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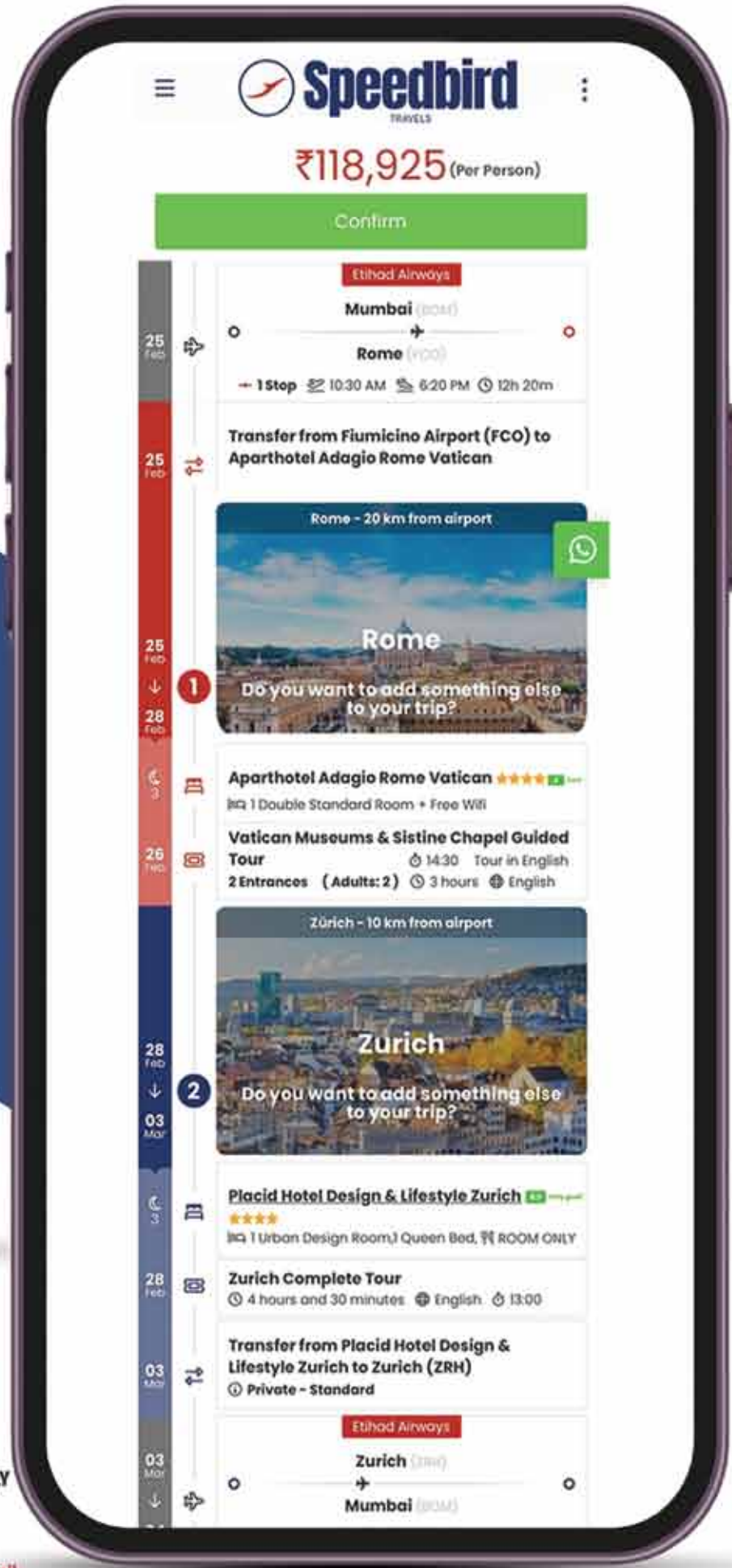
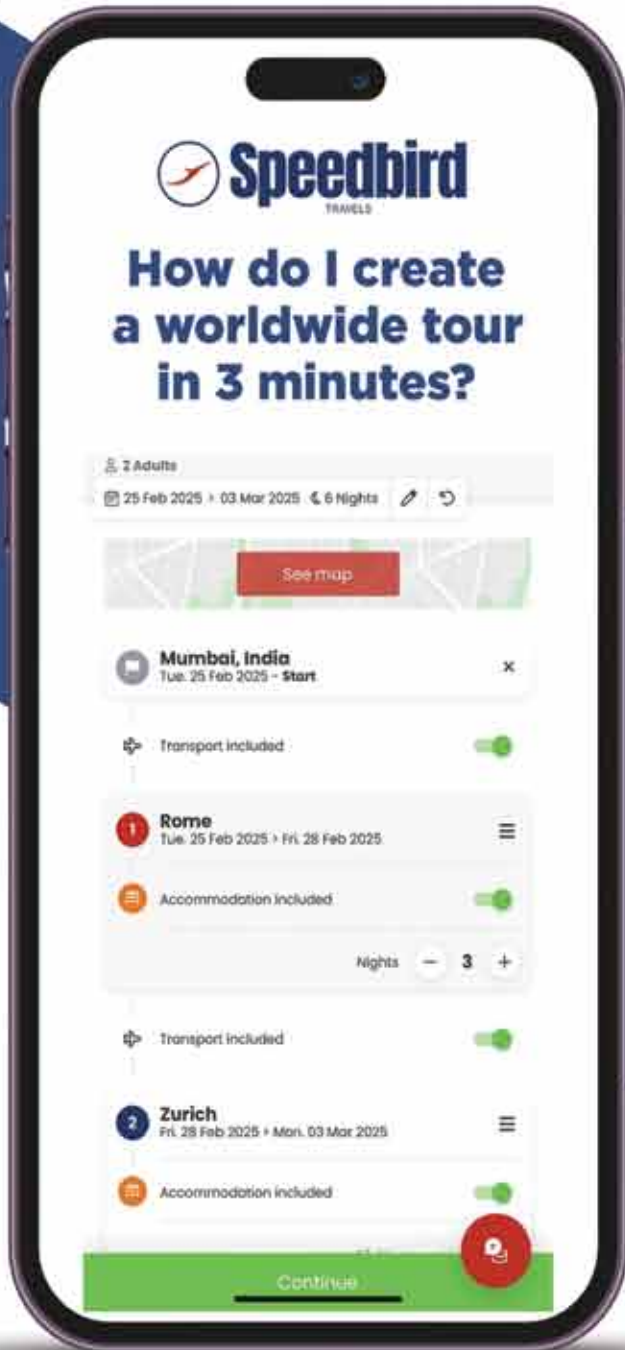
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## Redefine India as high-value destination: Amitabh Kant

Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa, says that India's tourism sector must prioritise job creation. To drive growth, it needs legislations on destination management, improved infra, and a focus on high-value global tourists.

Janice Alyosius



Amitabh Kant  
India's G20 Sherpa

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual CII Tourism Summit 2024 witnessed a compelling discussion led by Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa, who offered a profound and actionable roadmap for harnessing the tourism sector to generate jobs and drive economic growth. The insights shared by him can serve as a guiding framework for policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders.

### Tourism for job creation

Kant began by emphasising the unmatched potential of the tourism sector in generating employment. "I think the industry needs to focus not on growth or pounds. It needs to highlight the job potential of the tourism sector. The multiplier impact of tourism is enormous on job creation. India needs jobs, and there is no better sector than tourism to create them," he said. He urged the industry to approach state governments and position tourism as a pivotal tool for economic development.

### State-level engagement

Kant advocated for decentralising tourism initiatives and moving be-

yond the confines of urban-centric conferences. "Instead of holding the CII conference in the Taj Mahal Hotel, they should go to states with high tourism potential," he suggested. He emphasised the need for states to enact destination-specific legislation and ensure accountability. "We need to focus on creating Chief Executives of the top 20 destination managers because tourism is multi-sectoral in character," he said.

### Destination management

He highlighted the need for robust destination management. Citing an example, Kant said, "Hampi gets about 750,000 tourists annually,

while Angkor Wat attracts close to 3 million. The lack of cleanliness, connectivity, and hotels at Hampi needs urgent attention," he suggested.

### 'Incredible India' campaign

While addressing India's international tourism strategy, Kant pointed

**India must promote itself as an upmarket, high-value destination; cultural and experiential tourism destination. India's strengths must be highlighted globally**

out the stagnation of global marketing efforts. "The 'Incredible India' campaign is dead and gone. You have not marketed India adequately in global markets for the last five years," he said, adding that, "Make sure that you drive a very rejuvenated, very invigorated, very energetic, incredible India campaign for

the world because you can't grow only on domestic; long term, you need high-value tourism to get into India." He stressed the importance of targeting high-value markets, such as the USA and Europe. "India must promote itself as an upmarket, high-value destination; cultural and experiential tourism destination. India's strengths must be highlighted globally," he added.

### Road ahead

Kant shared a blueprint for leveraging tourism to drive economic growth and jobs in India, saying that focusing on job creation, destination management, and global marketing, India can unlock its tourism potential and position itself as a leading destination.



## Is industry ready for transformation?

As we step into 2025, the global landscape is poised for transformative growth. Against this backdrop, industry is gearing up to tackle emerging challenges and seize opportunities.

The IATO expects robust growth in inbound tourism for 2025, driven by improved infrastructure, streamlined visa policies, and increased global connectivity. Key priorities include promoting India as a year-round destination, leveraging digital marketing, and enhancing collaboration with state tourism boards. IATO anticipates significant boosts from events like G20 follow-ups, spiritual tourism, and eco-tourism initiatives.



Rajiv Mehra  
President, IATO



Himanshu Patil  
President, OTOAI

2025 looks set to be an exciting year for outbound travel from India. More travellers are looking for unique and meaningful experiences, going beyond popular tourist spots to explore offbeat destinations, luxury adventures, experiential travel. Social media is having a big influence, inspiring people to discover new places and share their journeys.

Contd. on page 11 ▶



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# ITTA seeks banking solutions

The ITTA Convention stressed the importance of educating drivers to make them ambassadors of change in tourism sector to promote responsible tourism practices. The event also highlighted the challenges faced by transporters in securing loans for large or imported vehicles, with a call for support from the banking sector.



Janice Alyosius

The International Tourism Transport Association (ITTA) Convention, held at The Grand New Delhi from 20-21 December 2024, saw industry leaders and experts discussing the evolving landscape of tourism and transport in India. The event, themed Driving Excellence: Upgrading Transport for a Sustainable and Bright Tomorrow, was graced by the presence of **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister of Tourism, Government of India, as the Chief Guest.



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Tourism, Government of India, lights the lamp at ITTA Convention, held at The Grand New Delhi

Addressing the delegates on the occasion, Shekhawat highlighted the exponential growth of India's tourism sector. Referring the Kumbh Mela as an example of India's unparalleled tourism potential, Shekhawat said, "The Kumbh Mela will start from 13 January. And this Kumbh period of one and a half months will separate India

from the rest of the world. More people will gather there than the population of any country."

#### Sustainability and mobility

Shekhawat highlighted sustainability as a key concern for the tourism sector. "Sustainability is going to be a big question in the future," he said, acknowledging the increasing congestion at es-

established tourist destinations. He emphasised that sustainable tourism must start with improving mobility, particularly in the road transport sector. "Sustainability starts with mobility, and if it is flagged as a travel operator, because any tourist, no matter where they go, whether they go by air or by rail, ultimately they have to sit in their car," he pointed out. "The maxi-

mum time they spend on the road, a very big part of that time, they spend in that cab," he emphasised. Shekhawat called on the tourism industry to take responsibility and cultivate responsible tourism practices, urging operators to educate and support drivers to become ambassadors for sustainability.

Talking about the challenges faced

by the tourism and transportation sectors, particularly regarding banking and regulations, he said, "In the first two weeks of January, I have decided, along with my of-

**In first 2 weeks of Jan, I have decided, along with my office, to dedicate a day for meeting with representatives from the banking sector**

—GS Shekhawat

office, to dedicate a day for meeting with representatives from the banking sector."

