

ISSUE 06/24

IATO SPEAKS

AN INITIATIVE BY IATO

*Ayodhya: India's emerging
Spiritual Tourism hub*

Your Local Partner in AYODHYA



Exclusive Holi event, 25th March in AGRA



For Ayodhya, contact 94157 79423.

For Holi in Agra, contact 98206 45750.

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KOLKATA // LUCKNOW // NEW DELHI // PRAYAGRAJ // VARANASI





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Dear Friends,

As we embark on a new year filled with promise and potential, it is time to gear up and march in full force. The past year has been marked by unprecedented challenges that have tested the resilience of our industry. However, it is in the face of adversity that true leaders emerge, and I am confident that together, we can shape a brighter future for Indian tourism in 2024.

The year 2024 beckons us with opportunities to revitalise and reposition our industry as a global leader. Our foremost focus will be on collaboration—strengthening ties with government bodies, industry players, and local communities. By fostering a spirit of unity, we can overcome challenges and create an ecosystem that nurtures sustainable growth.

In the technological era, digital transformation is no longer an option but a necessity. Embracing cutting-edge technologies will be pivotal in enhancing the overall travel experience, from seamless bookings to personalised itineraries. Our commitment to innovation will not only attract the modern traveller but also position India as a tech-savvy destination on the global stage.

Sustainability lies at the heart of our vision for 2024. We aim to implement eco-friendly practices across the value chain, from reducing carbon footprints to promoting responsible tourism. By integrating sustainability into our operations, we not only contribute to environmental conservation but also appeal to the growing number of conscious travellers seeking meaningful and ethical experiences.

Moreover, we will actively engage in promoting lesser-explored destinations, thereby dispersing tourist footfalls and unlocking the hidden gems of our diverse nation. This will not only stimulate local economies but also preserve the authenticity of our cultural heritage.

As we navigate the uncharted waters of 2024, I am confident that our collective efforts will rekindle the flame of optimism in the Indian tourism industry. Together, let us shape a future where India stands tall as a beacon of hospitality, innovation, and sustainability on the global travel map.



Rajiv Mehra
President
IATO



IATO AFFAIR



NOVEMBER

All members of the association were informed on the Chiapas Birding and Photography Festival 2024 to take place in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, Mexico from 28th February – 1st March 2024 and members who are interested may attend.

All members (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) were informed on the Royal Orchid & Regenta Hotels – Special Exclusive Rates for IATO Members Valid till March 31, 2024.

All IATO members in Delhi/NCR were informed on the Special Invitation for IATO Members: Economic Times Travel & Tourism Conclave & Awards 2023.

All members were informed on the Indian Business Delegation for Buyer Seller Meet / Roadshow in CIS Region covering, Russia, Tajikistan & Uzbekistan from December 10 to December 22, 2023.

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All members were informed on the invitation to 6th TOFTigers Wildlife Tourism Awards and Sustainable Tourism B2B Travel Trade Show.

All members were informed on the IATO Training Programme on December 2, 2023.

All members (recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India) were informed on the invitation for participation in FITUR to be held from January 24 to 28, 2024 in Madrid, Spain.

All members were informed on the IATO request to allow plying of BS IV Diesel Buses during GRAP IV in Delhi.

All members were informed on the webinar on Taj Usha Kiran, Gwalior on December 1, 2023

All active members were informed on the Tourism Promotion Seminar between India - Coastal Provinces of Vietnam, December 20-22, 2023



IATO AFFAIR

DECEMBER

IATO Training programme was held on Saturday, December 2, 2023. The topic of the programme was 'Tourism - The world of opportunities for Gen-X' in New Delhi.



All members (Recognized by the Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India) were informed on the invitation for participation in ITB Berlin to be held on March 5-7, 2024.

IATO was felicitated at ATOAI Convention



All active members were informed on the Invitation to participate in the FAM trip and Tourism Stakeholders Seminar at Sariska, Alwar, Rajasthan being organised by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India (Northern Region) on December 17-18, 2023.

IATO President at the ICPB Convention in Gandhinagar.

