels effortless and special.

With 'Weddings with Orchid', we endeavour to create celebrations that are seamless in execution, distinctive in character and memorable for all the right reasons—while delivering the heartfelt hospitality that has always been at the core of The Orchid experience.

From Enterprise Technology to Smarter Travel

How AI Is Redefining Connected Experiences

Travel Mail Desk

As technology continues to reshape businesses and consumer experiences, Artificial Intelligence is emerging as a powerful force in simplifying complex processes, enabling smarter decision-making and delivering greater personalisation. At the forefront of this transformation is Emmvee Technologies Private Limited (ETPL), which is focused on building connected enterprise technology designed around real-world operational needs.

Taking this vision into the travel sector, ETPL's Roamiyo aims to create a more intelligent, seamless and traveller-centric experience—from discovering destinations and planning itineraries to adapting plans in real time. In this exclusive interaction, Sumanth Donthi, Director, Emmvee Technologies Private Limited, shares his perspective on the evolution of enterprise technology, the growing role of AI, and how Roamiyo envisions making travel more personalised, connected and effortless.

What inspired you to establish Emmvee Technologies, and what key gaps in business technology did you aim to address through ETPL?

Emmvee Technologies was born from a challenge we had experienced ourselves. As businesses grow, they adopt more technology, but that does not always make them easier to operate. Different functions begin using different systems, information becomes fragmented, and employees often spend more time managing software than using it to make better decisions.

That made us question whether the problem was really a lack of technology. In many cases, the technology already existed – it simply did not fit the way the organisation actually worked. We established ETPL to bridge that gap. Our objective is to build enterprise technology around real operational requirements rather than expecting businesses to reorganise themselves around rigid software. Because our thinking has been shaped by manufacturing and other operationally intensive environments, we understand that technology must work reliably at scale, connect different parts of an organisation and remain simple for the people using it every day.

At its core, ETPL is built on a straightforward belief: technology has not failed businesses; complexity has. Our role is to remove that complexity and make technology genuinely useful.

ETPL is developing ERP and Customer Resource Platform solutions to simplify business operations. How can



Sumanth Donthi
Director, Emmvee Technologies Private Limited

technology help organizations improve efficiency without making processes more complex for users?

The true measure of enterprise technology is not how many features it offers, but how naturally it fits into everyday work.

A system should reduce the number of decisions, follow-ups and repetitive actions required from an employee. It should connect information across departments, present each user with what is relevant to their role and make the next action clear. If people need extensive training simply to complete a routine task, the technology has probably transferred complexity to the user instead of solving it.

At ETPL, we approach ERP and Customer Resource Platform development by first understanding how work actually moves through an organisation – from the shop floor and logistics teams to sales, customer service and management. Technology can then create a connected flow in which information is entered once, updated across systems and made available to the right person at the right time.

The best enterprise technology should almost disappear into the workflow. Employees should experience fewer manual handovers

and less duplication, while leaders gain better visibility and faster decision-making. Efficiency comes not from adding more software, but from creating a simpler and more connected way of working.

AI is rapidly transforming businesses across industries. How do you see Artificial Intelligence changing decision-making, automation, customer engagement, and enterprise technology in the coming years?

AI will gradually move from being a separate tool to becoming an intelligence layer across the organisation. In decision-making, its most important contribution will be reducing blind spots. Businesses already generate enormous amounts of data, but much of it remains scattered across systems or reaches decision-makers too late. AI can identify patterns, highlight exceptions and bring attention to issues before they become larger problems. The final judgement will continue to belong to people, but it can be supported by faster and more relevant intelligence.

Automation will also evolve beyond repetitive back-office tasks. AI will increasingly help coordinate workflows across functions – identifying a delay, understanding its likely impact, notifying the relevant teams and recommending the next action.



Customer engagement will become more contextual. Instead of every customer receiving the same journey, businesses will be able to understand intent, history and immediate requirements and respond accordingly. However, adoption must remain purposeful. The objective should not be to insert AI into every process. It should be to use AI where it can improve clarity, responsiveness and outcomes while maintaining human accountability, strong data governance and customer trust.

With Roamiyo, you are applying AI to travel. How do you envision AI changing the way travellers discover destinations, plan trips, and experience travel in a more personalized and seamless way?

Travel is personal, but most digital travel experiences still begin by showing everyone broadly the same options. AI can change that by understanding not only where someone wants to go, but how they like to travel. Two people visiting the same destination may want completely different experiences. One may prefer a tightly planned itinerary, while another wants time to explore spontaneously. Preferences may also change depending on whether the person is travelling alone, with friends or with family.

AI can help travellers move from endless browsing to more meaningful choices. It can make discovery more relevant, bring scattered recommendations together and help build an itinerary around the traveller's interests, budget, pace and circumstances.

Its role should continue after the booking stage as well. During a trip, plans change because of weather, delays, opening hours or simply a change of mind. A travel companion should be able to understand that context and help the traveller adapt without having to reconstruct the entire plan.

With Roamiyo, our intention is for this intelligence to remain in the background. Travellers should not have to understand the technology. They should simply experience a journey that feels easier, more relevant and more naturally organised around them.

The travel industry often operates across fragmented systems and large amounts of customer data. How can AI and connected digital ecosystems help create a more integrated and personalized travel experience?

The travel industry has many excellent platforms, but each one generally solves one part of the journey. Travellers may discover a destination on social media, receive recommendations through messages, make bookings across multiple platforms, maintain an itinerary elsewhere and coordinate with their group through another application.

The problem is not necessarily the absence of information. It is that the traveller is often responsible for connecting all of it.

A connected digital ecosystem can bring these different elements into one continuous journey. AI can help interpret the information, understand the relationships between it and translate it into useful actions. A saved video can become a place on an itinerary. A flight delay can trigger a change in the day's plan. The preferences of several group members can be considered together instead of being debated across dozens of messages.

For this to work responsibly, travellers must retain control over their information, and platforms must be transparent about how that information is used. Personalisation should feel helpful rather than intrusive. The opportunity is to move from a collection of disconnected transactions to a travel experience that understands context and accompanies the traveller from initial inspiration to the journey itself.

Looking ahead, what is your vision for ETPL and Roamiyo, and which emerging technologies or trends do you believe will have the biggest impact on businesses and the travel industry over the next five years?

Our vision for ETPL is to build technology that makes complex organisations easier to operate. We want to create connected enterprise platforms that give employees clarity, give customers a better experience and give leaders a more accurate, real-time view of the business.

Roamiyo applies the same philosophy to travel. Travel currently involves too many disconnected decisions, platforms and conversations. Our ambition is for Roamiyo to become a travel companion where the journey can live – from discovery and planning to coordination and the experience of being on the trip.

Over the next five years, I believe the biggest change will come from the convergence of contextual AI, real-time data and connected digital ecosystems. Enterprise platforms will move from recording what has already happened to helping organisations anticipate what requires attention. In travel, platforms will move from displaying options to understanding intent and helping travellers act on it.

We will also see interfaces become more natural, automation become more adaptive, and personalisation become increasingly sensitive to context. At the same time, trust, privacy and responsible use of data will become even more important.

The companies that create the greatest impact will not necessarily be those that use the most technology. They will be the ones that use it to remove the most friction from people's lives.

Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Unveils Shore Temple Dialogues, an Exclusive Forum Celebrating Luxury Weddings in Mahabalipuram

Travel Mail Desk

GRT Hotels & Resorts unveiled Shore Temple Dialogues, a signature sub-brand under its acclaimed GReAT Conversations platform, with an exclusive evening at Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Mamallapuram, bringing together the country's leading voices in luxury weddings against the timeless backdrop of the UNESCO World Heritage Shore Temple and the Bay of Bengal.

The inaugural edition convened an influential gathering of celebrated wedding planners, destination specialists, hospitality leaders, representatives from Tamil Nadu tourism and lifestyle influencers to explore the evolution of destination weddings and Mahabalipuram's emergence as one of India's most coveted wedding destinations.

The panel featured John Santhana Paul, Business Head, The Chozhas Media & Entertainments; Nikhil Jetha, Founder of EWE Events; Ramkumar R, Managing Director of Varsham Events & Vice President South India of EEMA; and Murugan Rajan, General Manager, Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay



Mamallapuram, and was moderated by Jit Bose, Vice President – Commercial, GRT Hotels & Resorts.

Guests were treated to an immersive culinary experience by the resort's award-winning chefs, showcasing refined global cuisine alongside regional Indian flavours, including an exceptional gourmet offering from the resort's dedicated vegetarian kitchen—reflecting its expertise in curating bespoke

celebrations across cultures and traditions.

Vikram Cotah, CEO, GRT Hotels & Resorts, said *"Shore Temple Dialogues is our way of celebrating destinations through meaningful conversations, exceptional hospitality and cultural experiences. Mahabalipuram offers a rare blend of heritage, coastal beauty and world-class hospitality, making it one of India's most compelling destinations for luxury weddings. Through this platform, we hope to inspire new collaborations while showcasing the destination on a global stage."*

The evening concluded with an intimate networking dinner, reinforcing Mahabalipuram's appeal as a destination where heritage, luxury and bespoke celebrations converge.