Addressing the event, **Satish Sehrawat**, President, ITTA, said, "This is a small festival of ITTA

which we do every alternate year. In these two days, all the members across India come here, and we celebrate and discuss the past, present, and what we are planning for the future." **Bobby KS Sawhney**, Honorary Secretary, ITTA and Chairman of the Convention, expressed his satisfaction with the discussions at the event. He pointed out banking and speed governance as significant issues which require immediate attention.



# A blueprint for industry growth

The tourism industry stands at a crossroads, where adaptation, innovation, and collaboration are key to growth. Going by the trends and embracing new strategies, travel agents and tour operators can remain competitive and play a vital role in shaping India's tourism future—a journey rich with challenges and opportunities.



TT Bureau

**Deep Kalra**, Founder and Chairman, MakeMyTrip, addressing the 18<sup>th</sup> CII Annual Tourism Summit, captivated the industry leaders with his insights into the evolving landscape of Indian tourism. Drawing from his 25 years in the travel industry, he shared key strategies for adapting to new trends, engaging travellers and positioning India as a global tourism powerhouse. His vision offered a roadmap for industry colleagues looking to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Here is a breakdown of the transformative ideas he shared, presented as actionable takeaways for every travel professional.

#### Sightseeing to experiences

Kalra highlighted a significant shift among travellers—particularly youth—toward immersive, experience-driven journeys. Today's tourists seek deeper connections with the places they visit, favour-

ing authentic cultural interactions over traditional sightseeing.

**Action for agents:** Design packages that focus on unique experiences, such as culinary tours, heritage walks, and interactions with local communities.

#### Middle-class travellers

India's burgeoning middle class is driving a boom in leisure travel, with many opting for premium experiences. Kalra noted a 25 per cent growth in travellers taking more than three leisure trips annually, often indulging in luxury accommodations and business-class flights.

**Action for agents:** Offer mid-range to luxury travel packages that cater to this demographic's aspirations for comfort and exclusivity.

#### The homestay revolution

Homestays, once a niche option, have become mainstream. Travellers now prefer these intimate,



**Deep Kalra**  
Founder and Chairman  
MakeMyTrip

personalised accommodations, driven by a desire for offbeat, crowd-free experiences—a trend accelerated by the pandemic.

**Action for agents:** Partner with local homestay providers to offer curated, authentic stays that highlight the charm of lesser-known destinations.

#### Art of storytelling

Strong narratives make destinations

unforgettable. Kalra pointed out how international tourism boards excel in storytelling and urged Indian operators to do the same.

**Action for agents:** Invest in creative content that tells the stories of destinations—whether it's the mystique of a heritage site or the charm of a bustling local market.

#### Digital platforms

Social media and digital platforms have become key drivers of travel decisions, with travellers discovering destinations through Instagram, Facebook, and online reviews.

**Action for agents:** Strengthen your digital presence by sharing visually engaging content, collaborating with influencers, and optimising your online platforms.

#### Embracing sustainability

Kalra stressed the importance of sustainable tourism, highlighting trends like carbon-neutral holidays and eco-friendly travel.

**Action for agents:** Incorporate sustainability into your offerings by promoting eco-conscious hotels, minimising plastic use, and encouraging responsible travel behaviour.

#### Innovative personalisation

Hyper-personalisation, powered by AI and data analytics, is the future of tourism. Kalra described how technology enables tailored experiences for every traveller.

**Action for agents:** Use customer data to create personalised itineraries and recommendations, ensuring every trip aligns with the traveller's unique preferences.

#### Collaboration key to growth

Kalra said the future of tourism lies in collaboration—between industry players, government bodies, and local communities.

**Action for agents:** Partner with stakeholders to offer enriched experiences, build trust, and con-

tribute to the holistic growth of the tourism ecosystem.

Today's Indian traveller is versatile, adventurous, and demanding—equally at ease trekking in the wilderness or indulging in luxury resorts. This evolving dynamic underscores the need for the tourism industry to adapt, innovate, and collaborate. Kalra's address served as a wake-up call, highlighting strategies that can help travel agents and tour operators stay competitive while playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of Indian tourism.





## Let's ring in 2025!

The year ahead feels like a breath of fresh air for the travel and tourism industry. There is so much optimism floating around—innovation, sustainability, global connectivity—but let's be real, none of this happens by itself. It's all about creating the right environment, building networks, and staying resilient through the usual challenges.

Take inbound tourism, for instance. It's brimming with potential, but it's going to need more than just hope to thrive. Better infrastructure, smoother visa processes, and a sharper marketing game are essential. India's got it all—spiritual retreats, eco-adventures, and some unique destinations—but these need a bigger, brighter spotlight. Outbound tourism, on the other hand, is evolving rapidly. But let's not gloss over the persistent hiccup of visa delays.

Meanwhile, travel trade associations are not shying away from making their presence felt. Domestic tourism continues to be a bedrock, and there is plenty of energy going into making it more accessible and appealing. Of course, to really protect and grow this space, the industry must embrace change—whether that is through innovative workshops, digital advancements, or closer ties with state tourism boards.

Collaboration seems to be the secret sauce driving growth. It's fuelling everything from religious and medical tourism to MICE travel. With infrastructure improvements, India's well-positioned to host large-scale events, welcome international patients and spiritual seekers. And let's not forget cruise tourism—it's finally catching on.

The hospitality industry is finding its groove again. With expansion plans underway and demand rising across every traveller demographic, the signs are promising. Aviation is another space that is buzzing with energy. The road ahead is as exciting as it is challenging. What stands out, though, is the sheer energy and determination to make 2025 a remarkable year for travel.

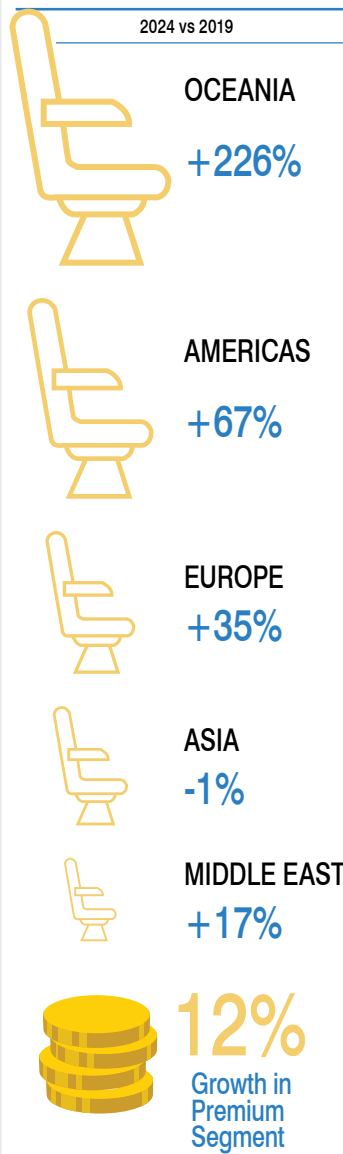
# India's travel boom A global comeback



### TRAVEL GROWTH: 2024 VS 2019

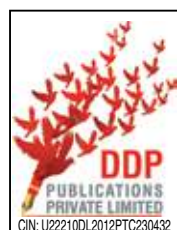
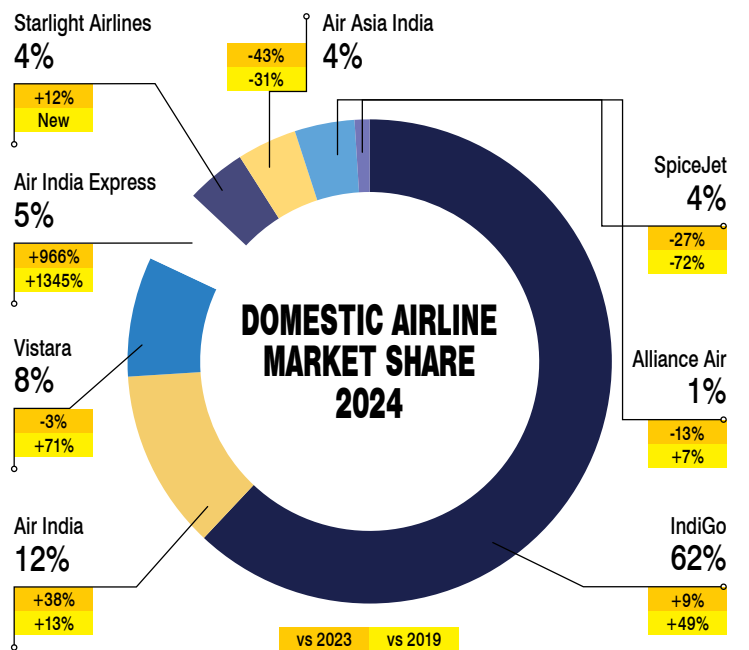
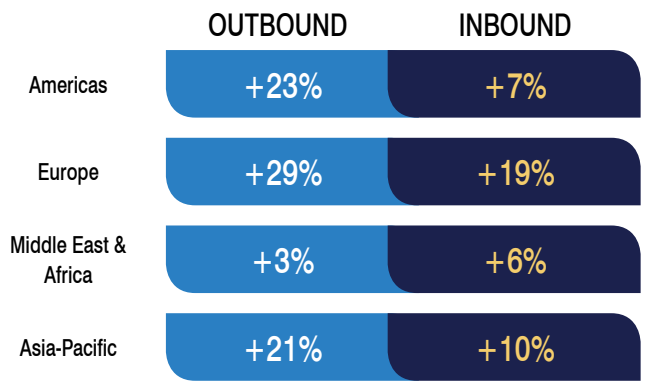


### REGIONAL SEAT CAPACITY GROWTH



### INDIA'S TRAVEL DEMAND

In 2024 India's outbound travel demand has grown by 15%, while Inbound travel to India shows a 9% increase as compared to 2023.



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# 'Inbound is a need, not choice'

Industry leaders and policymakers, addressing the 18<sup>th</sup> CII Annual Tourism Summit 2024, shared insights on how to propel inbound tourism to new heights. While inbound tourism can be the game changer for India, achieving the targets requires coordinated efforts across infrastructure, marketing, and policy, they said.



Nisha Verma

The Ministry of Tourism discussed various facets of their strategy and suggestions at the recently held 18<sup>th</sup> CII Annual Tourism Summit 2024. From infrastructure upgrades to marketing innovation, the discussions offered a roadmap for making India an irresistible destination for global



**From infra upgrades to marketing innovation, the discussions offered a roadmap for making India an irresistible destination for global travellers**

travellers. While inbound tourism can be the game changer for India, but achieving the targets requires coordinated efforts across infrastructure, marketing, and policy.

Addressing the summit, **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister of Tourism, Government



The delegates launch the CII EY Report on Employment Landscape in Tourism & Hospitality in India

Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, the number of branded hotel rooms in cities like Delhi remains insufficient.

"We have fantastic convention capacities but lack the requisite hotel inventory to accommodate large-scale events," he said. He advocated for granting infrastructure status to the hospitality sector, enabling hoteliers to build the necessary capacity with reduced financial barriers.

#### India: From visible to viral

Emphasising the need for a robust marketing strategy to enhance India's global tourism appeal, **Mugdha Sinha**, Director General,

engagement are the currencies of tourism marketing," she said.

Billa concurred, noting that while Incredible India remains a globally recognised brand, the narrative must evolve. "We need to target both emotional and logical decision-makers. Infographics, data-driven campaigns, and targeted digital marketing can make a significant impact," he suggested.

#### Overtourism:

##### A double-edged sword

The increase in domestic tourism, driven by revenge travel post-COVID, has created an unintended challenge for the industry.

and cultural resonance of India as a destination, which enhances its unique appeal.