All members were informed on the closing of Red Fort from December 6 to 8, 2023 and monument shall remain open on December 11, 2023 for the visitors.

All members were informed on SATTE Awards 2024.



IATO AFFAIR

All members (Recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India) were informed on the Invitation for Participation in AIME to be held from 19th to 21 February 2024 in Melbourne, Australia.

All active members were informed on the invitation by Palace on Wheels for introduction and meet & greet session on December 20, 2023 from 5 to 6.30 pm.

All members were informed Regarding 17th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition (TITE).

All active members were informed on the Invitation to participate in Mahabharat Circuit Conference and Familiarization Trip at Kurukshetra, Haryana, from January 9-11, 2024.

All members were informed on the Clarification Regarding Restriction being imposed on Diesel Buses, Mini coaches and Tempo Traveller from 1st January 2024 in Delhi NCR:-

The matter was taken up with Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region & Adjoining Areas, Delhi Traffic Police and Principal Secretary cum Commissioner, Transport

Department, Govt. of Delhi and IATO requested that Delhi Traffic Police Ground staff and Transport Authority should follow the advisory, so that the tourist Buses having all India tourist permits are not stopped and harassed unnecessarily.

On IATO's request, CAQM had issued an advisory that stated "While the subject Direction No. 78 was issued only in the context of inter-state/inter-city public bus services being operated by the NCR State Govt., including State PSUs and private entities, it is hereby again clarified that these directions shall not be applicable to buses, temp - travellers, mini buses etc. under "All India Tourist Vehicles (Permit)" serving to the tourism sector."

However, to avoid any problem members were once again requested to ensure that the drivers carry with them the following documents:-

Name list of Passengers in the vehicle Complete Itinerary



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Copy of the attached circular of CAQM dated 2nd November 2023 and a copy of Circular of Transport Department of NCR Delhi dated 3rd November 2023.

Presently GRAP III stage was in force from 22nd December 2023 and as per orders there was

restriction on plying of 4 wheelers (including Tempo Travelers, BS III Petrol and BS IV Diesel four wheelers and as soon as GRAP III would be removed, tempo traveler could ply in Delhi.



IATO AFFAIR

JANUARY

All members (Tour Operators & Travel Agents) were informed on the Invitation from MTDC for empanelment of tour operator and travel agents.

All members were informed on the 22nd Kazakhstan International Exhibition (KITF) 2024 in Almaty from April 24-26, 2024.

All active members were informed on the Invitation by Palace on Wheels for introduction and meet & greet session, on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 from 5 to 6.30 pm.

All active members were informed on the FAM Trip of Gwalior for the Tour Operators from January 19 to 21, 2024.

All members were updated on Withdrawal of IndiGo flights on sector Khajuraho – Varanasi – Khajuraho.

All IATO members were informed on the Celebration of IATO Annual Day on Sunday, February 11, 2024 at Heritage Transport Museum, Taoru, Gurgaon.

Visit to the Palace on Wheels by IATO led by Hony. Secretary



IATO AFFAIR

All members were informed on the Letter from MATATO to IATO seeking guidance and support.

All members were informed on the Introduction of IndiGo Daily Direct Flights on sector Delhi – Khajuraho and Khajuraho – Delhi from October 27, 2024.

All active members were informed on the Fam Trip of Gwalior for the Tour Operators scheduled from February 3 to 5, 2024

All members were informed on the Ellora Ajanta International Festival, February 2 to 4, 2024, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Maharashtra.



Ayodhya

India's emerging Spiritual Tourism hub

Ayodhya, a city steeped in ancient history and revered as the birthplace of Lord Rama, is rapidly emerging as the next big spiritual tourism destination in India. With its rich cultural heritage, historic significance, and on-going developmental initiatives, Ayodhya is attracting pilgrims and tourists alike, positioning itself as a must-visit destination for those seeking a spiritual and cultural experience.