With the launch of Shore Temple Dialogues, GRT Hotels & Resorts introduces a distinctive platform dedicated to destination-led storytelling, bringing together visionaries, creators and industry leaders to shape the future of experiential travel and luxury celebrations.

STEP INTO CORBETT HIDEAWAY – IHCL SELEQTIONS IN UTTARAKHAND

Travel Mail Desk

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), India's largest hospitality company, today announced the opening of Corbett Hideaway, Jim Corbett – IHCL SeleQtions in Uttarakhand.

Mr. Gaurav Pokhariyal, Chief Operating Officer, Full-Service Business, IHCL, said, *"Corbett is one of India's most sought-after wildlife destinations, drawing travellers with its natural beauty and thriving ecosystem. The addition of Corbett Hideaway – IHCL SeleQtions strengthens our presence in Uttarakhand and furthers our partnership with Leisure Hotels Group with the addition of its sixth resort to the IHCL portfolio."*

Set along the banks of the Kosi River, Corbett Hideaway – IHCL SeleQtions offers a peaceful retreat in one of India's most iconic wildlife destinations. Spread across seven acres, the 80-key resort features private sit-outs overlooking the river, landscaped greens and open spaces creating an immersive connection with the destination. Ija, the all-day dining restaurant, presents a thoughtfully curated menu of authentic Kumaoni cuisine alongside Indian classics and international favourites, while Himmaleh Bar & Deck offers an immersive alfresco setting overlooking the river.



Mr. Vibhas Prasad, Director, Leisure Hotels Group, added, *"We are delighted to further strengthen our partnership with IHCL with the launch of the Corbett Hideaway – IHCL SeleQtions. As pioneers of hospitality in Corbett National Park, Leisure Hotels Group has played a key role in shaping the region into a sought-after wildlife and leisure destination in Uttarakhand. This opening builds on that legacy, bringing together our deep-rooted understanding of the destination with IHCL's expertise to create*

experiences that are both authentic and enriching."

Nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas, Corbett National Park is among India's most celebrated wildlife destinations. The resort offers a range of curated experiences designed to immerse guests in the region's natural landscape, including guided jungle safaris, birdwatching excursions, river rafting and visits to the Garjiya Devi Temple.

ELIVAAS Expands its Footprint in Jim Corbett with Five New Hospitality Launches

Travel Mail Desk

ELIVAAS has expanded its portfolio in Jim Corbett with the launch of five new hospitality experiences—Farm Naturelle, Sylvaara, Puvalgarh Farms, Aranya Library and Dhela Jungle Retreat. The expansion further strengthens the company's presence in one of India's most sought-after wildlife and leisure destinations while broadening its offering across multiple stay formats for modern travellers.

The five launches reflect the changing preferences of travellers, who are increasingly seeking immersive, experience-led holidays over conventional hotel stays. Together, the properties cater to a wide range of travel occasions, from peaceful farm escapes and intimate boutique retreats to private villa holidays and full-service resort experiences, while remaining united by ELIVAAS focus on curated hospitality and personalised service.

Farm Naturelle offers a tranquil farm retreat spread across eight acres of orchards, organic farmland and open green spaces, allowing guests to experience the slower rhythm of rural living alongside the comforts of a luxury private villa. Sylvaara is designed as an intimate boutique retreat for couples, families and small groups seeking contemporary luxury amidst nature. Puvalgarh Farms



blends the charm of an English countryside estate with the tranquillity of Jim Corbett's wilderness. The property features an elegant four-bedroom villa alongside a cottage-style suite, making it ideal for families, friends and small groups seeking an exclusive getaway. Aranya Library introduces thoughtfully designed row villas that combine private living spaces with landscaped surroundings and dedicated reading spaces, making them ideal for extended family getaways. Dhela Jungle Retreat completes the collection with a nature-inspired resort featuring suites, duplex accommodations, dining venues and recreational facilities that complement the landscape of Jim Corbett.

Across the five properties, guests can enjoy experiences that celebrate the destination, including wildlife safaris, bonfire evenings, outdoor dining, farm experiences, private celebrations and personalised concierge services, offering multiple ways to experience Jim Corbett beyond a conventional hotel stay.

ELIVAAS Expands its Footprint in Jim Corbett with Five New Hospitality Launches Speaking on the expansion, **Ritwik Khare, Founder & CEO, ELIVAAS**, said, "Jim Corbett has evolved into much more than a wildlife destination. Travellers today are looking for stays that are more personal, immersive and connected to the destination. With Farm Naturelle, Sylvaara, Aranya Library, Puvalgarh Farms and Dhela Jungle Retreat, we have created five distinct hospitality experiences that cater to different travel preferences while maintaining the same commitment to thoughtful design, personalised service and memorable stays. This expansion is an important milestone in strengthening our presence in one of India's most dynamic leisure markets."

The latest additions reinforce ELIVAAS' strategy of building destination-led hospitality experiences that go beyond accommodation, offering travellers the flexibility to choose between farm stays, boutique retreats, private villas and resort living under a single trusted brand.

Sterling Puts Bastar on the Traveller's Map with its 80th Resort

Travel Mail Desk

Sterling Holiday Resorts, one of India's leading hospitality companies, has announced its entry into Chhattisgarh with the launch of Sterling Naman Bastar, Jagdalpur—its 80th resort in India and the first property in Jagdalpur to operate under a national hospitality brand.

The milestone opens a gateway to one of India's most fascinating yet relatively under-discovered regions—Bastar. Located on Chitrakote Road, Sterling Naman Bastar is positioned as a comfortable gateway from which to discover Jagdalpur and the wider Bastar region. Spread across approximately 3.21 acres, the resort offers 45 rooms across five categories, including garden-facing rooms, spacious suites and a private pool villa.

Speaking on the launch, **Mr. Vikram Lalvani, Managing Director & CEO, Sterling Holiday Resorts**, said, "Some destinations are already on everyone's travel list. Others are waiting to be discovered. We believe Bastar belongs firmly in the second category. The combination here is extraordinary—waterfalls, forests, caves, craft, cuisine and a rich living culture. Yet Bastar remains relatively under-discovered by the mainstream Indian traveller. Our role as a Destination Architect is not simply to put a hotel in such a location, but to help travellers understand why they should come here and then make the destination easier and

richer to experience. With Jagdalpur providing the gateway and Sterling Naman Bastar providing a comfortable hospitality base, we have an opportunity to introduce many more travellers to this remarkable region. Our 80th resort is therefore more than a milestone for Sterling—it is an opportunity to help put another compelling Indian destination on the traveller's map."

Commenting on the partnership, **Jayesh Sangani and Rachit Sangani, owners of Sterling Naman Bastar Jagdalpur, a unit of Dishi Resort Pvt. Ltd.**, said, "Bastar has

tremendous potential as a destination, with remarkable natural landscapes and a rich cultural heritage. Our association with Sterling combines our understanding of the region with the brand's reach, distribution and hospitality expertise. Together, we aim to establish Sterling Naman Bastar as the preferred base for travellers exploring Jagdalpur and the wider Bastar region."

As Sterling expands its network, its ambition is therefore not simply to put more properties on the map, but to help put more destinations on the traveller's map.



Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur Introduces Helicopter Arrivals for Destination Weddings

Travel Mail Desk

Destination wedding arrivals in Jaipur are taking to the skies. Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur has introduced helicopter arrivals for wedding couples, adding a new dimension to the large-format destination wedding experiences the resort offers.

Managed by Black Rock Hotels & Resorts, the 40-acre property is among Rajasthan's larger destination resorts, with 351 rooms and extensive indoor and outdoor event infrastructure. The new offering allows couples to incorporate an aerial arrival into their wedding itinerary, turning what has traditionally been a ceremonial entrance into part of the larger destination experience.

The move also reflects a broader change in India's luxury wedding market. As celebrations become increasingly personalised, families are looking beyond conventional décor and hospitality to create distinctive moments across the wedding journey, from guest experiences and entertainment to the couple's arrival.

For hotels, this is changing how destination weddings are approached. The emphasis is shifting from providing rooms and banquet spaces to creating an entire celebration



ecosystem that can accommodate increasingly elaborate and individualised requirements.

Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur Introduces Helicopter Arrivals for Destination Weddings. **Ravindra Pratap Singh, Chairman, Ravi Surya Group and owner of Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur**, said, "Destination weddings have become much more personal. Families are no longer looking only for a beautiful venue; they want to create moments that

feel specific to them and that guests will remember. An aerial arrival is one such experience. At Ananta Jaipur, our scale gives us the flexibility to think beyond conventional wedding formats and work with families on how the entire celebration unfolds, from the arrival to the ceremonies and experiences in between."

Ananta Spa & Resort Jaipur has been developed with destination weddings and MICE as major demand segments. Its event infrastructure includes 12 venues, multiple indoor banquet spaces and expansive outdoor lawns. Among them is the 70,000 sq. ft. Suijin Lawn, while a dedicated 16-pillared, Vastu-compliant ceremonial Pagoda has been designed for traditional wedding rituals, including ghudchadi, baraat, and jaimala.