#### Infrastructure & awareness

While infrastructure improvements are commendable, awareness remains a bottleneck. "We have built roads, flyovers, and luxury trains, but do people in the USA or Brazil know about them?" asked Sinha. She advised that targeted campaigns would bridge the gap between India's physical and informational infrastructure. Billa stressed the need for a holistic approach. "It's not just about



Mugdha Sinha, Director General, Ministry of Tourism, at the panel discussion on 'Strengthening Inbound Tourism - Getting the Momentum'

"Tourism creates jobs, uplifts local communities, and contributes significantly to GDP. By 2047, as

Sinha added that tourism serves as soft diplomacy. "Foreign tourists become brand ambassadors



**Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi are not just convention centres but symbols of India's readiness to host the world**

—GS Shekhawat



Homa Mistry quizzes the participants on pertinent inbound tourism issues

of India, said, "Infrastructure is the backbone of tourism. Bharat Mandapam and Yashobhoomi are not just convention centres but symbols of India's readiness to host the world." The minister highlighted the government's achievements, including the development of world-class airports, luxury trains, and over 125 operational airports, with plans to reach 350 by 2047.

However, challenges remain. According to **Suman Billa**, Additional

Ministry of Tourism, claimed, "India is no longer just the land of snake charmers. But we have struggled to move beyond this outdated perception. Despite our incredible infrastructure, informational asymmetry hampers our visibility."

Sinha suggested adopting the "Three V's" mantra—Visibility, Virality, and Visionary Marketing. She emphasised the role of digital platforms. "It's no longer about offices or traditional campaigns. Today, storytelling and social media

"Overcrowding in domestic hotspots is pushing international tourists away," said Sinha.

She underscored the need for strategic planning to balance domestic and inbound tourism, ensuring that the influx of domestic tourists does not compromise the experience for foreign visitors.

#### Tourism's multiplier effect

Tourism isn't just an economic activity; it's a solution to many of India's challenges.

we aim for a \$25 trillion economy, our Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and global rankings should reflect our aspirations," said Shekhawat.

for India. A positive experience here translates into goodwill and influence abroad," she said. She also pointed out the emotional

building airports or convention centres, but it's about creating seamless experiences, from visa processing to last-mile connectivity," he said.

Shekhawat said, "We have the assets, both natural and cultural. What we need now is strategy and execution."

#### Inbound vital

- Boosts foreign exchange, strengthens economy
- Creates jobs and supports local communities
- Enhances India's global image, soft diplomacy

#### Key challenges

- Overcrowding deters foreign visitors
- Lack of marketing hinders global visibility
- Informational gaps create negative perceptions

#### Forward strategy

- Focus on visibility, digital marketing
- Strengthen infrastructure, hotel room capacity
- Showcase India's diversity beyond traditions

**Tourism News**

With surge in demand, branded hotels to log 13-14% revenue growth in FY24-25, 11-12% in next fiscal: CRISIL

GST Council allows high-end hotels to choose between two indirect tax rates for restaurant services on premises

Indian airlines saw 12% growth in domestic air traffic, flew 1.42 crore passengers in November this year: DGCA

India records 18.89 million Foreign Tourist Arrivals and ₹231,927 crore Foreign Exchange Earnings in 2023: MOT

Meghalaya keen to promote film shoots in state to showcase destination, launches new guidelines for film production

FHRAI requests MOT to set up a central portal by NCHMCT to address skill gaps in hospitality

Odisha CM urges Centre for special package, seeks ₹10,000 crore for tourism infrastructure

# Japan promotes regional destinations

To offer Indian travellers newer options and more reasons to visit Japan, Japan National Tourism Organization is promoting the Alpine route, new regional destinations, as well as the autumn season. Ryo Bunno, Executive Director, JNTO Delhi office, shares details on the new experiences that travel agents can add to their itineraries.

Hazel Jain

**Ryo Bunno**, Executive Director, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Delhi office, is impressed with the Indian market. Having recently concluded a three-city roadshow in India (in Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru) he reflects, "The Indian travel agents now demonstrate a deeper understanding and maturity in selling Japan as a destination. Increasingly, agent queries are shifting beyond the well-known Golden Route, which includes Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima, to explore unique experiences in other regions of Japan."



**Ryo Bunno**  
Executive Director  
JNTO Delhi office

milestone in promoting Japan as a travel destination.

Bunno adds, "Notably, the trend of FIT is on the rise, particularly from Mumbai, reflecting a shift in traveller's preferences for personalised itineraries and offbeat experiences. We recorded about 192,500 Indian visitors to Japan between January and October in 2024, which was an all-time

high. October 2024 alone saw approximately 21,700 visitors from India, marking a remarkable 29.2 per cent increase compared to the 16,800 visitors in October 2023. The numbers jumped from October 2023 and continued to rise every month. We expect to reach 2 lakh Indian visitors in 2024 and more than that in 2025."

With 47 unique prefectures and distinct seasonal experiences, Indian agents have abundant opportunities to promote Japan's diverse destinations, rich cultural heritage, and breathtaking natural beauty, offering travellers year-round exploration.

He says that while Indians prefer the Golden Route, as well as the cherry blossom season, his office is now promoting regional areas and other seasons like autumn, which is also very beautiful and draws fewer people and less crowded. "Japan has a lot of at-

**Japan has a lot of attractions, and travellers to our Alpine Route is also increasing. It is close to Tokyo. Hokkaido is also an upcoming destination**

tractions, and traffic to our Alpine Route is also increasing. It is close to Tokyo. Hokkaido is also an upcoming destination. We also have unique regional areas like Kyushu and Okinawa," he says.

**Nibedita Roy**, Manager, JNTO Delhi Office, adds, "Not only are the agents asking about the regular itineraries, but they are also inquiring about offbeat places. Mumbai has shown the path to the other

parts of the country. Ten years ago, Japan was perceived only as a commercial destination. But now, Japan has become a popular leisure destination and Mumbai has been a pioneer in that.

**JNTO KEY INDICATORS**

**192,500**  
Indian visitors JNTO recorded between January and October in 2024

**21,700**  
visitors received from India in October 2024

**29.2%**  
increase compared to 16,800 visitors in October 2023

**2 lakh**  
Indian visitors JNTO expects in 2024

# Charting bold luxury expeditions

Silversea's growing focus on the Indian market presents an exciting opportunity to cater to a clientele seeking exclusive, immersive cruise trips. With strategic expansions and a strong focus on sustainable luxury, the brand is charting a bold course for 2025 and beyond, making it an exciting time to explore the possibilities it offers.

TT Bureau

**S**ilversea Cruises has long been a benchmark for ultra-luxury cruising, offering travellers the chance to explore iconic, as well as remote, destinations with unparalleled comfort and personalised service. As the brand continues to expand its horizons, Indian travellers are playing a growing role in shaping its offerings.

**Popular destinations defining luxury**

Silversea's itineraries are a gateway to the extraordinary. From the icy wilderness of Antarctica to the rugged beauty of Alaska, Silversea's voyages immerse guests in nature's grandeur. The Mediterranean and the Baltics remain favourites for those seeking rich cultural experiences, while Asia's blend of ancient traditions and modern marvels has increasingly captivated cruisers.

A growing trend among Indian travellers has been their preference for Asian itineraries, which offer prox-



Silversea's voyages immerse guests in nature's grandeur

imity and luxury in equal measure. Silversea's smaller ships, designed for intimate journeys, are perfectly suited for private charters catering to families or corporate groups, making the brand an appealing choice in the region.

**Strategic expansion for 2025 and beyond**

Silversea's strategic priorities for 2025 reflect its commitment to delivering unique experiences. A

standout initiative is the Silversea Hotel in Puerto Williams, Chile. Scheduled to open in 2025, the 150-room luxury property will serve as a pre and post-expedition base for Antarctica-bound travellers. Developed in collaboration with Chilean companies, including DAP Airlines, the project ensures seamless travel, combining convenience with exclusivity. Looking ahead, Silversea's footprint in the expedition cruise market is set to

grow significantly. The addition of 22 new landing sites in Antarctica, expanding the total to 80, underscores the brand's dedication to offering diverse and unmatched polar adventures.

Closer to home, Silversea is aligning its strategy to attract more Indian travellers. With smaller ships ideal for private charters and bespoke experiences, the cruise line is poised to capture a larger share

of the Indian market, particularly among affluent travellers seeking proximity-focused luxury.

**Trends shaping the expedition cruise industry**

The expedition cruise industry is evolving, driven by sustainability, cultural immersion, and the pursuit

**A growing trend among Indian travellers has been their preference for Asian itineraries, which offer proximity and luxury in equal measure**

of remote adventures. Silversea's innovative offerings place it at the forefront of this transformation. For instance, the Silversea Hotel in

Puerto Williams is set to redefine Antarctic exploration, while exclusive air routes ensure a seamless travel experience. Beyond Antarctica, the brand is expanding its itineraries, with over two dozen new ports in Europe, the Canadian Arctic, Oceania, the Galápagos, and Antarctica planned for 2025 and 2026. As Indian luxury travellers increasingly seek meaningful, immersive journeys, Silversea is well positioned to meet the demands.

**SILVERSEA'S FUTURE PLANS**

**In 2025**  
opens Silversea Hotel, Puerto Williams

**80**  
landing sites added in Antarctica

**In 2025-2026**  
New ports in Europe, Arctic, Galápagos

# Networking, expansion to rule in 2025

► Contd. from page 5



**Ajay Prakash**  
National President  
TAFI

“ In 2025, our aim is to strengthen the no-waste policy within the association and among our members. The other thing that we are working on is an insurance scheme for our members. Interestingly, we have a proposal, which we are studying, where even the small agent would be able to offer their clients the facility to fly now and pay later. Travel does remain a discretionary spend. And the younger generation is all about EMIs. So we thought we should take advantage of this. ”

“ ADTOI currently boasts more than 1,000 members across India. However, the share of tour operators approved by the MOT is under 10 per cent. We are actively advocating safeguarding the interests of our



**Ved Khanna**  
President  
ADTOI

members who provide services in domestic tourism. After taking on the role of president, I established a committee with the primary goal of increasing the number of MOT-approved tour operators to over 200. ”



**Sanjeev Mehra**  
President  
Skål International India

“ At Skål International India, our main objective is to grow our membership and improve business prospects. We intend to make a substantial impact by facilitating additional networking events among our colleagues and linking each club and state throughout India. As the largest association in the world, Skål offers tremendous potential for the hospitality sector. By fostering partnerships with the media, we aim to form significant business growth and enhance our networking initiatives. ”

“ India is experiencing a significant increase in religious and medical tourism. Religious tourism is attracting visitors to the country's spiritual centres, while medical tourism has seen a rise in travellers from Africa,



**Kanwarjeet Singh Sawhney**  
General Secretary  
ITTA

the Middle East, and other areas in search of high-quality healthcare services. Hospitals in India are bustling with international patients, largely due to India's proficient medical professionals. ”



**Gajesh Girdhar**  
National Coordinator  
NIMA

“ The MICE segment constitutes a broad and varied area within the tourism industry, including inbound, outbound, and domestic travel. To effectively navigate this extensive segment, collaboration among multiple associations is crucial. NIMA understands that tackling the challenges of MICE requires a unified approach among stakeholders; therefore, collective efforts are necessary. With the rapid infrastructure development, India is set to host larger events. ”

“ Moving into 2025, we aim to offer more diverse itineraries, focusing on guest experiences. As part of our vision to provide our guests with more of what they love, NCL continues to innovate with a soon-to-



**Manoj Singh**  
Country Head-India  
Norwegian Cruise Line

be 20-ship fleet, offering unique onboard experiences like industry-first racetracks, award-winning spas and expanded outdoor spaces. Guests can look forward to the debut of Norwegian Aqua and Norwegian Luna. ”



**Sunil Kumar**  
President  
TAAI

“ As we prepare to celebrate '75 Years of TAAI' in 2026, we are set to kick off a year-long celebration in early 2025, a year in advance to ensure the initiative evolves with significance and transitions into a major industry event. This initiative aims to recognise our legacy and achievements. With new year coming, we intend to highlight our focus on the association's role in fostering collaboration between us and the industry, enhancing our relevance. ”