Diving back in history

Ayodhya holds a special place in Hindu mythology as the birthplace

of Lord Rama. The city is mentioned in ancient texts like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, adding to its historical and religious importance. The Ram Janmabhoomi, believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama, has been a focal point of religious and cultural debates for decades and has recently witnessed significant developments, contributing to Ayodhya's prominence.

The glory of Ram Mandir

The construction of the Ram Mandir, a grand temple dedicated to Lord Rama, has been a historic



INDIAN ESCAPDE



moment for Ayodhya. The temple complex is set to become a major pilgrimage site, attracting millions of devotees from across the country and the world. The intricate architecture and the spiritual ambience of the temple are expected to contribute to Ayodhya's appeal as a spiritual tourism destination.

The city is also undergoing a cultural renaissance with the promotion of traditional arts, crafts, and music. Initiatives to showcase Ayodhya's cultural heritage are being undertaken, including festivals, exhibitions, and cultural events that provide visitors with a deeper understanding of the city's rich history and traditions.

Development in full swing

Recognising the potential of Ayodhya as a spiritual tourism hub, the government has undertaken various developmental initiatives to enhance infrastructure and amenities. Improved transportation facilities, modern hotels, and other tourist-friendly services are being introduced to ensure a comfortable and enriching experience for visitors.

Ayodhya is also being developed as a smart city, incorporating technology to enhance connectivity and accessibility. These efforts aim to make Ayodhya not only a spiritual destination but also a model city for sustainable tourism.

INDIAN ESCAPDE

Cultural and religious tourism circuit

Ayodhya's strategic location makes it an integral part of the cultural and religious tourism circuit in India. Pilgrims and tourists visiting Varanasi, Prayagraj, and other nearby religious destinations can easily include Ayodhya in their itinerary, creating a comprehensive spiritual journey through the heart of India.

Ayodhya's journey from a city of historical and religious importance to a vibrant spiritual tourism destination is marked by significant developments. The construction of the Ram Mandir, cultural renaissance, and focused developmental initiatives are transforming Ayodhya into a must-visit destination for those seeking a profound spiritual and cultural experience. As the city continues to evolve, Ayodhya is poised to play a pivotal role in India's spiritual tourism landscape, inviting visitors to connect with its rich heritage and embrace the spiritual essence embedded in its ancient streets.

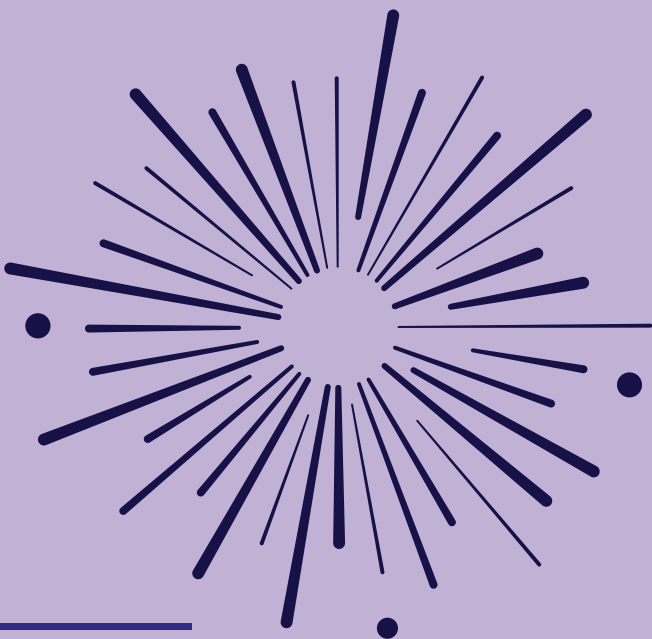


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Mr B.C. Joshi, Joint Secretary (F-I), Ministry of Home Affairs was written on the issues with the e-Visa 24x7 Help Desk Number 91-11-24300666

Foreign clients gave their feedback that whenever they call on the helpdesk number numerous times the automated voice keeps coming that all the staff members are busy and asks if we'd like to hold on. Clients from Italy, USA and Sri Lanka were facing the same issue.



Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, Hon'ble Lt. Governor, Government of NCT Delhi regarding restriction imposed on plying of BS IV diesel buses during GRAP IV

IATO appraised that restriction/ban on plying of BS-IV diesel vehicles having All India Tourist Permit will hit the tourism sector badly. 95 per cent of the tour operators, travel agents in Delhi are in possession of BS-IV vehicles as BS-VI stage was introduced during Covid in 2020 and tourism business from March 2020 to April 2022 was zero due to restriction on international flights and visa suspensions. Most of the tour operators had no business for over 30 months and they closed down their business. Therefore, IATO members were not in a position to purchase new vehicles. Now inbound tourism was picking up and our members just started

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their business but still they do not have funds to spend for purchasing new vehicles. However, BS –IV vehicles that they have in possession is well maintained and has fitness certificate and following the emission norms.

Restriction of plying of BS IV having All India Tourist Permit vehicles will result in that our members will not be able to provide services to their foreign clients traveling from across the globe This will also be giving a very negative image of our country in front of foreign tourists who will be stopped to enter Delhi. Delhi is the Gateway city for 60-70 per cent foreign tourists arriving in India. This will result that foreign tourists after return to their county will sue their foreign tour operators in the court of law for lapse of services, who in turn will take Indian tour operators to the court. This will also result in that we in India will not be able to achieve target of 30 million foreign tourists by 2030 as desired by our Hon'ble Prime Minister.

IATO had represented the case to Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), NCR and Adjoining Areas to allow BS IV Diesel Buses having All India Tourist Permit. This was favourably considered by CAQM based on its merit.

IATO requested that Services to be provided to the tourists especially the foreign tourists who have travelled from different countries travelling thousand kilometres with confirmed arrange

ments in India should be considered under ESSENTIAL SERVICES and plying of All India Tourist Vehicles Commercial Diesel Buses with BS-IV certificate having valid registration and registered after 1st January 2018 and having fitness certificate in case GRAP IV is enforced, should be allowed and there should not be any restriction during GRAP IV stage so that the tour operators are able to provide uninterrupted services to tourists already committed to them.



Dr Mahendra Khadgawat, Director Archaeology and Museum Department, Jaipur (A & M), Government of Rajasthan, on the closure of State Monuments and Museums on Election Day without any advance notice

It came as a surprise and shock to the tourism stakeholders as all other tourism related activities were normal, hotels were welcoming the tourists, city palace was open, airport and railway staff was functioning normal.

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Itineraries were made by the tour operators and confirmed to the foreign tourists and at 5 pm on 24th November 2023 IATO, members received the orders that all state monuments and museums will remain closed. Monuments/Museums in all the other states remain open on the Election Day.

IATO requested that on election days, monuments/museums should remain open and be treated as essential services like RTDC hotels and Palace on Wheels. Monuments/museums should only be closed as per scheduled days as tour operators plan itineraries for the foreign tourists accordingly.



Mr B.C. Joshi, IOFS, Joint Secretary (F-I), Ministry of Home Affair was written to on the problems faced by the foreign tourists from Taiwan while visiting Sikkim from Rangpo outpost

IATO apprised that for Taiwanese Nationals visiting Sikkim, the Sikkim Permit was issued by INDIA-TAIPEI ASSOCIATION, Taipei, which was issuing the Indian Visas also.

The India-Taipei Association can be called deemed Embassy. Sikkim Permit is being issued by India-Taipei Association for many years and there has never been any such problem in the past and this permit was being accepted by RANGPO FRO post.

Recently, whenever any client wanted to enter Sikkim from RANGPO FRO outpost, Officials at FRO were not accepting this SIKKIM PERMIT saying that this permit was not issued by Indian Embassy and INDIA-TAIPEI ASSOCIATION is just an association. As per the FRO in Rangpo (Sikkim Border), they have instructions not to allow anyone with Republic of China or Peoples Republic of China passports to enter Sikkim unless they have a clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs or Ministry of External Affairs.

IATO believed that they were not able to differentiate between REPUBLIC OF CHINA WHICH IS TAIWAN and PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA – WHICH IS MAINLAND CHINA

IATO requested to kindly look into this matter and suitable directives to be issued to the officials at Rangpo outpost to avoid any inconvenience to the tourists from Taiwan.