The resort's wedding proposition is complemented by accommodation across five categories, wellness and leisure facilities, landscaped spaces, and multiple dining experiences, allowing multi-day celebrations to be hosted largely on-site. With Jaipur already established as one of India's leading destination wedding markets, Black Rock Hotels & Resorts expects greater personalisation and experience-led celebrations to increasingly influence the design and operation of luxury wedding resorts.

Sarova Hotels & Resorts Taps into Growing Demand for Experiential Indian Destination Weddings

Travel Mail Desk

As Indian destination weddings increasingly evolve into multi-day celebrations centred around experiences, Sarova Hotels & Resorts is strengthening its offering for the Indian market, bringing together beachfront celebrations, personalised hospitality and Kenya's diverse leisure and safari experiences.

Sarova Whitesands Beach Resort & Spa in Mombasa is among the group's popular properties for Indian weddings, offering a beachfront setting for intimate gatherings and larger celebrations. Wedding programmes can be tailored around traditional functions including Mehendi, Haldi, Sangeet, the wedding ceremony and reception, with options covering customised décor, entertainment, bespoke dining, spa experiences and curated activities.

The resort's three wedding packages, Coastal Elegance, Signature Indian Ocean Wedding and Ultimate Sarova Celebration, offer varying levels of accommodation, experiences and inclusions, while allowing couples to customise the celebrations around their requirements.

Beyond the wedding, guests can enjoy sunset dhow cruises, spa and wellness experiences, marine activities, Mombasa Old Town, Fort Jesus and Haller Park, while the

wider Sarova portfolio enables couples to add stays in destinations such as the Maasai Mara, Samburu, Lake Nakuru and Nairobi

Commenting on the opportunity, **Mita Vohra, Board Director, Sarova Hotels & Resorts**, said "Indian weddings are becoming increasingly experience-led, with couples looking to create memorable journeys for their families

and guests rather than simply a wedding celebration. Kenya offers a wonderful combination of natural beauty, culture, hospitality and adventure, and through Sarova's portfolio, couples can bring all of these elements together. We see significant potential in offering the Indian market a wedding experience that is distinctive, personal and uniquely Kenyan."



Courtyard by Marriott Opens First Hotel in Ghaziabad, Expanding Presence in Delhi NCR

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 Ghaziabad, marking the brand's debut in Ghaziabad. Located in Rajnagar Extension, one of the region's fastest-growing commercial and residential corridors, the hotel reflects Marriott International's continued expansion across India's high-growth markets while bringing the Courtyard brand's signature blend of comfort, functionality and flexible spaces to the destination.

"Delhi NCR continues to grow as one of India's most dynamic economic corridors, and Ghaziabad plays an increasingly important role in driving further business, infrastructure development and domestic travel demand", said Kiran Andicot, Senior Vice President, South Asia, Marriott International. "As the city grows into a thriving commercial and residential destination, we see a strong opportunity for the Courtyard by Marriott brand, which has long been trusted by ambitious travellers seeking comfort and style. We are excited to mark our presence in Ghaziabad and offer our guests more choices across the region".

"We are delighted to introduce the Courtyard by Marriott experience to Ghaziabad and welcome guests to a hotel designed around the way people travel today. Whether visiting for business, celebrating life's special moments or enjoying time with family, guests will find thoughtfully designed spaces and



warm, intuitive service that will make every stay comfortable. We also look forward to becoming an integral part of Ghaziabad's growing community and a destination where travellers and locals alike can gather, connect and celebrate," said Praveen Sharma, Hotel Manager, Courtyard by Marriott Ghaziabad.

Courtyard by Marriott Ghaziabad participates in Marriott Bonvoy, Marriott International's

award-winning travel program, allowing members to earn and redeem points for their stay at the new hotel and at other hotels and resorts across Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of extraordinary hotel brands.

With the Marriott Bonvoy app, members enjoy a level of personalisation and a contactless experience that allows them to travel with peace of mind.

SOPA LODGES CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF SAFARI EXCELLENCE

Travel Mail Desk

Sopa Lodges proudly marks 40 years of safari excellence, celebrating a remarkable journey of hospitality, conservation and memorable experiences across the diverse landscapes of East Africa.

The Sopa story began with an ambitious vision in the early 1980s and became reality on 8 August 1986, when Masai Mara Sopa Lodge opened its doors with just 36 guest rooms, inviting travellers to experience the extraordinary beauty of the Maasai Mara.

What began as a single safari lodge has since grown into a distinguished collection of six properties across Kenya and Tanzania, including Masai Mara Sopa Lodge, Amboseli Sopa Lodge, Lake Naivasha Sopa Resort, Lake Nakuru Sopa Lodge, Samburu Sopa Lodge and Tarangire Sopa Lodge. While Ngorongoro Sopa Lodge and Serengeti Sopa Lodge were rebranded to Explorer by Elewana Collection, they remain an important part of the Sopa legacy.

Across four decades, the philosophy of "One Sopa, One Standard, One People"



has remained at the heart of the brand, reflecting a shared commitment to authentic hospitality, cultural appreciation, environmental conservation and exceptional guest experiences.

Sopa Lodges has welcomed thousands of travellers from around the world, creating opportunities to discover East Africa's extraordinary wildlife and landscapes, connect with local cultures and celebrate special moments. The brand's journey has been shaped by its people, communities and trade partners whose dedication has helped build a lasting hospitality legacy.

Sustainability and responsible tourism remain central to Sopa's future. Through conservation initiatives, cultural preservation and meaningful community partnerships, Sopa Lodges continue to work towards protecting the natural and cultural heritage that makes East Africa a unique destination.

From one lodge and 36 rooms at Masai Mara Sopa Lodge to a respected East African safari hospitality brand, Sopa's story is ultimately a story of people, passion, culture, conservation and unforgettable memories.

Happy 40th Anniversary, Sopa Family. Forty years of memories, milestones and meaningful partnerships, with many more remarkable journeys ahead.

TAJ FORAYS INTO LUXURY BRANDED VILLAS WITH TAJ MOUNT KUSUR RESORT & VILLAS, LONAVALA; DEVELOPED BY AMAVI

Travel Mail Desk

Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), India's largest hospitality company, today announced the launch of Taj Mount Kusur Resort and Villas in Lonavala, Maharashtra. Developed in partnership with Amavi, India's only hospitality-backed real estate brand, the project marks Taj's entry into the luxury branded villa segment.

Mr. Puneet Chhatwal, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, IHCL, said, "For over a century, Taj has defined luxury hospitality through its grand palaces, landmark city hotels, safaris and residences. Recognised as the World's Strongest Luxury Hotel Brand and India's Strongest Brand, Taj continues to strengthen its position at the forefront of the luxury hospitality sector. The launch of Taj Mount Kusur Resort & Villas marks our entry into the branded villa segment, broadening our portfolio to address evolving consumer preferences while bringing the trust, service excellence and legacy of the brand to a new category of luxury real estate."

Spread across a 34-acre estate in the Western Ghats, Taj Mount Kusur Resort and Villas is an integrated luxury development comprising 32 branded villas and a 100-key Taj resort. The project offers panoramic views of the surrounding lake and valley. Inspired by contemporary barn-style architecture, featuring expansive glass façades and spacious verandahs, the villas naturally flow into the surrounding landscape. The



development includes a two-acre Wabi-Sabi Central Park inspired by the Japanese philosophy of embracing simplicity and harmony with nature. Residents can enjoy the Miyawaki forest, nature trails, zen gardens, stargazing decks, golf putting greens, a fitness lawn and multi-purpose sports courts. The integrated project also includes Club Amavi offering wellness and recreation facilities, banquet and dining venues.

The branded villas will be offered for sale integrated into the resort inventory through a lease-back programme. Residents will have access to Taj's renowned hospitality services, including concierge assistance, housekeeping, maintenance and the leisure and wellness amenities of the resort.

Mr. Apurv Kumar, Managing Director, Clarks Group of Hotels and Founder, Amavi, said,

"Second homes are bought to create more time — time with family, time in nature and time for oneself. Yet too often, they become another responsibility. At Amavi, our purpose is to change that. Taj Mount Kusur Resort and Villas brings together the privacy and permanence of a home with the care and service of Taj hospitality. Rooted in the Western Ghats, it also reflects our belief that meaningful development must respect the land and create value for the communities around it. We want Mount Kusur to be not merely a property people own, but a place they return to, belong to and come to."

Mr. Sachin Agrawal and Mr. Bajrang Bararia, Founders, Amavi, said, "With

Taj Mount Kusur Resort and Villas, Amavi has sought to create a residential offering that combines design, nature and hospitality. Luxury consumers today are increasingly seeking experiences that combine the privacy of a second home with the services and assurance of a hospitality brand. The project's low-density planning, integrated amenities and professionally managed services are intended to provide homeowners with the privacy of villa ownership and the convenience of a luxury resort. Amavi is pleased to partner with IHCL in bringing this vision to life under the Taj brand."