“ 2024 was a dynamic year for the Indian aviation sector, marked by robust growth in domestic and international travel. For Virgin Atlantic, this positive momentum, coupled with our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebra-



**Shivani Singh Deo**  
Country Manager-India  
Virgin Atlantic

tions, underscored the resilience and potential of India as our key market. Our ambitious growth plans for 2025, with almost a million seats available in India, reflect our confidence in the long-term prospects of this market. ”



**Yummi Talwar**  
Chief Operating Officer  
South Asia, VFS Global

“ In line with the trends of 2024, we expect the demand to continue into 2025. To cater to the increase in demand, we have invested in digital products to elevate the experience of our visa applicants. Demand for services such as Visa At Your Doorstep is expected to grow as people prefer to enrol for their biometrics and process their visa applications at the place and convenience of their choice. We started Temporary Service Points for UK Visas in 12 locations in 2024. ”

“ The key trends in 2025 include strong growth in luxury vacations and increased demand for travel to unusual destinations. People nowadays do not enjoy hurrying around on their most expensive



**Rajesh Kakade**  
Founder & CEO  
Red Planner

vacation. Though we passionately believe in conventional business with a personal touch, in light of the new dynamics, creative thinking, and instant knowledge, we began working on technology alongside tradition. ”



**Abhishek Sonthalia**  
Managing Director  
Turtle Down Under

“ In 2024, we learned a lot that we would like to build upon in 2025. Our first focus will be on providing training and knowledge to our travel agents by hosting at least one webinar each month featuring suppliers as speakers. Additionally, we aim to enhance our technology to enable travel agents to book activities, car rentals, and transportation in real-time online. In 2025, our plans at Turtle Down Under are centred around expanding reach in the European and South-east Asian markets. ”

“ Our 2025 plan will focus on positioning Malaysia as an affordable destination, using social media to produce engaging content that highlights the nation's distinctive features, and actively promoting our Visit Malaysia



**Norah Jaafar**  
Director  
Tourism Malaysia, Mumbai Office

Year 2026 campaign. This strategy seeks to promote travel, raise awareness and sustainable tourism of Malaysia, particularly among younger, tech-savvy tourists. Priority will to expand into tier II and III cities throughout India. ”

Contd. on page 12 ►

# Resilience & adaptability will be key

▶ Contd. from page 11



**Arjun Baljee**  
President  
ROHL

“Over our 75-year history, SOTC has witnessed the evolution of the Indian traveller, especially with the growing demand from tier II, III, and IV markets. With strong travel intent, high disposable income, and a desire for meaning-

“In 2025, ROHL will focus on three broad pillars: Expansion and diversification, sustainability and community engagement. We plan to add new properties across tier II and tier III cities, aligning with the growing demand for affordable luxury in underserved markets. Strengthening our commitment to eco-friendly operations, we aim to introduce more green initiatives, including energy-efficient infrastructure and sustainable F&B practices, while promoting local jobs and community development.”



**SD Nandakumar**  
President & Country Head - Holidays and Corporate Tours, SOTC Travel

ful holidays, these regions are now key growth drivers for us. Travel is no longer restricted to a particular season, and Indians are seizing every opportunity to explore both domestic and international destinations.”



**Chirag Agarwal**  
Co-founder & COO  
TravClan

“2025 is set to be a transformative year as we continue to redefine the travel experience for our customers. Our commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction drives every step of our journey, ensuring

“2024 has been a transformative year for the travel industry, highlighting key trends that will shape our approach in 2025. Travellers are increasingly exploring new and unique destinations, with many upgrading from domestic to short-haul international trips. The frequency of travel among Indians is rising, and we are seeing a surge in first-time travellers seeking guidance—emphasising the critical role of travel agents. Agents and travellers are becoming tech-savvy.”



**Alok K Singh**  
Co-founder and CEO  
Travmint

travellers can explore the world effortlessly and without breaking the bank. Enhancing customer experience is one of our primary goals. Also investing in advanced technologies like AI.”



**Pranav Kapadia**  
Founder and Director  
Global Destinations

“In 2025, we expect significant growth and expansion in our tourism efforts. Our primary goal is to expand our tourism portfolio and serve more tourism boards and hospitality brands, which will allow us to diversify

“Global Destinations is gearing up for a transformative 2025, driven by innovation and a commitment to growth. Our focus is on redefining event-based travel by offering curated, exclusive experiences tied to global music festivals, sporting events, and cultural celebrations. These packages will specifically cater to younger, experience-driven travellers seeking meaningful connections through unique journeys. Sustainability remains at the heart of our vision. We are forging tie-ups.”



**Neeti Sharma**  
Director, Intrepid Marketing and Communications

our offerings to meet the evolving needs of travellers. We will also continue to participate in key trade shows, organising more roadshows, and fostering strategic tie-ups with influencers and media to target niche audiences.”



**Beate M Kakkar**  
Managing Director  
Indiva Marketing

“The tourism industry will focus heavily on resilience and adaptability to navigate an ever-evolving landscape. The key to sustainable growth lies in embracing strategies that support both recovery and forward momentum.

“On behalf of our destination and hotel clients, we are planning to work more closely with all key travel catalysts - art, food and sports. We would like to associate with key quality events across India which cater to people who are eager to explore and know what they are looking for. Yet keep an open mind and curiosity to add new aspects and experiences, especially when they are travelling abroad. We identified multiple opportunities and will continue to be proactive.”



**Kush Kapoor**  
CEO  
Roseate Hotels and Resorts

“We have been operating in India for close to 20 years and India is an extremely important market for us. Over the last few years, we have strengthened our partnerships and established new ones, with several

“Roseate Hotels is gearing up to redefine luxury and sustainability with its upcoming projects. The first milestone Roseate Noida is set to debut near Jewar International Airport in December 2025, shortly after the airport becomes operational. Touted as the smartest hotel globally in terms of technology and eco-friendly practices, it aims to set new benchmarks. Beyond Noida, Roseate is initiating construction of a world-class luxury resort in South Goa.”



**Jatinder Paul Singh**  
CEO and Co-founder  
Vacations

“The government should prioritise building new airports through private participation and expanding rail, road, and waterway networks. Infrastructure development is also needed in high-growth areas like



**Sumit Prakash**  
Country Director (India & South Asia), Collinson International

leading financial services institutions in India, such as NPCI (RuPay), Federal Bank, HDFC, working in partnership to enhance their customer engagement propositions through incorporating travel-related rewards and benefits.”

“As we close the year, India's travel industry is soaring to new levels, fuelled by rapid economic growth, a rising middle class, and changing traveller preferences. According to the Ministry of Tourism, India's tourism sector accounted for 7.9 per cent of the GDP in recent years and is expected to exceed 10 per cent in the next decade. India is also positioned 39<sup>th</sup> in the World Economic Forum's 2024 Travel and Tourism Development Index. Emerging trends include rural and eco-tourism.”



**Rajesh Arya**  
President  
GAEHP

religious circuits and under-utilised destinations like Lakshadweep. Additionally, we urge the Union government to consider a uniform GST rate of 12 per cent on hotels to simplify the compliance process.”

Compiled by TT Bureau

experience  
**Oman**

*A Gift for life*

**Extraordinary Experiences**

**2025**

Beauty Has An Address

[experienceoman.om](http://experienceoman.om)

JANUARY 1<sup>st</sup> FORTHCOMING ISSUE 2025  13

# experience Oman



## January

1 Wed	New Year
2 Thu	
3 Fri	
4 Sat	
5 Sun	
6 Mon	
7 Tue	
8 Wed	
9 Thu	
10 Fri	
11 Sat	
12 Sun	
13 Mon	
14 Tue	
15 Wed	
16 Thu	
17 Fri	
18 Sat	
19 Sun	
20 Mon	
21 Tue	
22 Wed	
23 Thu	
24 Fri	
25 Sat	
26 Sun	Republic Day
27 Mon	
28 Tue	
29 Wed	
30 Thu	
31 Fri	



## February

1 Sat	
2 Sun	
3 Mon	
4 Tue	
5 Wed	
6 Thu	
7 Fri	
8 Sat	
9 Sun	
10 Mon	
11 Tue	
12 Wed	
13 Thu	
14 Fri	
15 Sat	
16 Sun	
17 Mon	
18 Tue	
19 Wed	
20 Thu	
21 Fri	
22 Sat	
23 Sun	
24 Mon	
25 Tue	
26 Wed	Maha Shivaratri
27 Thu	
28 Fri	



## March

1 Sat	
2 Sun	
3 Mon	
4 Tue	
5 Wed	
6 Thu	
7 Fri	
8 Sat	
9 Sun	
10 Mon	
11 Tue	
12 Wed	
13 Thu	
14 Fri	Holi
15 Sat	
16 Sun	
17 Mon	
18 Tue	
19 Wed	
20 Thu	
21 Fri	
22 Sat	
23 Sun	
24 Mon	
25 Tue	
26 Wed	
27 Thu	
28 Fri	
29 Sat	
30 Sun	
31 Mon	Eid-ul-Fitr



## April

1 Tue	
2 Wed	
3 Thu	
4 Fri	
5 Sat	
6 Sun	
7 Mon	
8 Tue	
9 Wed	
10 Thu	Mahavir Jayanti
11 Fri	
12 Sat	
13 Sun	
14 Mon	
15 Tue	
16 Wed	
17 Thu	
18 Fri	Good Friday
19 Sat	
20 Sun	
21 Mon	
22 Tue	
23 Wed	
24 Thu	
25 Fri	
26 Sat	
27 Sun	
28 Mon	
29 Tue	
30 Wed	



# experience Oman



## August

1	Fri	
2	Sat	
3	Sun	
4	Mon	
5	Tue	
6	Wed	
7	Thu	
8	Fri	
9	Sat	Raksha Bandhan
10	Sun	
11	Mon	
12	Tue	
13	Wed	
14	Thu	
15	Fri	Independence Day
16	Sat	Janmashtami
17	Sun	
18	Mon	
19	Tue	
20	Wed	
21	Thu	
22	Fri	
23	Sat	
24	Sun	
25	Mon	
26	Tue	
27	Wed	Ganesh Chaturthi
28	Thu	
29	Fri	
30	Sat	
31	Sun	



## May

1	Thu	
2	Fri	
3	Sat	
4	Sun	
5	Mon	
6	Tue	
7	Wed	
8	Thu	
9	Fri	
10	Sat	
11	Sun	
12	Mon	Buddha Purnima
13	Tue	
14	Wed	
15	Thu	
16	Fri	
17	Sat	
18	Sun	
19	Mon	
20	Tue	
21	Wed	
22	Thu	
23	Fri	
24	Sat	
25	Sun	
26	Mon	
27	Tue	
28	Wed	
29	Thu	
30	Fri	
31	Sat	

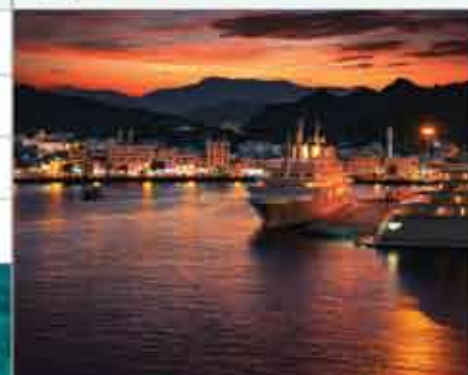
## June

1	Sun	
2	Mon	
3	Tue	
4	Wed	
5	Thu	
6	Fri	
7	Sat	Eid-ul-Zuha
8	Sun	
9	Mon	
10	Tue	
11	Wed	
12	Thu	
13	Fri	
14	Sat	
15	Sun	
16	Mon	
17	Tue	
18	Wed	
19	Thu	
20	Fri	
21	Sat	
22	Sun	
23	Mon	
24	Tue	
25	Wed	
26	Thu	
27	Fri	
28	Sat	
29	Sun	
30	Mon	



## July

1	Tue	
2	Wed	
3	Thu	
4	Fri	
5	Sat	
6	Sun	Muharram
7	Mon	
8	Tue	
9	Wed	
10	Thu	
11	Fri	
12	Sat	
13	Sun	
14	Mon	
15	Tue	
16	Wed	
17	Thu	
18	Fri	
19	Sat	
20	Sun	
21	Mon	
22	Tue	
23	Wed	
24	Thu	
25	Fri	
26	Sat	
27	Sun	
28	Mon	
29	Tue	
30	Wed	
31	Thu	



# A Gift for life



# experience Oman

## September



## October

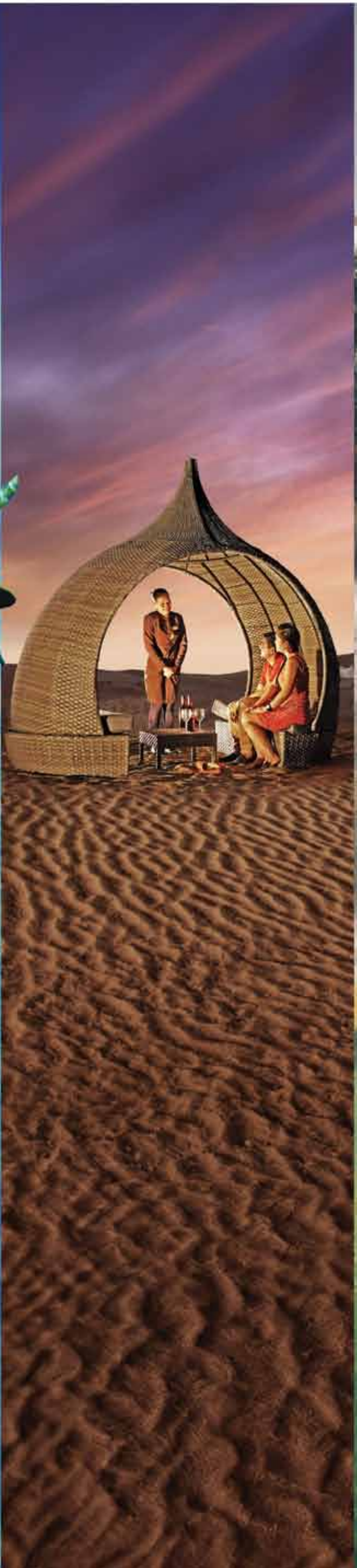
## November

## December

1 Mon		1 Sat		1 Mon
2 Tue		2 Sun		2 Tue
3 Wed		3 Mon		3 Wed
4 Thu		4 Tue		4 Thu
5 Fri	Eid-e-Milad	5 Wed	Guru Nanak Jayanti	5 Fri
6 Sat		6 Thu		6 Sat
7 Sun		7 Fri		7 Sun
8 Mon		8 Sat		8 Mon
9 Tue		9 Sun		9 Tue
10 Wed		10 Mon		10 Wed
11 Thu		11 Tue		11 Thu
12 Fri		12 Wed		12 Fri
13 Sat		13 Thu		13 Sat
14 Sun		14 Fri		14 Sun
15 Mon		15 Sat		15 Mon
16 Tue		16 Sun		16 Tue
17 Wed		17 Mon		17 Wed
18 Thu		18 Tue		18 Thu
19 Fri		19 Wed		19 Fri
20 Sat		20 Thu		20 Sat
21 Sun		21 Fri		21 Sun
22 Mon		22 Sat		22 Mon
23 Tue		23 Sun		23 Tue
24 Wed		24 Mon		24 Wed
25 Thu		25 Tue		25 Thu
26 Fri		26 Wed		26 Fri
27 Sat		27 Thu		27 Sat
28 Sun		28 Fri		28 Sun
29 Mon		29 Sat		29 Mon
30 Tue		30 Sun		30 Tue
				31 Wed









New Delhi  
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Buzz Travel Marketing Pvt. Ltd.  
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Mumbai-400020

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# Indians on Paris Region's radar

Paris Region is stepping up efforts to attract Indian tourists with streamlined visa processes, enhanced vegetarian options, and the legacy of the 2024 Olympics. Key initiatives include promoting weddings, improving connectivity, and offering unique experiences, aiming to position the country as a top destination for Indian travellers.



Janice Alyosius

Paris Region continues to capture the imagination of international tourists as one of the world's most sought-after travel destinations. The destination has been making special efforts to further enhance its appeal among Indian travellers. Sharing her views on the bond between India and Paris Re-

gion, **Alexandra Dublanche**, Vice President of the Paris Region and President at Choose Paris Region, said, "I think there is a mutual love; French people appreciate India, and Indian people admire France. Among international tourists to the Paris Region, Indians make up just 1.3 per cent, which is approximately 300,000 visitors a year. I believe, we can do much more."



**Alexandra Dublanche**  
Vice President of the Paris Region and President at Choose Paris Region

Region, with captivating imagery of events held at iconic locations like the Eiffel Tower and Versailles. Alexandra Dublanche highlighted the legacy of Olympic and Paralympic, noting that the event facilitated infrastructure improvements like the expansion of the Paris Region networking transports, which includes more than 350 km

of new lines and 139 additional stations. "These developments are expected to improve accessibility and draw tourists to lesser-explored areas of the Paris Region," she emphasised.

## Beyond iconic landmarks

While the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre remain top attractions, Alexandra Dublanche revealed a growing trend among Indian travellers; the desire for authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences. "Returning tourists are seeking to live like Parisians—exploring hidden gems, interacting with locals, and venturing outside of Paris to explore castles and impressionist landmarks along the Seine," she said.

## Weddings and MICE

Paris Region is also intensifying efforts in the weddings and MICE segments. The region, attracting 50 million visitors annually, sees 25 per cent of its tourism driven by

MICE, though the share of Indian MICE travellers remains small. "We aim to combine leisure and business tourism," she elaborated.

## Leveraging trends and tie-ups

Partnerships with major players like Accor are being discussed to expand MICE offerings tailored to the Indian market. Alexandra Dublanche said, "We recently met with OYO to discuss potential collaborations. Since January, we have opened a new office in Mumbai, highlighting our commitment to the Indian market." She added, "Leveraging Bollywood is another priority, as destinations featured in films often see a surge in popularity among Indian audiences."

## Looking ahead

Reflecting on 2024, Alexandra Dublanche mentioned the success of hosting Indian tourism professionals in Paris Region, including a specialised event for wedding

planners. In 2025, the much-anticipated reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral is expected to draw global attention. Paris Region will continue focusing on promoting lesser-known experiences and

**Returning tourists are seeking to live like Parisians—exploring hidden gems, interacting with locals, and venturing outside of Paris to explore castles**

improving practical aspects. "The aim is not just to sell Paris and its region but to showcase the wealth of experiences that already exist but are less known," she said.

## IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

**70%**

growth in Indian arrivals in 2023

**50 million**

visitors - Annual Paris Region tourist numbers

**25%**

share of tourism driven by MICE

Paris Region has taken several steps to enhance the experience for Indian travellers. Among the key steps are improving visa processing times, expanding vegetarian and vegan food options in restaurants, and positioning Paris Region as a premier wedding destination. The efforts are already bearing fruit, with Indian arrivals increasing by 70 per cent in 2023.

## The Olympic effect

The Paris 2024 Olympics served as a global showcase for Paris

# Virgin Atlantic lists record growth in India

India remains an important market for Virgin Atlantic, with an impressive growth of 350 per cent compared to 2019 levels. The airline has steadily increased capacity while focusing on innovative offerings and exceptional service standards to cater to the unique needs of Indian travellers.



Nisha Verma

India, being the third largest market after the UK and the USA, holds a special place for Virgin Atlantic. The airline has registered a 350 per cent growth compared to 2019 levels, underlining its strategic focus on both business and leisure travel markets. The airline's expansion and enhanced offerings present new opportunities for travel agents, who can serve their clients with a premium, globally trusted brand. **Shivani Singh Deo**, Country Manager-India, Virgin Atlantic, says, "India's travel demand has not only recovered but also surged beyond pre-COVID levels." Travel agents will find a growing base of Indian customers, eager to explore premium cabins, with increased spending power.

## Expansion & connectivity

Virgin Atlantic's enhanced network has opened new opportunities for travel agencies to cater to a diverse range of customers. New routes to Riyadh, Toronto, and Cancun com-



**Shivani Singh Deo**  
Country Manager-India  
Virgin Atlantic

plement the increased frequencies to Mumbai and Delhi. Additionally, the airline's codeshare partnership with Indigo provides seamless connectivity to over 34 Indian cities. "In India, we have added more capacity and a new route this year. We have increased Mumbai's capacity to two daily flights in the winter season and since we have two A350s on Delhi route. Hence, overall capacity on India will be growing in 2025," she adds.

## Curating for Indians

The airline has introduced several tailored services to cater to the preferences of Indian travellers, making it an attractive option for travel agents. Deo noted, "We have focused on offering Indianised services such as regional cuisine, which reflects familiar flavours for our customers. We also provide local crew members to enhance comfort and create a more personalised experience for passengers travelling from India." In fact, Virgin Atlantic's flexible loyalty programmes allow Indian travellers to earn and redeem miles across the airline's global network, offering them even more value.

"We have seen growing interest in premium cabin services, with Indian travellers increasingly willing to invest in a more comfortable experience, particularly for business and long-haul flights," she further adds.

## Technology a priority

The investment in technology by

**The airline has introduced several tailored services to cater to the preferences of Indian travellers, making it an attractive option for travel agents**

the airline not only enhances the passenger experience but also streamlines the booking process for travel agents. Shivani highlights, "We have integrated

advanced pricing tools that allow travel agents to quickly provide competitive and transparent quotes for their clients." The airline has also developed user-friendly platforms that streamline bookings, upgrades, and client management.

"Our onboard innovations, such as the A330neo and A350 aircraft, offer exceptional amenities. These unique features appeal to premium travellers and provide agents with an added selling point," she adds.

## Collaborations galore

Virgin Atlantic supports travel agents through various trade en-

agement initiatives to ensure their success in the Indian market. "Our partnerships with travel agencies are integral to our business. We empower agents with product knowledge and sales tools through training modules," affirms Deo.

## Completing 25 years

As Virgin Atlantic approaches its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in India, it plans further expansions, new routes, and enhanced trade collaborations. "Our tie-ups with travel agencies are integral to our success. We are committed to working closely with them to deliver exceptional experiences," she concludes.

## Acquire

- Virgin Atlantic posts a 350% increase compared to 2019
- New routes and codeshare partnerships
- Rise in premium services among Indians

## Engage

- Tailored meals, local crew & flexible loyalty programmes boost experience
- Indian travellers choosing tailored experiences
- Travel agents can offer curated solutions

## Retain

- Advanced systems streamline booking
- Incentives and training strengthen travel agent relationships
- Adaptable fleet configurations

# Cricket camaraderie in Ahmedabad

The Tour Operators & Travel Agents Association of Gujarat (TAG) recently organised TAG Champions League 2024 in Ahmedabad. In all, 10 teams took part in the three-day tournament. Munjal Fitter, President, TAG, along with the TAG Cricket Committee members, felicitated industry professionals at the opening ceremony of the event.



# 'We want to be seen more in India'

Costa Cruises has strengthened its presence in India by introducing a new team of four preferred sales agents. This strategic expansion of its distribution channel aims to seamlessly cater to both incentive and leisure markets, unlocking India's vast and largely untapped potential for cruising.



Hazel Jain

With India being a high potential market for Costa Cruises, **Mirco Vassallo**, the International Sales Director of the company, was in India to announce their strategic decision to expand their distribution network by appointing three new cruise specialists as their preferred sales agents, taking the total to four. They are Rayna Tours, Sharaf Travel, and Cruise Carrot, in addition to Lotus Aero Enterprise that was already representing Costa in the country.