Located between Mumbai and Pune, Lonavala is one of Maharashtra's most established leisure destinations. Known for its scenic valleys, lakes and waterfalls, the hill station continues to attract leisure travellers, wellness seekers and second-home buyers.

ITC Hotels Signs Storii Assagao, Expands Presence in Goa

Travel Mail Desk

ITC Hotels Limited today announced the signing of a management agreement for a 51-key hotel in Assagao, North Goa, under its fast-growing Storii by ITC Hotels brand. The hotel is envisioned as a distinctive hospitality offering inspired by the region's vibrant character, attracting travellers to its dynamic culinary treasure, natural beauty, boutique retail experiences, and proximity to the state's celebrated beaches and attractions.

Storii Assago will feature well-appointed rooms and suites, an all-day dining restaurant and a range of dining, social and recreational experiences. The signing further strengthens ITC Hotels' presence in Goa across various brands and reinforces its strategy of expanding across high-potential leisure markets.

Anil Chadha, Managing Director, ITC Hotels Limited, said, "Goa continues to be one of India's leading tourism markets and remains a key focus area for our leisure growth strategy. Assagao has emerged as an attractive micro-market, driven by its distinctive character, strong visitor appeal, and evolving travel preferences. Storii



Assagao will seamlessly blend the essence of the locale with the brand's focus on personalized service and memorable guest experiences. We are delighted to partner with Ananda Hospitality Services Private Limited on this exciting project."

Purshottam Sharma and Dilip Sharma, Partners at M/s Ananda Hospitality Services Private Limited, said, "Assagao has steadily evolved into one of Goa's most sought-after hospitality destinations, attracting travellers looking for enjoyable and well-curated stays. We are pleased to collaborate with ITC Hotels and look forward to creating a hospitality offering that reflects the unique appeal of the region while delivering exceptional guest experiences."

The signing also marks a significant addition to ITC Hotels' growing presence in North Goa, a market that continues to benefit from strong tourism demand, improving connectivity, and increasing preference for experiential leisure travel. With its strategic location and proximity to key tourism hubs, its tree-lined avenues, charming neighbourhoods, and evolving hospitality landscape, Storii Assagao is well-positioned to become a preferred choice for travellers exploring the region.

GOLF TOURISM EXPO AND CONCLAVE

"The Perfect Drive: Tee Off for Luxury Tourism"

 **23rd OCT 2026** |  **NEW DELHI**



BENEFITS OF THIS CONCLAVE



Targets high-end & luxury tourism market.



Promote golf tourism as a premium travel experience.



Connects global investors, resorts & tourism brands.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Showcase of golf resorts & luxury destinations.



Networking with high-net-worth travelers & investors.



Discussions on luxury tourism trends.



Investment in golf-centric infrastructure.



Positioning India as a global golf tourism destination.



Contact for: Stall/Table Space Bookings and Sponsorship Opportunities:



SECRETARIAT : ICM GROUP, NEW DELHI



E-48, 3rd Floor, Naraina Vihar, New Delhi - 110028 (India)



Mobile: +91- 9266034001, 9266034002, 9266034003, 9266034004



Email: cmd@icmgroup.in, cmd.icmgroup@gmail.com



Hotel Makhan Residency

Where Amritsar's Hospitality Meets Its Culinary Legacy

Travel Mail Desk

A visit to Amritsar is as much a culinary journey as it is a cultural one, and **Hotel Makhan Residency** brings both experiences together under one roof. Located in the heart of the Holy City, the property combines contemporary comfort with the warmth of traditional Punjabi hospitality, making it a convenient stay for travellers exploring Amritsar and its iconic landmarks.

At the centre of the experience is its celebrated restaurant, where the flavours of Amritsar take the spotlight. Known for its authentic local cuisine, the restaurant invites guests to experience the city through freshly prepared, richly spiced and perfectly crisp dishes. Its culinary identity is rooted in tradition, with local flavours and recipes carried forward through generations.

The restaurant's inviting interiors provide a comfortable setting for everything from a relaxed family meal to a memorable gathering with friends. With multiple dining spaces, guests can enjoy their meal in an ambience that complements the vibrant spirit of Amritsar.

The property's hospitality legacy dates back to **1962**, reflecting decades of experience in bringing authentic local flavours to visitors. Alongside its dining experience, Hotel Makhan Residency offers elegantly appointed rooms, modern amenities and banquet facilities, creating a well-rounded hospitality experience.

For travellers looking to **stay comfortably and taste Amritsar authentically**, Hotel Makhan Residency offers more than accommodation—it offers a flavourful introduction to the city's legendary food culture.



STORIES, JOURNEYS, SMILES: ONE STATE. TWO MARTS. ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES



20-21-22 SEPTEMBER 2026
VENUE: AMRITAM PALACE



RAJASTHAN

Travel Mail Desk

The Rajasthan Domestic Travel Mart (RDTM), organised by the Federation of Hospitality & Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) in association with the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, is Rajasthan's premier B2B tourism marketplace. Now in its sixth edition, RDTM has established itself as an important platform connecting Rajasthan's tourism fraternity with travel trade professionals from across India.

RDTM brings together hotels, resorts, tour operators, destination management companies, travel agents, wedding planners, event managers, experience providers, tourism boards, airlines, media and other stakeholders under one roof. Through business meetings, networking opportunities and destination showcases, the Mart creates a platform for meaningful partnerships, knowledge exchange and new business opportunities.

The purpose of RDTM extends beyond promoting established tourism destinations. Rajasthan's tourism potential is vast and diverse, encompassing heritage and culture, wildlife, rural and tribal experiences, spirituality, wellness, adventure, arts, crafts, cuisine and immersive journeys. The Mart provides an opportunity to showcase this diversity to domestic buyers, encouraging them to discover new destinations and develop innovative travel products for their clients.

For buyers, RDTM offers direct access to a wide range of tourism suppliers, enabling them to discover new properties, experiences and destinations, to explore suppliers and work with DMCs and establish



direct business relationships, explore competitive offerings and create customised itineraries. For exhibitors, it provides visibility among national travel trade professionals, opportunities to generate new business, expand market reach, understand evolving buyer expectations and build long-term partnerships.

The benefits of RDTM extend to Rajasthan's tourism industry at large. By bringing the public and private sectors together, the event strengthens industry collaboration, encourages investment, promotes lesser-known destinations and supports the development of new tourism circuits. It contributes to longer visitor stays, employment generation and economic opportunities for communities and businesses connected with tourism, including hospitality, transport, handicrafts, culture and entertainment.

Importantly, RDTM encourages the industry to look beyond conventional sightseeing

and embrace the future of experiential, immersive and responsible tourism where travellers connect not only with monuments and landscapes, but also with the people, traditions and stories that make Rajasthan unique.

A New Chapter: Marwar Travel Mart

RDTM 2026 introduces an exciting new initiative. For the first time, the Mart will be extended beyond Jaipur for an additional three days in Jodhpur, creating a seven-day tourism marketplace across two important destinations of Rajasthan.

Following RDTM in Jaipur from 17-19 September 2026, the inaugural Marwar Travel Mart (MTM) will take place in Jodhpur from 20-22 September 2026. MTM will provide a dedicated platform to showcase the immense tourism potential of the Marwar and Thar region, including its heritage, desert landscapes, wildlife, rural experiences, arts and crafts, luxury hospitality, destination weddings and vibrant cultural traditions.

This initiative represents an important step towards expanding tourism promotion beyond traditional centres and bringing greater visibility to the diverse regions of Rajasthan. Together, RDTM and MTM aim to promote new circuits, encourage longer stays, strengthen business opportunities and position Rajasthan as a destination of endless possibilities.

Through Stories, Journeys and Smiles, RDTM 2026 celebrates Rajasthan's tourism industry and its shared vision of making the state more accessible, diverse, experiential and sustainable for travellers from across India and the world.



#Wed_in_India

Empowering Wedding Industry (One Industry, One Vision)
Presents

Join The Biggest Wedding Industry Gathering Of 2026

Indian Wedding Industries Conclave & Expo

2nd Edition

21,22
September
2026

at 
TAJ
AGRA

Hospitality & Venue Partner Hotel



Meet 2000+ Professionals From:

Event Planners

Luxury Caterers

5-Star Hoteliers

Hospitality Experts

Bridal Fashion Designers

Artist Managers

Celebrity Photographers

Décor Stylists

Entertainment Designers

Wedding Tech Innovators

Invitation Experts

Luxury Wedding Venues Showcase

Luxury Gifting Brands

Makeup Artists

Jewellery Designers

Wedding Guest Hospitality & Tours

Sound & Light Vendors



About the Conclave

The Indian Wedding Industries Conclave 2026 is the country's most vibrant and curated platform for the entire wedding business ecosystem.

This one-of-a-kind event brings together entrepreneurs, service providers, creatives, and innovators from across India's booming wedding industry to connect, collaborate, and grow.

From inspirational talks and expert panel discussions to a dynamic wedding showcase & exhibition zone, the conclave promises unmatched networking, brand exposure, and the latest trend insights — all under one roof.

Whether you're a seasoned professional or an emerging brand, this is the space where the future of the Indian wedding industry is being shaped.

Who Should Join?

Event Planners & Wedding Coordinators

Decorators & Designers

Bridal Fashion Designers & Boutiques

Photographers & Cinematographers

Luxury Wedding Venues & Hospitality Tours

Hotel & Resort Chains

Luxury Caterers, Bakers & Beverage Brands

Makeup Artists & Stylists

Entertainment Designers & Artist Managers

Wedding Tech Innovators & Gifting Brands

Exhibition Glimpse



Scenic Tours APAC and STIC GSA Services Announce a Strategic Partnership for Scenic and Emerald Luxury River Cruises in India

Travel Mail Desk

Scenic Tours APAC Pte. Ltd. and STIC GSA Services Private Limited, a leading travel representation company in India, today announced a strategic partnership to drive the growth of Scenic Luxury River Cruises and Emerald River Cruises in the Indian market.

The partnership brings together Scenic Group's award-winning luxury river cruise brands with STIC's extensive market expertise, trade relationships and distribution network in India. The shared focus will be on building brand awareness, strengthening trade engagement and growing the luxury river cruise category for HNI Indian travellers.

Anthony Laver, General Manager, Sales & Marketing, APAC, said, "India is an important growth market for Scenic Group, and the partnership with STIC marks a significant step in our APAC strategy. STIC's strong market presence and deep understanding of the Indian travel trade make them the perfect partners to build a solid sales base for Scenic and Emerald Cruises in India. We are pleased to be working with their experienced and professional team to secure long-term growth in the India market."

The partnership will see STIC work closely with Scenic's APAC team to expand the Scenic and

Emerald Cruises brands across key market segments in India. The particular focus will be on travel advisors, tour operators and other key trade partners. The collaboration will also support product training and provide the trade with the resources to effectively present luxury river cruising to their clients.

Isha Goyal, Executive Director and CEO, STIC GSA Services Private Limited, said, "We are delighted to bring Scenic and Emerald to the Indian market and see significant potential for both brands. Our team will focus on building strong trade partnerships, driving awareness and developing the business across India. With our market expertise and Scenic Group's exceptional luxury cruise offering, we are confident this partnership will deliver strong and sustainable growth."

STIC will lead the brands' sales and market development activities in India, working with its established network of travel partners to identify new opportunities, strengthen distribution and drive demand for Scenic and Emerald's river cruise experiences.

Dominic Tan, Regional Sales and Marketing Manager, APAC, Scenic Group, said, "We will be working closely with STIC to build the brands, strengthen trade engagement and convert opportunities into new business. Our team will focus on supporting our partners with

the product knowledge, tools and marketing activities needed to grow Scenic and Emerald across India."

Scenic Luxury River Cruises and Emerald River Cruises offer travellers the opportunity to explore some of the world's most sought-after destinations by river, with land extensions also available. We combine immersive destination experiences with exceptional service, sophisticated onboard experiences and carefully curated itineraries. Scenic is recognised for its all-inclusive luxury river cruise experience, while Emerald offers a premium contemporary approach to river cruising, providing travellers with choice and flexibility across a range of European and Asia river journeys.

With Indian travellers increasingly seeking distinctive, experiential and premium holidays, the partnership is designed to position river cruising as an attractive option for discerning travellers, looking to combine destination discovery with comfort and convenience.

The partnership forms part of Scenic Group's broader strategy to strengthen its presence across the Asia Pacific region, with its Singapore-based APAC team supporting the development of the Scenic and Emerald Cruises products across key regional markets.





CHOMU PALACE JAIPUR

A Heritage Hotel



Business Meets Royal Grandeur

Create meaningful connections in a venue where magnificent architecture, premium hospitality and versatile event spaces redefine the MICE experience



OWNED BY



DANGAYACH
GROUP



ROYAL WEDDING | MICE & CONVENTION | SHOOT | LEISURE HOLIDAYS

📍 Chomu Jaipur (Raj.)

☎ +91-9001094090, 9257030900, 9257030913

✉ ados@chomupalacehotel.com, srsrsm@chomupalacehotel.com, sm@chomupalacehotel.com

Etihad Airways and Africa World Airlines sign strategic partnership agreement

Travel Mail Desk

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, and Africa World Airlines, the Accra-based carrier that has connected Ghana and the wider West African region for more than a decade, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a strategic partnership spanning codeshare and interline cooperation, cargo collaboration and frequent flyer programmes.

The agreement, signed in Accra, sets out a framework for the two airlines to connect their networks. Once implemented, it will allow Etihad guests to travel on a single ticket beyond Accra onto Africa World Airlines' network across Ghana and West Africa and bring Africa World Airlines' customers to Abu Dhabi and onwards across Etihad's network of 118 destinations.

The partnership goes further than the airlines' passenger networks. The two carriers intend to cooperate on cargo, connecting Ghanaian and West African exporters with Etihad Cargo's global capacity, and on loyalty, giving members of both airlines' programmes more ways to earn and redeem.

The partnership lands as Ghana and the UAE draw closer, with growing trade, investment



and government engagement between the two countries, and travel between Accra and the UAE rising with it. A direct commercial link between the two capitals of these aviation markets is the natural next step.

The Memorandum of Understanding takes effect from 24 July 2026, with the individual areas of cooperation to be implemented in stages. The partnership prepares the ground for Etihad's own Abu Dhabi-Accra service set to launch on 24 March 2027. Combined journeys will go on sale as soon as the interline cooperation takes effect.

Arik De, Chief Commercial and Revenue Officer, Etihad Airways, said "Ghana is one of West Africa's most dynamic aviation markets, and Africa World Airlines is the natural partner there. This framework spans passenger services, cargo and loyalty, and it will connect Ghanaian travellers and businesses to Abu Dhabi and to our network across the world's fastest-growing markets. We are here to grow with Ghana."

Sohail Mahmood, Chief Operating Officer, Africa World Airlines, said "Africa World Airlines has proudly connected Ghana and West Africa for more than a decade, with a network that includes Kumasi, Tamale, Takoradi, Lagos, Abuja and Ouagadougou. This partnership with Etihad Airways across passenger, cargo and loyalty will give our customers a direct line to Abu Dhabi's expansive network, while supporting greater opportunities for Ghanaian travellers and international businesses."

TransNusa Launches High-Frequency, Twice-Daily Direct Flights Between Jakarta And Bangkok

Travel Mail Desk

TransNusa Strengthens ASEAN Footprint Via Strategic Partnerships

TransNusa, the Asia-Pacific region's pioneering Premium Service Carrier, has officially commenced its highly anticipated direct scheduled service connecting Jakarta, Indonesia, and Bangkok, Thailand. The inaugural flights took off, injecting vital new capacity into one of Southeast Asia's primary travel corridors with an unprecedented twice-daily flight schedule operating right from day one.

Datuk Bernard Francis, Group Chief Executive Officer of TransNusa, highlighted the strategic and economic importance of this event by saying, "Today's launch of the Jakarta-Bangkok route represents a strategic move to meet the growing demand for leisure and business travel to Thailand from Indonesia."

"By launching with twice-daily services, we aim to provide greater flexibility for our customers while further strengthening connectivity, trade, and regional tourism ties between our two countries," Datuk Bernard said, adding that the Jakarta-Bangkok route is historically one of the busiest in the region.

The new route marks a major milestone in TransNusa's rapid international expansion,



adding to its established network of regional routes including Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Perth, and Guangzhou. Operating from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport to Suvarnabhumi Airport, the daily services are operated by the airline's modern fleet of Airbus A320 aircraft.

Redefining Regional Travel: Day-One High Frequency & Premium Comfort

Breaking away from standard industry practices that conservatively scale new international routes with three to four weekly flights, TransNusa is entering the Indonesian-Thai market with an aggressive twice-daily scheduled flight operation. The dual morning and afternoon schedules have been engineered to cater to corporate executives, digital nomads, and leisure tourists seeking absolute itinerary flexibility without forcing overnight layovers or long transits.

Strengthening ASEAN Foothold

In addition to introducing new practices, TransNusa Airlines also took a major step forward to boost air connectivity and tourism between Indonesia and Thailand by signing a milestone Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) on August 4. Datuk Francis signed the MoU alongside the Governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Ms. Thapanee Kiatphaibool. This strategic partnership was also commemorated at the Indonesia-Thailand Business Forum in the presence of H.E. Anutin Charnvirakul, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, underscoring its high-level economic and bilateral significance.

LOT Polish Airlines is launching flights to Hanoi

Travel Mail Desk

Star Alliance member LOT Polish Airlines is further expanding its route network from Warsaw to Asia and will launch a new Boeing 787 Dreamliner thrice-weekly nonstop service to Hanoi from 31 March 2027. Following Bangkok, Delhi, Seoul and Tokyo, the Vietnamese capital will be LOT's fifth destination in the Far East.