With these four preferred sales agents, Costa Cruises aims at offering its cruises to both the incentive market and to those customers who prefer an international style holiday and want to explore Europe by visiting different countries and destinations in a one single voyage.



**Mirco Vassallo**  
International Sales Director  
Costa Cruises

Elaborating on the development, Vassallo says, "Through this collaboration, we will be able to introduce more Indian guests to our product proposition. I am here to meet the travel agents and learn more about this incredible market. We want to understand the potential it offers to us and how we can make available our products to the trade here. We

want to be more accessible and easier to be sold cruise product in this market in next three years. India market has a huge potential, and we see an increase in demand from corporate and leisure segments."



**With the four preferred sales agents, Costa aims to offer its cruises to the incentive market and those who prefer an international style holiday**

Speaking about 2024, Vassallo says it was a really good year for the cruise company. "We registered huge demand from all our sales region. One out of every 10



guests was coming from our international market, particularly India and the Middle East. For India, we are focussed on promoting our bestseller – the season on Emirates where we provide tailored entertainment and Indian food with an international touch. We want to be an experience-based company. Our focus, therefore, will not only be on the itinerary but also the experiences we offer with an ex-

tended culinary offering, and introducing innovative sea and land experiences," he explains.

**Nalini Gupta**, Owner and General Manager, Lotus Aero Enterprise, says, "As Costa Cruises' General Sales Agent in India for over a decade, our dedication and innovative strategies have not only fostered significant presence of Costa brand but have also inspired other

ocean liners to explore the opportunities within the Indian market. Costa Serena for us personally was a big win because for the first time we were able to bring India on the cruising map of Costa."

## CRUISING CHANNELS

### Booking partners

Rayna Tours  
Sharaf Travel  
Cruise Carrot  
Lotus Aero Enterprise

### Focus on

Popular Western  
Mediterranean itineraries  
(Italy, France, Spain)  
Eastern Mediterranean  
(Greece and Turkey)  
Northern Europe  
Caribbean  
The UAE

# Marine insurance: Safety net for biz

Imagine you are a manufacturer exporting goods to global clients or a logistics provider ensuring seamless delivery of products. In both scenarios, you depend on the safe transit of goods. But what if something goes wrong? This is where marine insurance steps in, acting as your safety net to protect against the unpredictable.



TT Bureau

From small business owners to large enterprises, marine insurance offers financial security and peace of mind. Whether it's a one-time shipment or regular transit, this coverage ensures your business is prepared for the unexpected.

### Breaking it down: What does marine insurance cover?

Marine insurance isn't just about ships or sea routes—it covers a variety of transit methods, including air, road, and rail. Here are the three key types of marine insurance and what they offer:

❖ **Marine Hull Insurance:** Designed for shipowners, it protects vessels and machinery against damage from accidents, storms, or piracy.

❖ **Marine Cargo Insurance:** For businesses moving goods, it covers physical loss or damage during transit, safeguarding shipments

from risks like theft or mishandling of goods.

❖ **Marine Liability Insurance:** Tailored for logistics companies, this policy covers third-party claims, such as property damage or injuries caused during the transit process. Each type caters to specific needs, ensuring businesses of all sizes are equipped to handle risks associated with moving goods.

### Why businesses need marine insurance

Every shipment carries risk, from minor delays to catastrophic loss. Picture this: A small business exporting handcrafted carpets to Europe faces a setback when half the shipment is water-damaged. Without marine cargo insurance, the financial hit could be devastating.

Similarly, logistics companies may encounter unexpected legal claims from third-party injuries. Marine liability insurance steps in to manage such costs, ensuring



**Arpita Suyal**  
Senior Product Manager- Marine  
Insurance, Policybazaar for Business

businesses stay afloat even in challenging times.

### What Indian businesses should know

In India, marine insurance is not always mandatory, but there are instances when it becomes essential:

❖ **Exporters and Importers:** Many international trade agreements, like CIF terms, require cargo insurance.

❖ **Vessel Owners:** Hull insurance is often required if the vessel is financed.

❖ **Logistics Contracts:** Liability insurance is commonly included in agreements with clients, even if not legally mandated.

Regardless of legal requirements, having marine insurance is a practical necessity for anyone involved in moving goods.

### How technology is changing marine insurance

Gone are the days of lengthy paperwork and complicated processes. With platforms like Policybazaar for Business, businesses can now purchase marine cargo insurance in just a few clicks. Whether you need single-shipment coverage or an annual plan, the process is quick, transparent, and hassle-free.

We are also working on simplifying claims and policy management, ensuring that protecting your

business is as easy as placing an online order.

### The road ahead: Marine insurance in a changing world

India's infrastructure projects, like the National Waterway and Dedicated Freight Corridor, are set to

**Marine insurance is more than a policy—it's a partnership that protects your business and ensures continuity, even in the face of unforeseen challenges**

transform logistics. This growth will bring new challenges, such as increased transit risks and the need for higher coverage limits. For small businesses, microinsurance products with minimal

deductibles will become a game-changer. Even online marketplaces are likely to embed marine insurance, making it accessible for every trader.

Marine insurance is more than a policy—it's a partnership that protects your business and ensures continuity, even in the face of unforeseen challenges. At Policybazaar for Business, we are committed to empowering businesses with the tools they need to thrive, so you can focus on growth while we handle the risks.



# Industry bonds over cricket league

Travel industry professionals from Gujarat gathered in Ahmedabad for the TAG Champions League 2024. Organised under the leadership of Munjal Fitter, President, TAG, the three-day cricket tournament not just showcased the industry's love for the game but also provided an opportunity to strengthen the bond.



Akash Tyagi

The TAG Champions League 2024, organised from 20 to 22 December, brought together 10 highly competitive teams comprising top professionals from Gujarat's travel and tourism industry. Over three action-packed days, the teams competed fiercely, not just for the coveted trophy but also to build camaraderie and connections that transcended business.

The event kicked off with a grand opening ceremony, where industry leaders and participants came together to celebrate the spirit of unity. The tournament culminated in a high-stakes finale, with the Global Gladiators, owned by Keyur Shah, emerging victorious after an intense showdown with the Rezymytrip Hurricanes. The TAG Champions League was not just a competition—it became a powerful symbol of the travel industry's abil-



Munjal Fitter, President, Tour Operators & Travel Agents Association of Gujarat (second from right) poses with other professionals

ity to come together, recharge, and strengthen relationships.

Speaking exclusively to **TRAVELTALK**, **Munjal Fitter**, President, Tour Operators & Travel Agents Association of Gujarat (TAG), explained the vision behind the TAG Champions League, emphasising its role in uniting the industry. "Cricket has the unique ability to bring people

together, and we wanted this tournament to serve as a platform for professionals from different regions to connect, collaborate, and recharge," he said.

Fitter highlighted the growth in Gujarat's travel industry in 2024, noting a rise in both outbound and domestic travel. He credited the growth to forward-thinking initia-

tives supported by the government and revealed plans for TAG's next big event—the TAG Global Summit (TGS) in July 2025. This three-day educational programme will focus on equipping travel agents with the tools and insights needed to address emerging trends and technological advancements, fostering innovation and growth in the industry.

**Shilp Ringwala**, Secretary, TAG, said, "This is one of a kind event happening in the Travel & Tourism Industry. The motto of TAG Champions League 2024 is to bring all

thought there would be no better idea than cricket to engage people in masses, thus, we pioneered the TAG Champions League 2024."

**We wanted this tournament to serve as a platform for professionals from different regions to connect, collaborate, and recharge**

— Munjal Fitter

Emphasising on the importance of the event, **Niral Patel**, Member, TAG Cricket Committee, said, "This initiative has helped in connecting B2B and B2C travel & tourism professionals from around the country. Looking the success of this edition, we have already announced the schedule for the next year as well."



the associations and travel agents on the same ground. This would help in fostering collaborations within the industry, which would further support the growth in the Travel & Tourism sector. We

# 1 million cheers to Tourism Malaysia

Tourism Malaysia New Delhi hosted a dazzling appreciation night celebrating a milestone of welcoming 1 million Indian tourists this year. The event was a testament to the unwavering partnership and dedication of its valued collaborators in promoting Malaysia as a top travel destination. The evening witnessed a grand event honouring the successful collective efforts.



# ITTA Convention unites stakeholders

The 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Tourist Transporters Association (ITTA) Convention, held in New Delhi from 20–21 December 2024, served as a platform to unite industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders. With themes of innovation, collaboration, and sustainability, the convention offered insightful sessions, panel discussions, and networking opportunities.

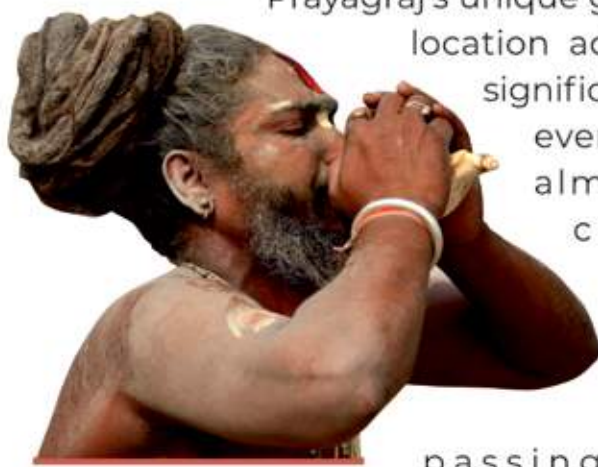


# A Divine Confluence



In a spectacular display of faith and tradition, Prayagraj is preparing to host the Maha Kumbh 2025 - one of the world's largest religious gatherings that occur once every 12 years. This grand spiritual congregation, deeply rooted in Hindu mythology, draws millions of pilgrims from across the globe to the sacred confluence of three rivers – the Ganges, Yamuna, and the Saraswati. The event, which marks a rare celestial alignment, brings together Hindu devotees from across the country, who bathe in the river to symbolically cleanse the soul and wash away sins.

## A Sacred Geography



Prayagraj's unique geographical location adds spiritual significance to the event. Situated almost at the centre of northern India, with the Tropic of Cancer passing directly overhead, the city's

position is believed to enhance the spiritual and medicinal benefits of bathing in the Triveni Sangam, especially during the Maha Kumbh. Bathers who take a dip in the holy Ganges during this time believe that the direct rays of the sun have disease-preventing and life-enhancing properties.

## The Spiritual Heart of India

The Maha Kumbh is more than a religious gathering; it represents a transformative spiritual journey as well. Devotees believe that taking a holy dip in the Triveni Sangam during this auspicious period cleanses the soul, washes away sins, and leads to spiritual salvation.

## Sacred Rituals and Celebrations

In January 2025, Prayagraj will once again host this remarkable event after a gap of 12 years. The last such event took place in 2013. For two months in early 2025, Prayagraj will transform into a temporary mega-city, hosting various Akhadas - spiritual monastic orders - including Mahanirvani, Atal, Niranjani, Anand, Juna, Avahan, and Agni Akhadas. The event will witness



a host of religious rituals with deep spiritual meanings. The Yajnas (sacred fire rituals) performed during Mahakumbh by the Akhadas are deeply spiritual and carry a 'sankalp' (resolution) for the greater good of society. These rituals aim to promote harmony, well-being, and global peace. Among other events during the MahaKumbh are the Shahi Snans (Royal Baths), conducted on astrologically determined auspicious dates. These ceremonial baths see participation from sadhus (holy men) and pilgrims alike. Local Heritage and Tourist Attractions

Beyond its spiritual significance, Prayagraj offers visitors a rich cultural experience. Visitors participating in Maha Kumbh can explore traditional handicrafts such as moonj weaving,





known for creating beautiful baskets and home decor items. Those who love to savour local food should not fail to try delicacies like chaat, kachori, jalebi, and other regional specialities.