Warsaw-Hanoi

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday:
Departure from Warsaw on LO 61 at 15:05h,
arrival in Hanoi the following day at 06:35h
local time

Hanoi-Warsaw

Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday:
Departure from Hanoi on LO 62 at 08:25h,
arrival in Warsaw at 14:40h local time

A fascinating new destination

"Vietnam is one of the most dynamically developing countries in Asia," says



Robert Ludera, Chief Commercial Officer at LOT Polish Airlines. "As a travel destination, the country fascinates visitors with extraordinary cultural sites and natural treasures, a high

degree of authenticity, amazing cuisine and a wide variety of landscapes, ranging from the bustling Hanoi capital region to the renowned Halong Bay."

Maldivian Expands AVIAREPS India's Mandate to Strengthen Its Pan-India Presence

Travel Mail Desk

Maldivian, the national airline of the Maldives, has expanded AVIAREPS India's role from South India representation to a pan-India General Sales Agent (GSA) mandate, reinforcing the airline's growing focus on the Indian market and its long-term commercial ambitions across the country.

The expanded partnership reflects Maldivian's continued confidence in India, one of the Maldives' most important source markets. Through AVIAREPS India's nationwide network and market expertise, the airline aims to further strengthen its trade engagement, sales development, and market visibility across key Indian cities.

Maldivian currently offers five weekly direct flights from Malé to Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram, along with twice-weekly services between Hanimaadhoo and Thiruvananthapuram, providing convenient connectivity between the Maldives and India. Supported by the airline's extensive domestic network, travellers can seamlessly access resort islands, local communities, and business centres across the archipelago.

India continues to play a significant role in Maldivian tourism, contributing nearly 190,000 visitor arrivals to the Maldives in 2025. The market remains a key growth driver for the airline, particularly across leisure, VFR, medical, and business travel segments.

Commenting on the development, Ibrahim Iyas, Managing Director of Maldivian, said "India remains a key strategic market for Maldivian, both for tourism and regional connectivity. By expanding AVIAREPS India's mandate, we are streamlining and consolidating our efforts across the country,



enabling a more coordinated approach to trade engagement and market development. This reflects our continued confidence in India and our commitment to capturing new growth opportunities as travel demand between India and the Maldives evolves."

Marcelo Kaiser, Chief Operating Officer, AVIAREPS, said "We are delighted to further strengthen our partnership with Maldivian as our mandate expands from South India to a pan-India representation. This milestone reflects the trust Maldivian has placed in AVIAREPS and reinforces our commitment to driving the airline's growth across the Indian market. Through our nationwide network and deep understanding of the travel trade, we look forward to expanding Maldivian's reach and creating new opportunities for the airline across the country."

As part of its future growth plans, Maldivian is also evaluating opportunities for network expansion and increased capacity, supported by the recent addition of its Airbus

A330 widebody aircraft and ongoing fleet development initiatives.

With India continuing to be an important market for both tourism and regional connectivity, the strengthened partnership further positions Maldivian to expand its reach and engagement across the country.



Turkish Airlines Strengthens Its China Network with Chengdu

Travel Mail Desk

Turkish Airlines, the airline that flies to more countries than any other, will launch scheduled flights to Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, as of 11 November 2026. Following Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, Chengdu will become the fourth destination in Mainland China served by the flag carrier.

Home to more than 21 million people, Chengdu is one of China's most prominent metropolitan centres. The city serves as a major hub for trade, logistics, and finance, hosting numerous multinational companies operating in strategic industries such as electronics, automotive, aviation, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence.

Recognized by UNESCO as a "City of Gastronomy", Chengdu attracts millions of visitors every year with its world-renowned Sichuan cuisine, as well as the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, a natural habitat and conservation centre for giant pandas.

Turkish Airlines CEO Ahmet Olmüştür

Commenting on the launch of the Chengdu route, **Turkish Airlines CEO Ahmet Olmüştür** said "China holds a strategically important position among Turkish Airlines' key markets. With the launch of our flights to Chengdu, one of China's foremost tourism, technology, and aviation centres, and a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, we are further strengthening our flight network in the country. We believe this new route will contribute to the continued growth of commercial, cultural, and tourism ties between Türkiye and China."

Turkish Airlines will operate three weekly flights on the Istanbul-Chengdu route on

Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, while return flights from Chengdu to Istanbul will operate on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The new route will provide a direct connection between Chengdu, Türkiye, and Turkish Airlines' extensive global network.

To mark the launch of the new route, Turkish Airlines is offering special fares starting from USD 540 in Economy Class and USD 1,991 in Business Class for travel between Istanbul and Chengdu. Fares are available on Turkish Airlines' official website and may vary at sales offices and travel agencies.



Qatar Airways' 150 Starlink-Equipped Widebody Aircraft Now Include the World's First Starlink-Equipped Boeing 787-9

Travel Mail Desk

Qatar Airways, the operator of the world's first and largest Starlink-equipped widebody fleet, has become the first airline to operate Starlink-equipped Boeing 787-9 aircraft, globally. The carrier has also completed Starlink rollout across its Boeing 787-8 sub-fleet in seven months, bringing the total number of its Starlink-equipped widebody aircraft to 150.

Qatar Airways remains on track to complete the Starlink rollout across its Boeing 787 fleet by the end of 2026. The latest achievement builds on Qatar Airways' record-breaking completion of the Boeing 777 programme in nine months and the Airbus A350 programme in eight months. The airline now operates the world's first and largest Starlink-equipped Boeing 777, Airbus A350, and Boeing 787 fleets.

By building a Starlink-connected journey at a scale unmatched by any other widebody operator, Qatar Airways is bringing passengers closer to a future where travelling no longer means stepping away from the digital world. Every new Starlink-equipped aircraft extends that experience to more passengers, offering them greater freedom

over how they spend their time onboard. Whether they want to work, stay connected with loved ones or simply relax, Starlink Wi-Fi speeds of up to 500 Mbps allow the cabin to become whatever passengers need it to be at 35,000 feet.

Qatar Airways was the first airline to globally offer Starlink onboard long-haul and ultra-long-haul routes across six continents. With free-of-charge, gate-to-gate Starlink Wi-Fi becoming available on more journeys across the airline's global network, Qatar Airways is keeping passengers connected to what matters most while flying to the Americas and Australasia, as well as key gateways across

Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Since launching Starlink connectivity onboard in October 2024, more than 23 million passengers have connected to the fastest Wi-Fi in the sky across over 86,000 Qatar Airways flights.

As the fastest and most ambitious Starlink widebody installation programme in aviation history surpasses 83 per cent completion, Qatar Airways continues to lead in innovation and offer enhanced value to its passengers. With up to 323 Starlink-enabled flights operating daily, the airline is making access to fast, seamless onboard connectivity an increasingly familiar part of its global passenger experience.

Passengers can now enjoy complimentary Starlink Wi-Fi throughout their journey via seamless Privilege Club membership authentication/enrolment.

Gate-to-gate access may be unavailable at certain airports due to local regulatory requirements.

Aircraft subject to change if operationally required.





11th Edition
ITCTA
B2B INTERNATIONAL
TOURISM EXPO • CONCLAVE • AWARDS

travel
mail

India's Leading Travel Magazine

11th Edition

**B2B INTERNATIONAL
TOURISM EXPO,
CONCLAVE &
TRAVEL AWARDS**

**Save
the date**

16th Nov 2026
NEW DELHI

NEXT-GEN TRAVEL
Intelligent, Immersive & Impactful



● CONNECT ● COLLABORATE ● CELEBRATE

Hong Kong Air Cargo Launches Freightler Service from Mumbai with Aeroprime Group

Travel Mail Desk

Hong Kong Air Cargo has expanded its India network with the launch of its dedicated freighter service from Mumbai, marking another significant milestone in its partnership with Aeroprime Group, its Cargo General Sales & Service Agent (GSSA) in India.

The launch comes within just two months of Aeroprime Group's appointment as the airline's Cargo GSSA, reflecting the strong collaboration between the two organizations to strengthen cargo connectivity between India and Hong Kong.

The new Mumbai service enhances Hong Kong Air Cargo's presence in India, offering inbound service to India while offering exporters increased cargo capacity and improved connectivity to Hong Kong and onward global markets.

Commenting on the milestone, Abhishek Goyal, Executive Director, Aeroprime Group, said: "Launching Hong Kong Air Cargo's freighter service from Mumbai within just two months of our partnership reflects the shared commitment and agility of both teams. Mumbai is one of India's most strategic cargo gateways, and this expansion enables us to



offer customers greater capacity, enhanced connectivity, and reliable cargo solutions. We thank Hong Kong Air Cargo and our partners for their continued trust and look forward to further expanding the airline's presence in India."

Mr. Raymond Chen, Vice President, Commercial spokesperson for Hong Kong Air Cargo said "The launch of our freighter service from Mumbai marks an important step in our India growth strategy. Mumbai is a key export hub, and we are pleased

with the rapid progress achieved alongside Aeroprime Group. Their support has played a vital role in expanding our footprint, and we look forward to strengthening our network and delivering greater value to customers."

The Mumbai expansion reinforces Hong Kong Air Cargo's long-term commitment to the Indian market while highlighting Aeroprime Group's expertise in driving airline cargo growth through strategic market development and commercial excellence.

beOnd Signs Memorandum of Understanding with Aeroprime Group to Advance Cargo Strategy in India

Travel Mail Desk

beOnd, the world's first premium leisure airline, today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Aeroprime Group to explore the appointment of beOnd's Cargo General Sales and Service Agent (Cargo GSSA) in India.

The MOU marks a milestone in beOnd's ecosystem development strategy as the airline expands its presence in one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets.

Aeroprime brings extensive experience in cargo management for international airlines, together with deep expertise in the Indian air cargo market and well-established industry relationships. A dedicated cargo strategy complements beOnd Group's expanding passenger operations and supports its long-term objective of building a diversified platform across key international markets.

"India is one of our highest-priority markets, and cargo is central to building a sustainable ecosystem within our AOCs," said **Tero Taskila, Chief Executive Officer of beOnd**. "In India, we've appointed Aeroprime as our partner who already knows this market inside out, so we start from a position of strength rather than learning as we go."



"We are pleased to sign this Memorandum of Understanding with beOnd and begin exploring a Cargo GSSA partnership in India," said **Abhishek Goyal, Executive Director & CEO of the Group**. "beOnd has introduced a distinctive premium proposition to the aviation market, and we look forward to working closely with the company as it develops its ecosystem and

cargo strategy for India. We are confident our experience and market expertise will help support beOnd's long-term ambitions in the region."

The MOU establishes Aeroprime Group as beOnd's cargo representative in India, anchoring the airline's presence as it advances its wider plans for the market.

SkyHop Aviation Signs MoU with Noemi Aerospace to Explore Electric Seaplane Operations and Potential Manufacturing in India

Travel Mail Desk

SkyHop Aviation Pvt. Ltd., India's first dedicated seaplane operator, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Noemi Aerospace to explore the deployment of electric seaplanes in India and the wider South Asian region, marking a significant step in SkyHop's plans to build the country's next generation of regional air connectivity.

Under the MoU, SkyHop will evaluate the introduction of Noemi's electric seaplane into its fleet, while the two companies will work together on the technical, operational, commercial and regulatory feasibility of electric seaplane operations in India.

The collaboration will also explore opportunities for the manufacturing and assembly of electric and hybrid seaplanes in India.

"India's seaplane opportunity goes far beyond connecting one destination to another. With our vast coastline, islands, rivers and lakes, seaplanes can fundamentally change how we connect regions where conventional airport infrastructure is difficult or impractical to build," said Avani Singh, Founder & CEO,



SkyHop Aviation. "Our immediate priority is to build a safe, reliable and scalable seaplane network across India. But as we build that network, we also have an opportunity to think

ahead about what the next generation of the fleet should look like. Electric and hybrid aircraft could become an important part of that transition, particularly for short regional routes, and our partnership with Noemi allows us to begin evaluating that opportunity today. Ultimately, our ambition is for SkyHop to help build the seaplane ecosystem in India, not simply operate within it. That means looking at the aircraft we fly, the infrastructure we create, the technology we adopt and, over time, the opportunity to manufacture and assemble these aircraft in India. We believe India has the potential to become not only one of the world's largest markets for seaplanes, but also an important global hub for the industry."

"What we are seeing is that India is putting effort into making the seaplane strategy real; this is the beginning of a strong market," said Eric Lithun, Founder and CEO of NOEMI Aerospace. "There is strong government ambition, a major programme for new seaplane routes, and now Skyhop is preparing to build its fleet. The agreement with SkyHop is an important confirmation that our aircraft fits the direction this market is taking. We are very proud of the momentum we are building in India together with Skyhop!"

India Set to Be Global Trade Hub with Air Cargo at Core Civil Aviation Secretary at 7th ACFI World Conclave

Travel Mail Desk

New Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and strategic partnerships announced at the 7th ACFI World Conclave 2026 brought state governments and industry stakeholders together to strengthen India's air cargo and export ecosystem. The collaborations focused on cargo and logistics infrastructure, multimodal connectivity, and perishable and high-value cargo. They also aimed to support MSMEs and exporters, expand global market access and promote technology-driven logistics solutions.

Samir Kumar Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, while attending the conclave, said, "ACFI brings the air cargo and logistics ecosystem together to identify challenges and drive practical solutions. As global supply chains diversify, India has an opportunity to strengthen its position as a reliable global trade and manufacturing hub, with air cargo playing a key role in pharmaceuticals, electronics, engineering goods and perishables. The government is focused on reducing friction through streamlined screening, one-stop security, dedicated transfer cargo security areas and greater use of technology. Air Cargo Policy 2.0 and the proposed National Air Cargo Community System will support end-to-end cargo processing, digital integration and lower logistics costs. The priority now is to turn these initiatives into clear deliverables and measurable outcomes through close



collaboration between government and industry, with ACFI playing an important role."

The programme also addressed the quality and future of cargo operations, with the launch of the Cargo Service Quality (CSQ) Initiative and discussions on VTOL and drones, AI and smart cargo security. A session on the evolution of Indian aviation further examined the changes shaping the sector. The conclave also featured the Innovatopia Awards, recognising innovations shaping the future of air cargo and logistics, followed by partner felicitations and networking.

Ramesh Mamidala, Vice President, Air Cargo Forum India (ACFI) and Head Cargo, Air India Limited, said, "The next phase of India's air cargo growth will be shaped not only by expanding airport capacity, but also by how quickly the industry adopts new technologies

and operating models. The discussions around VTOL and drones highlight the potential for new modes of cargo movement, particularly where speed, connectivity and access to difficult or underserved locations matter. At the same time, these technologies will need to develop alongside appropriate safety, regulatory and operational frameworks. The focus must be on identifying practical applications that can improve cargo movement, complement existing networks and make India's logistics ecosystem more responsive to the needs of global trade."

Sanjiv Edward, President, Air Cargo Forum India (ACFI) and Chief Executive Officer – Cargo & Logistics, GMR Group, said, "India has the opportunity to move from being a growing air cargo market to becoming a stronger global cargo hub, but this will require coordinated action across the entire ecosystem. The discussions at the conclave have highlighted the importance of airport infrastructure, efficient cargo operations, stronger international connectivity and closer alignment between airlines, airports, logistics providers, exporters and governments. The state partnerships and industry collaborations announced during the conclave add an important regional dimension to this effort. The priority now is to turn these partnerships and ideas into measurable improvements in capacity, service quality, market access and ease of doing business, while building a cargo network that is resilient enough to respond to changing global trade patterns."

Uber Partners with ixigo to Offer Train Ticket Booking on the Uber App

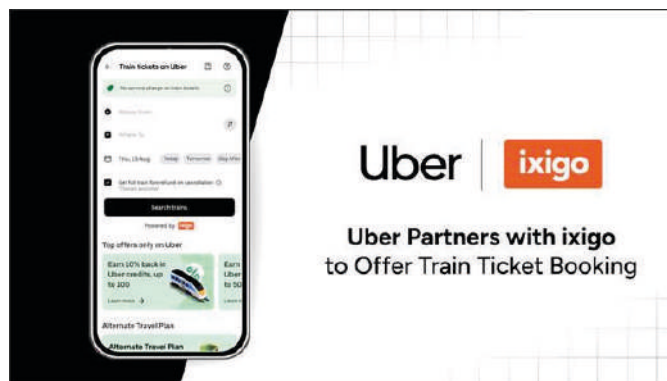
Travel Mail Desk

Uber announced the launch of Train Ticket Booking on the Uber app in partnership with ixigo, India's leading AI-native travel platform. The new offering enables riders to book train tickets, check their PNR status, and seamlessly connect their first and last-mile journeys with Uber, all within a single app.

The launch builds on Uber's continued expansion of its intercity travel offerings in India. With Train Ticket Booking, Uber continues to expand its portfolio of intercity travel options, leveraging ixigo's market-leading train booking technology and seamless post-booking experience, making it easier for riders to plan every stage of their journey through a single, trusted platform.

Train travel remains one of the most preferred modes of long-distance transportation in India, with Indian Railways carrying 741 crore passengers in FY2025-26. As the online train ticketing market continues to grow, Uber and ixigo are partnering to make train travel more convenient by integrating ixigo's train ticket booking with Uber's first- and last-mile mobility, giving riders a simpler and more connected travel experience.

Commenting on the partnership, **Arnab Kumar, Director, Business Development, Uber**



India and South Asia, said, "Train journeys are an integral part of how India travels. For millions of people, the journey starts well before they board the train and continues long after they arrive at their destination. With Train Ticket Booking on the Uber app, riders can now book their train tickets, check their PNR status, and seamlessly connect to and from the railway station, all within a single app. We're pleased to partner with ixigo to bring together their expertise in train ticketing with Uber's mobility platform, making the overall travel experience more seamless and convenient for riders."