Moreover, there are several nearby attractions to discover, including historic sites, serene ghats, cultural hubs, and temples each contributing to an enriching experience. Some of the major tourist attractions are:

- **The Hanuman Temple** near Allahabad Fort, featuring a massive 20-foot-long reclining idol of Lord Hanuman and 108 Shivalingas
- **The serene Narayan Ashram** on the Ganges' banks, known for its intricate stone carvings. The Mankameshwar Temple, famous for its self-manifested Shiv-linga
- **The ancient Kalyani Devi Temple**, a significant Shaktipeeth
- **And finally, the Shri Venkateshwara Swamy Temple**, which represents the harmonious blend of North and South Indian spiritual traditions.

### Modern Amenities and Adventure

The 2025 Maha Kumbh combines traditional spirituality with modern amenities and adventure opportunities. Visitors can enjoy helicopter joy rides offering breath-taking aerial views of the Kumbh Mela grounds and the sacred Sangam. Water sports activities along the riverbanks provide another exciting dimension to the spiritual journey.

### Infrastructure and Preparations

Government authorities are working round-the-clock to ensure world-class infrastructure and safety measures for the millions of expected visitors. The preparations encompass modern amenities, accommodation facilities, and security arrangements to create a comfortable and secure environment for pilgrims and tourists from diverse backgrounds. The Uttar Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (UPSTDC) is establishing a "tent city" at strategic locations including Arail Ghat, Parade Ground, and Jhunsi, with 2,000 tents of various categories to accommodate the massive influx of pilgrims and travellers.

### Prayagraj, a part of Uttar Pradesh's Spiritual Triangle

Prayagraj, known as one of the 'Saptpuris' or the seven sacred cities in Hinduism, also forms the spiritual triangle in Uttar Pradesh. Other than Prayagraj, the spiritual triangle includes Ayodhya and Varanasi. While Prayagraj is the place where the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers converge, forming the Triveni Sangam, Varanasi, known as Kashi, is considered the holiest city in Hinduism, as the place where Lord Vishwanath (Shiva) is said to dwell and Ayodhya, is known as the birthplace of Lord Rama, holding immense significance for devotees, symbolizing the values of dharma and devotion. They celebrate a rich heritage of rituals, festivals, and timeless wisdom. The triangle reflects the essence of devotion, faith, and unity, fostering spiritual growth. Each city, with its distinct aura, invites reflection, offering a profound connection to India's cultural and spiritual roots.

### Nearest Tourist Destination



Prayagraj to Shringverpur  
(31.2 km) Via NH-330 and NH-30



Prayagraj - Mirzapur  
(88.9 km) Via NH-19



Prayagraj to Chitrakoot  
(134.4 km) Via NH-35



Kumbh Administration



Emergency Assistance



Hotel and Food



Achievements of UP



Maha Kumbh Tent Booking



Maha Kumbh Mela App



Whatsapp Chat



Uttar Pradesh Tourism App.

# MOVEMENTS

## TAIWAN TOURISM ADMINISTRATION

New Delhi

Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) appoints **PAUL SHIH** as the Director, TTA, Singapore Office. Shih brings a wealth of knowledge, significant experience and proven leadership roles from across sectors in key positions. In his new role, he is responsible for India, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the Middle East tourism markets. His overall responsibility encompasses developing the markets he is responsible for to enhance Taiwan's visibility and destination awareness and boost visitor numbers. He will also be responsible to unfold Taiwan latest destination marketing and publicity campaign 'Taiwan - Waves of Wonder'.



## NIRAAMAYA WELLNESS RETREATS

Bengaluru

Niraamaya Wellness Retreats has appointed **GOURAV DEB** as the Chief of Operations. With over 30 years of experience in hospitality and ITES, Deb has contributed to operational excellence at esteemed brands, including Radisson Hotel Group, Wyndham Hotels, Lemon Tree Hotels, The LaLiT, and Firstsource Solutions. His diverse expertise, coupled with a strong commitment to people-centricity, has consistently driven business performance and operational success. He began his career in 1995 with TGI Fridays in India, and over the years, has held leadership positions across several prestigious organisations.



## CLARKS EXOTICA CONVENTION RESORT AND SPA

Bengaluru

Clarks Exotica Convention Resort and Spa has appointed **Rashi Singh** as Associate Director - Marketing & Communication. With 12 years of experience in branding, marketing, and strategic communication, Singh has consistently delivered impactful campaigns and strengthened brand identities across some of the most reputed organisations in the hospitality and marketing sectors. Prior to this, she served as Marcom Manager at The LaLiT Ashok Bangalore, where she enhanced the guest experience through targeted marketing initiatives.



## THE FERN HOTELS & RESORTS

South & East India

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has appointed **PRATESH PATIL** as the General Manager - Operations for South & East India. In the strategic role, Patil will oversee the operations and management of The Fern Hotels & Resorts' current and expanding portfolio of properties across Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala. With two decades of rich experience in the hospitality industry, Patil brings a wealth of knowledge in operations management, team leadership, and business strategy. His primary focus will be on driving operational excellence and ensure exceptional guest experiences.



## SHANGRI-LA EROS NEW DELHI

New Delhi

Shangri-La Eros New Delhi appoints **VIKRAM SOOD** as the Director of Rooms. With over 20 years of experience in hospitality, Sood brings a strong commitment to enhancing guest experiences and improving operations. In his new role, he will spearhead comprehensive Rooms Division management, encompassing guest services, operational excellence, and team performance. A graduate with a three-year Diploma in Hotel Management from the Institute of Hotel Management and a degree in Humanities from Delhi University, he has curated an impressive career trajectory across iconic properties.



## ROYAL ORCHID & REGENTA HOTELS

North India

Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels has appointed **CHANDAN KUMAR** as the Associate Director of Sales. He will be based at Gurgaon office of ROHL. He has over 14 years of experience in sales with a deep understanding of the leisure and hospitality business. His expertise spans across a variety of destinations, including the scenic hill stations of Shimla, Manali, and Mussoorie, as well as the beach resorts of Goa. He has a proven track record of generating business growth, managing key accounts, and building long-lasting relationships with clients.



Mumbai

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has appointed **YOGESH PAWAR** as the General Manager - Procurement. With over 21 years of experience in procurement and supply chain management, Pawar will play a crucial role in developing and executing procurement strategies. He will be responsible for developing comprehensive procurement plans, identifying and evaluating potential suppliers, negotiating strategic sourcing contracts, and improving supply chain visibility.



## SHERATON GRAND BANGALORE HOTEL

Bangalore

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway appoints **GAURAV TOKAS** as the Director of Rooms. Tokas has over 10 years of experience in the hospitality industry, with a proven track record in hotel operations, guest service, and revenue management. In his new role, he will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Rooms Division, focusing on optimising guest experiences, managing room inventory, and driving revenue growth. He will lead the team in ensuring seamless delivery of service excellence and guest satisfaction, while further strengthening the hotel's position as a premier destination in Bangalore.



**RAJEEV KANT** has joined Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels as the Associate Director of Sales. He will also be based at Gurgaon office of ROHL. Kant is a seasoned sales professional with over 18 years of experience in the hospitality industry. An MBA in Marketing & Finance, he has been working as the Assistant Director of Sales. His career has seen him excel in a variety of roles across leading hospitality organisations, including Sr. Sales Manager at Pride Plaza Hotels, Head of Sales & Marketing at Hotel Harshikhar in Bhimtal, Sr. Manager at DLF Group, Ramada BMK, Clarks Group of Hotels.



## NOVOTEL GOA RESORT & SPA AND NOVOTEL GOA CANDOLIM

Goa

**JOY FERNANDES** has been appointed as the Cluster IT Manager by Novotel Goa Resort & Spa and Novotel Goa Candolim. Fernandes brings a wealth of experience from his earlier roles at Novotel Bengaluru Outer Ring Road and Ibis Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, where he successfully managed IT operations for an inventory of 526 rooms. In his previous positions, he excelled in several key areas, including Operational Systems Support, IT Strategy & Planning.



## THE WESTIN MUMBAI POWAI LAKE & LAKESIDE CHALET - MARRIOTT EXECUTIVE APARTMENTS

Mumbai

**EKTA KANCHAN** has been appointed as the Director of Marketing & Communications by The Westin Mumbai Powai Lake and Lakeside Chalet - Marriott Executive Apartments. With over 12 years of experience in hospitality, F&B marketing, alcohol and beverage industries, Kanchan brings a special fusion of creativity, strategic thinking, and operational knowledge to the position. In her new role, she aims to elevate the brand's presence by blending data analytics with innovative marketing to create effective experiences.



**ANJALI TOMER** has been appointed by Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels as the Director of Sales. She will also be based at Gurgaon office of ROHL. She has over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry. Starting as a Sales Representative at IHG Group, she quickly climbed the ranks due to her exceptional customer service skills and passion for creating memorable experiences for guests. Over the years, she has worked with various renowned hotel brands, including IHG Group and Sarovar Group.



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## JANUARY

- ❖ **Holiday Expo**  
Date: 3-5  
Venue: Coimbatore, India
- ❖ **Outbound Travel Roadshow**  
Date: 8-13  
Venue: New Delhi, India
- ❖ **Tourism Fair**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Visakhapatnam, India
- ❖ **Travel MICE and Corporate Show**   
Date: 11-12  
Venue: Lucknow, India
- ❖ **Adventure Travel Show 2025**  
Date: 11-12  
Venue: London, UK
- ❖ **Asia Pacific International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Conference 2025**  
Date: 15-18  
Venue: Goa, India
- ❖ **Thai International Travel Fair 2025**  
Date: 16-19  
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
- ❖ **Holiday Fair Vienna 2025**  
Date: 16-19  
Venue: Vienna, Austria
- ❖ **India International Travel Mart**  
Date: 17-19  
Venue: Kochi, India
- ❖ **TAFI Annual Convention**  
Date: 17-20  
Venue: Ninh Binh, Vietnam
- ❖ **U & I Bali Roadshow**  
Date: 20  
Venue: Kolkata, India
- ❖ **U & I Bali Roadshow**  
Date: 21  
Venue: New Delhi, India
- ❖ **FITUR**   
Date: 22-26  
Venue: Madrid, Spain
- ❖ **U & I Bali Roadshow**  
Date: 23  
Venue: Ahmedabad, India
- ❖ **U & I Bali Roadshow**  
Date: 24  
Venue: Mumbai, India
- ❖ **Holiday Expo**  
Date: 24-25  
Venue: Visakhapatnam, India
- ❖ **Utah Travel Expo 2025**  
Date: 24-25  
Venue: Utah, USA
- ❖ **India International Travel Exhibition**  
Date: 24-26  
Venue: Nagpur, India
- ❖ **OTM**  
Date: 30-1 February  
Venue: Mumbai, India

## FEBRUARY

- ❖ **Dhaka Travel Mart 2025**  
Date: 6-8  
Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh
- ❖ **India Travel Mart**  
Date: 8-10  
Venue: Ahmedabad, India
- ❖ **Gujarat Travel Fair 2025**  
Date: 9-11  
Venue: Ahmedabad, India
- ❖ **Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Melbourne, Australia
- ❖ **Saudi Travel Market**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- ❖ **Travel & Tourism Fair**  
Date: 13-15  
Venue: Bengaluru, India
- ❖ **India International Travel Mart**  
Date: 14-16  
Venue: Kolkata, India
- ❖ **South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange 2025 (SATTE)**  
Date: 19-21  
Venue: New Delhi, India

## INDO HIMALAYAN EXPO 2025

- ❖ **Indo Himalayan Expo 2025**  
Date: 21-23  
Venue: Haridwar, India
- ❖ **Riyadh Travel Fair 2025**  
Date: 24-26  
Venue: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- ❖ **India Travel Mart**  
Date: 28-2 March  
Venue: Chandigarh, India
- ❖ **India International Travel Exhibition 2025**  
Date: 28-2 March  
Venue: Bhubaneswar, India
- ❖ **Holiday Expo**  
Date: 28-2 March  
Venue: Varanasi, India