Aloke Bajpai, Group CEO & Rajnish Kumar, Group Co-CEO, ixigo said, "As India's largest OTA in the train category, our focus has always been on making rail travel simpler, more

reliable and stress-free. Beyond booking tickets, we've continued to invest in a seamless post-booking experience, better customer support and innovative features that give travellers greater peace of mind throughout their journey. By partnering with Uber, we're extending that experience beyond the train itself, enabling travellers to plan their journey seamlessly from their doorstep to their destination."

The launch also builds on Uber's presence at railway stations across India. Through dedicated pickup and drop-off zones from Ahmedabad in the West to

Secunderabad in the South to Howrah in the East to many new big railway stations soon, Uber already helps millions of riders connect to and from their train journeys. By adding Train Ticket Booking to the Uber app, Uber is extending this experience beyond station connectivity to support travellers throughout their journey.

With this launch, Uber continues to strengthen its multimodal mobility platform, which today spans Moto, Auto, Cars, Metro, Intercity Cars, Intercity Buses, and now Train Ticket Booking. Together, these offerings reinforce Uber's vision of becoming the one platform for every journey, making it easier for riders to move seamlessly across cities and across the country.

Sprite and IRCTC Flag Off India's First Branded Train as the Sprite Tejas Express

Travel Mail Desk

Rail travel has long been an integral part of India's mobility and social fabric, connecting cities, communities, and millions of passengers across the country. In a first-of-its-kind partnership, Sprite and the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) today flagged off the Sprite Tejas Express, in the presence of senior leadership from Indian Railways, IRCTC and Coca-Cola India. Bringing together Sprite's signature refreshment with India's diverse travel culture, the partnership creates a new experience for passengers travelling between the two cities, where varied tastes, preferences and shared moments come together along the journey.

The Delhi-Lucknow corridor offers Sprite an opportunity to connect with consumers across one of its key markets, while reaching travellers across business, leisure, and family journeys. The Sprite Tejas Express will operate on the Lucknow-New Delhi-Lucknow route for six months starting August 2026, with five coaches featuring Sprite branding across the exterior. The train will also be announced as the Sprite Tejas Express at originating and en route stations on both legs of the journey.

Abhishek Gupta, Vice President, Customer Development, Coca-Cola India & Southwest



Asia, said, "We congratulate IRCTC on this innovative partnership and an important milestone for travel experiences in India. At Coca-Cola, we continue to explore collaborations that can unlock new avenues for growth and create shared value. Our association with IRCTC reflects our

commitment to building long-term customer relationships and expanding our presence across the travel ecosystem. With the Sprite Tejas Express, we are bringing Sprite's refreshment and creating a more engaging experience for travellers."

The Sprite Tejas Express directly integrates sustainability into the passenger journey by incorporating practical, recycled material applications on the ground. At the station, benches are made from recycled plastic, with each bench repurposing approximately 45 kg of post-consumer packaging waste. Extending this approach to its ceremonial launch, the train's flag-off featured an official flag made from repurposed PET bottles, demonstrating how discarded materials can be transformed into functional and meaningful elements.

Ajit Kumar Sinha, Chief Regional Manager, Lucknow Division, IRCTC, said, "At IRCTC, we continuously look at opportunities to enhance the passenger experience across our premium train services through relevant partnerships and initiatives. Our association with Sprite on the Tejas Express brings an established consumer brand into the travel environment through an integrated onboard experience. We look forward to making the journey more engaging for passengers travelling on the Lucknow-New Delhi route."

PACHEWAR GARH

DESTINATION WEDDING PACKAGES

Celebrate Your Special Day IN ROYAL RAJASTHANI STYLE

Experience the charm, heritage, and grandeur of Pachewar Garh with a thoughtfully designed destination wedding package tailored to your celebrations.

350+
YEARS
OLD FORT



42

ROYAL HERITAGE
ROOMS



40

SPACE FOR
SWISS TENTS



15+

AMENITIES

◆ PERFECT FOR 150 TO 250 PEOPLE DESTINATION WEDDING ◆



GRAND CELEBRATIONS



TIMELESS MOMENTS



A ROYAL SETTING

CHOOSE YOUR PERFECT PACKAGE

BASIC PACKAGE

₹3,00,000/-

Essential Tent Setup, Basic Decor
And Event Management.

MEDIUM PACKAGE

₹5,00,000/-

Enhanced décor, elegant setups, tent
arrangements & event management.

PREMIUM PACKAGE

₹9,00,000/-

Luxury décor, premium setups,
detailed styling, tent arrangements,
& complete event management.

*Create Memories.
Celebrate Royally.*

FOR BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

+917080903636

PACKAGES CAN BE CUSTOMIZED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF GUESTS,
EVENTS, DECOR PREFERENCES & WEDDING REQUIREMENTS.



WILDLIFE & ECO-TOURISM

EXPO & CONCLAVE







ITM-AMRITSAR PUNJAB





Appointments



AIR INDIA APPOINTS TEWOLDE GEBREMARIAM AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of Air India announced the appointment of Tewolde Gebremariam as the airline's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, succeeding Campbell Wilson. This executive transition marks a pivotal juncture in Air India's transformation journey to become a world-class, leading global airline.

MAYFAIR HOTELS & RESORTS REINFORCES ITS BRAND & MARKETING VISION WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF RAJNI KUMARI SINGH AS MARKETING MANAGER

As MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts continues to strengthen its position as one of India's leading luxury hospitality brands, the company has appointed Rajni Kumari Singh as Marketing Manager at its Corporate Office. Bringing expertise in destination marketing, luxury hospitality communications, public relations, and integrated brand strategy, Rajni joins MAYFAIR to support the brand's continued growth by enhancing market visibility, strengthening brand positioning, and driving impactful marketing and communication initiatives.



THE LEELA HYDERABAD WELCOMES MR. RAHUL SHARMA AS GENERAL MANAGER, BRINGING 25 YEARS OF HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP AND A PROVEN RECORD OF EXCELLENCE

The Leela Hyderabad is pleased to announce the appointment of Rahul Sharma as General Manager. With over 25 years of experience across luxury hospitality, hotel operations, sales, revenue management, and business development, Rahul brings a proven track record of driving business performance while delivering exceptional guest experiences.

JW MARRIOTT RANTHAMBORE RESORT & SPA ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF VIVEK GOMES PEREIRA AS GENERAL MANAGER

JW Marriott Ranthambore Resort and Spa is pleased to announce the appointment of Vivek Gomes Pereira as the General Manager. As Marriott International's landmark 10,000th property globally, the resort represents a defining moment in the brand's history, and Vivek's team has been central to shaping it, having led the property through its pre-opening phase and guiding it through a milestone launch.



THE WESTIN HYDERABAD MINDSPACE NAMES AMIT MAINI AS GENERAL MANAGER

The Westin Hyderabad Mindspace is pleased to announce the appointment of Amit as General Manager. A seasoned Marriott International leader with over 15 years of hospitality experience, Amit brings extensive expertise in commercial strategy, business performance and stakeholder management across diverse markets in South Asia.

ABHIRATH SAH APPOINTED GENERAL MANAGER OF LE MÉRIDIEN MAHABALESHWAR RESORT & SPA

Le Méridien Mahabaleshwar Resort & Spa welcomes Abhirath Sah as its new General Manager, bringing over 19 years of experience across hotel operations, sales, marketing, revenue management, and strategic leadership. Abhirath brings a dynamic leadership journey across some of India's leading hospitality brands, most recently serving as Director of Operations at Marriott Suites Pune.



D TRAVELLX APPOINTS NAVEEN HARDASANI AS ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER – MICE & WEDDINGS

D TravellX has announced the appointment of Naveen Hardasani as Assistant General Manager – MICE & Weddings, marking another significant step in the company's growth strategy for India's rapidly expanding corporate MICE, luxury weddings, and experiential travel segments.



NARWAR

Lakefront Resort,
Madhav Tiger Reserve



NARWAR LAKEFRONT RESORT

Where the Lake Meets the Wild

Discover a getaway where peaceful lakefront living meets the thrill of the wilderness. Narwar Lakefront Resort offers comfortable stays, scenic views, lakeside dining and memorable experiences surrounded by nature.

Complete your escape with an exciting safari through Madhav Tiger Reserve home to tigers, leopards, deer, diverse birdlife and captivating forest landscapes.

From quiet moments by the water to adventures in the wild, Narwar brings you the best of both worlds.

Narwar Lakefront Resort

Stay by the lake. Explore the wild.

Luxury Stays | Lakeside Dining | Wildlife Experiences

WWW.TRAVELMAIL.IN

travel mail

India's Leading Travel Magazine

INDIA'S PIONEER IN TRAVEL
JOURNALISM FOR 25 YEARS

OUR CATEGORIES

MINISTRY, TOURISM, TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY, AVIATION,
HOTELS, ASSOCIATIONS, ADVENTURE, FAIRS & FESTIVALS,
RESTAURANTS, ENTERTAINMENT, APPOINTMENTS ETC.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

*We Connect You
To The World*



RNI. NO. 65222/96