## MARCH

- ❖ **ITB Berlin 2025**  
Date: 4-6  
Venue: Berlin, Germany
- ❖ **India Travel Mart**  
Date: 7-9  
Venue: Dehradun, India
- ❖ **India International Travel Mart**  
Date: 7-9  
Venue: Ahmedabad, India
- ❖ **Tourism Fair**  
Date: 14-16  
Venue: Jaipur, India
- ❖ **Holiday Expo**  
Date: 21-22  
Venue: Vadodara, India
- ❖ **Travel & Tourism Fair**  
Date: 21-23  
Venue: Chennai, India
- ❖ **India Travel Mart 2025**  
Date: 21-23  
Venue: Goa, India

## APRIL

- ❖ **Rendez-vous en France 2025**  
Date: 1-2  
Venue: Lyon, France
- ❖ **International Luxury Travel Market Africa 2025**  
Date: 6-8  
Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
- ❖ **Deluxe Travel Market 2025**  
Date: 8  
Venue: Tbilisi, Georgia
- ❖ **Incentives, Business Travel & Meetings Expo 2025**  
Date: 9-11  
Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
- ❖ **World Travel Market Africa 2025**  
Date: 9-11  
Venue: Cape Town, South Africa
- ❖ **World Travel Market 2025**  
Date: 14-16  
Venue: São Paulo, Brazil
- ❖ **Pacific Asia Travel Association Annual Summit 2025 (PATA)**  
Date: 21-23  
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey
- ❖ **Kazakhstan International Exhibition Tourism & Travel 2025**  
Date: 23-25  
Venue: Almaty, Kazakhstan
- ❖ **Arabian Travel Market**   
Date: 28-1 May  
Venue: Dubai, UAE

## MAY

- ❖ **Travel Malaysia Fair 2025**  
Date: 2-4  
Venue: Singapore Expo, Singapore
- ❖ **International Travel & Tech Expo 2025**  
Date: 3-4  
Venue: Greater Noida, India
- ❖ **The Great Indian Travel Bazaar 2025**  
Date: 4-6  
Venue: Jaipur, India
- ❖ **ILTM Latin America 2025**  
Date: 5-8  
Venue: São Paulo, Brazil

## GLOBAL MEETING & INCENTIVE TRAVEL EXCHANGE 2025

- ❖ **Global Meeting & Incentive Travel Exchange 2025**  
Date: 6-9  
Venue: Braselton, USA
- ❖ **International Mediterranean Tourism Market 2025**  
Date: 7-8  
Venue: Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
- ❖ **Travel and Leisure Expo 2025**  
Date: 8-11  
Venue: Davao, Philippines
- ❖ **IMEX Frankfurt 2025**  
Date: 20-22  
Venue: Frankfurt, Germany
- ❖ **ITB China 2025**  
Date: 27-29  
Venue: Shanghai, China
- ❖ **The Leisure Show Dubai 2025**  
Date: 27-29  
Venue: Dubai, UAE
- ❖ **Nepal International Tourism Expo 2025**  
Date: 30-31  
Venue: Kathmandu, Nepal

## JUNE

- ❖ **Seoul International Travel Fair 2025**  
Date: 5-8  
Venue: Seoul, South Korea
- ❖ **Bali & Beyond Travel Fair 2025**  
Date: 11-13  
Venue: Bali, Indonesia
- ❖ **Sustainable Tourism Africa Summit 2025**  
Date: 12-13  
Venue: Mombasa, Kenya
- ❖ **Hong Kong International Travel Expo 2025**  
Date: 12-15  
Venue: Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong
- ❖ **International Tourism Trade Show 2025**  
Date: 25-27  
Venue: Koto, Japan
- ❖ **International Tourism and Hospitality Innovation Conference 2025**  
Date: 27  
Venue: Montreal, Canada
- ❖ **Seoul International Travel Mart 2025**  
Date: 30-1 July  
Venue: Seoul, South Korea
- ❖ **ILTM Asia Pacific 2025**  
Date: 30-3 July  
Venue: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

## JULY

- ❖ **Global Travel Marketplace 2025**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Hollywood, USA
- ❖ **Travel & Tourism Fair 2025**  
Date: 11-13  
Venue: Kolkata, India
- ❖ **Korea International Tourism Show 2025**  
Date: 18-21  
Venue: Goyang-si, South Korea
- ❖ **GBTA Convention 2025**  
Date: 21-23  
Venue: Denver, USA
- ❖ **11th International Conference on Hospitality and Tourism Management**  
Date: 25-26  
Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- ❖ **Travel & Tourism Fair**  
Date: 31-2 August  
Venue: Ahmedabad, India

## AUGUST

- ❖ **Travel and Tourism Fair**  
Date: 11-13  
Venue: Mumbai, India
- ❖ **Digital Travel Summit APAC 2025**  
Date: 12-13  
Venue: Singapore
- ❖ **Taiwan International Travel Expo**  
Date: 22-25  
Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
- ❖ **International Conference on Sustainable Tourism Management 2025**  
Date: 24-26  
Venue: Paris, France
- ❖ **PATA Travel Mart 2025**  
Date: 26-28  
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
- ❖ **Business + Leisure Travel and MICE 2025**  
Date: 28-30  
Venue: New Delhi, India

## SEPTEMBER

- ❖ **ITB India**   
Date: 2-4  
Venue: Mumbai, India
- ❖ **International Travel Expo Ho Chi Minh City**  
Date: 4-6  
Venue: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- ❖ **African Travel Market 2025**  
Date: 14-16  
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria
- ❖ **Asian Tourism Fair**  
Date: 19-20  
Venue: Dhaka, Bangladesh
- ❖ **Tourism Fair**  
Date: 22-24  
Venue: Bhubaneswar, India
- ❖ **International & French Travel Market**  
Date: 23-25  
Venue: Paris, France
- ❖ **Corporate Travel World Asia Pacific 2025**  
Date: 23-25  
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
- ❖ **Africa Traveltech Summit & Expo 2025**  
Date: 24-25  
Venue: Nairobi, Kenya
- ❖ **Istanbul Tourism Fair**  
Date: 25-26  
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey
- ❖ **Tourism Expo Japan**  
Date: 25-28  
Venue: Tokoname, Japan

## OCTOBER

- ❖ **ILTM North America**  
Date: 6-9  
Venue: Nassau, Bahamas
- ❖ **IMEX America 2025**  
Date: 7-9  
Venue: Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas
- ❖ **Global Luxury Travel Expo 2025**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
- ❖ **International Travel and Tourism Trade Fair**  
Date: 10-12  
Venue: Pruszków, Poland
- ❖ **Deluxe Travel Market**  
Date: 14  
Venue: Riga, Latvia
- ❖ **ITB Asia**   
Date: 15-17  
Venue: Marina Bay Sands, Singapore
- ❖ **Antalya Tourism Fair**  
Date: 22-24  
Venue: Antalya, Turkey
- ❖ **Tourism Innovation Summit**  
Date: 22-24  
Venue: Seville, Spain
- ❖ **Swiss International Holiday Exhibition**  
Date: 31-2 November  
Venue: Lugano, Switzerland

## NOVEMBER

- ❖ **World Travel Market London**   
Date: 4-6  
Venue: London, UK
- ❖ **Taipei International Travel Fair**  
Date: 7-10  
Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
- ❖ **International Inland Tourism Fair (Intur)**  
Date: 13-16  
Venue: Valladolid, Spain
- ❖ **Belgium Travel Expo**  
Date: 17  
Venue: Nivelles, Belgium
- ❖ **International Travel & Tourism Fair**  
Date: 22-24  
Venue: Warsaw, Poland
- ❖ **Qatar Travel Mart (QTM)**  
Date: 24-26  
Venue: Doha, Qatar

## DECEMBER

- ❖ **International Luxury Travel Market**  
Date: 1-4  
Venue: Cannes, France
- ❖ **International Tourism Trade Fair and Congress**  
Date: 11-13  
Venue: Izmir, Turkey

# NDC: Game-changer in distribution

With the travel industry adopting a more experiential and customer-centric approach, ITQ's roadmap for 2025 prioritises enhanced AI-driven solutions, expedited integration of new airlines and technologies into the NDC platform.

 Surbhi Sharma

With technology and innovation at the forefront, the travel industry is experiencing a paradigm shift. InterGlobe Technology Quotient (ITQ), the official partner of Travelport in India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bhutan, hosted an event for the travel fraternity in Delhi and Mumbai recently. The event saw convergence of industry leaders, travel agents, and technology enthusiasts. Designed to unravel the complexities of modern travel technology, it provided attendees with valuable insights into automation and integration, NDC (New Distribution Capability) and Travelport+, while highlighting the burgeoning opportunities in the Indian travel market.

In an interaction with **Surbhi Sharma**, **Anil Parashar**, Executive Director, ITQ, and **Anoop Tewari**, Chief Commercial Officer, ITQ, shared their perspectives on the travel evolving landscape, emphasising the need for innovation, collaboration, and practical solutions to empower travel agents and enhance customer experiences.

**Tackling the technology overload**  
Highlighting the overwhelming surge of content and technological solutions available in the market, Parashar said that there is so much of technology burst and content that an average person feels confused and overloaded. According to him, the focus should shift toward streamlining the clutter to deliver result-oriented and replicable solutions for the industry.

Parashar emphasised the importance of regular dialogue within the travel fraternity to exchange ideas and develop actionable strategies. "The process is ongoing. Integration and new technologies introduced by Travelport need broader



**Anil Parashar**  
Executive Director  
InterGlobe Technology Quotient



**Anoop Tewari**  
Chief Commercial Officer  
InterGlobe Technology Quotient

**The focus should shift toward streamlining the clutter (of overloaded content) to deliver result-oriented and replicable solutions for the industry**

**NDC is steering the industry toward personalisation, allowing airlines to offer tailored services and enabling travellers to make informed choices**

adoption," he said. He pointed to the progress in New Distribution Capability (NDC) adoption, with 20 airlines in India currently onboard. "We need to take this number significantly higher," he noted, underscoring the need for simplified, comprehensible content for agents.

**Innovations driving change**  
Parashar outlined the advance-

ments ITQ and Travelport are making to support the industry. "We have introduced cutting-edge technologies like JSON:API, which enhances efficiency and adaptability," he shared. He stressed the dual focus on content quality and customer-centric solutions as key drivers for the organisation's continued leadership in India. "End of the day, more than any technol-

ogy, it is the solutions that the travel agent and the customer are looking for," he said, emphasising the importance of delivering optimal and cost-effective tools.

**Promise & challenges of NDC**  
Delving into the concept of NDC, he described it as a transformative distribution capability offering new avenues for airlines to connect with customers directly. While some airlines are in advanced stages of adoption, others remain in nascent phases. "Initially, there was scepticism about whether NDC would render GDS obsolete," he said. However, he added, GDS platforms have proven essential for integrating complex solutions and adapting to NDC's demands.

**Regional engagement & growth**  
Tewari elaborated on ITQ's commitment to driving growth across India, from tier I cities to smaller markets. "We have introduced technology to nearly 150 agencies across India, helping many small startups become major players," he said. He also highlighted the enthusiasm of second-generation travel agents for adopting new technologies.

**Road ahead 2025**  
Parashar and Tiwari emphasised the customer's evolving preferences, which now lean heavily toward experiential travel and fewer touchpoints. By 2025, artificial intelligence and integrated solutions will play pivotal roles in meeting these demands.

ITQ 2025 roadmap	Engagement	Focus areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prioritise enhanced AI-driven solutions</li> <li>■ Integration of new airlines &amp; techs into NDC platform</li> <li>■ Strengthening support system for travel agents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Introduced JSON API technologies</li> <li>■ Simplified &amp; comprehensible content for agents</li> <li>■ Introduced technology to 150 agencies across India</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enhance post-booking automation &amp; content curation</li> <li>■ Deliver optimal &amp; cost-effective tools</li> <li>■ Minimise confusion through optimised content</li> </ul>

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