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Mr Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo was contacted

The feedback and complaints which IATO had seen on the social media against IndiGo was not only hurting IndiGo but to IATO also as IATO was associated with IndiGo from the day it was started.

IATO forwarded an email received from one of its members M/s. Midtown Travel who had a group of 25 pax of Korean Nationals and one of the group members lost her baggage, which was not traceable. Compensation, which was offered by IndiGo, was par below and did not even meet the cost of the empty suitcase of international standard.

IATO requested to kindly look into the above complaint and try best to locate the baggage. In case if the baggage was not traced, then apparently it was stolen, in this situation reasonable compensation to be given to satisfy a foreign tourist.

Further IATO felt that either there was a shortage of staff at the ground level OR they were not fully trained and that needed to be looked into.



An appeal to the Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi ji, Prime Minister of India requesting help for the Tourism Industry for revival of inbound tourism to India

IATO quoted Hon'ble Union Minister of Tourism, Shri G. Kishan Reddy ji, who had stated that foreign tourist arrivals in India are yet to reach the pre-COVID-19 levels; with 85.9 lakh of them visiting the country in 2022 where as it were 3.14 crore in 2019.

IATO cited various reasons for inbound tourism to India not matching up to the pre-covid level

- Covid-19 pandemic. This resulted that tourism industry lost trained manpower and there were no financial help from the Government. The incentives for overseas marketing and promotion were not there.

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- All Indiatourism Overseas offices have been closed and due to lack of trained manpower, Indian Embassies/High Commissions/Consulates were also not able to do regular interaction/follow up with the foreign tour operators who were promoting India/or wished to promote India.

- Lack of marketing and promotion of tourism in overseas markets.

- For participation in overseas travel marts, our Ministry of Tourism had to approach Ministry of Finance to seek approval for each travel mart separately. Lot of time was wasted in taking approval.

- It was understood that the Government put all the schemes for overseas promotion including Fam Trips to India, overseas road shows, marketing and promotions through electronic and print media etc. on hold.

IATO put forward suggestions, which would help in increasing foreign tourists arrivals to India:-

- Financial support to the inbound tour operators by way of giving them 5% incentives on their net foreign exchange earnings, which they can utilize for overseas promotions and marketing at least for 5 years or till the time inbound tourism to India is fully revived and brought to the level of 2019-20.

- Trained officers of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India to be appointed in the Embassies who should only look after the promotion of tourism to India.

- Aggressive overseas promotion through electronic and print media to be done by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for which funds to be provided to the Ministry.

- Participation in Overseas travel marts by the Ministry of Tourism Govt. of India along with the stakeholders should be planned for the whole year.

- FAM Trips to India and overseas Road Shows to be started immediately.



A Success Story - IATO thanked Ministry of Home Affairs and Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India

IATO had written to the authorities and apprised that whenever any client wanted to enter Sikkim from RANGPO FRO outpost, Officials at FRO were not accepting this SIKKIM PERMIT saying that this permit was not issued by Indian Embassy and INDIA-TAIPEI ASSOCIATION is just an association.

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As per the FRO in Rangpo (Sikkim Border), they have instructions not to allow anyone with Republic of China or Peoples Republic of China passports to enter Sikkim unless they have a clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs or Ministry of External Affairs. IATO believed that they were not able to differentiate between REPUBLIC OF CHINA WHICH IS TAIWAN and PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA – WHICH IS MAINLAND CHINA.

IATO requested the Joint Secretary (F) – MHA and Commissioner – BOI to look into this matter and suitable directives may be issued to the officials at Rangpo outpost accept the Inner Line Permit issued by the India-Taipei Association to avoid any inconvenience to the tourists from Taiwan while entering Sikkim.

IATO thanked Ministry of Home Affairs and Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India for considering IATO's request favourably as Inner Line Permit being issued by the India-Taipei Association were now being accepted at Rangpo Check-post and tourists from Taiwan are being allowed to enter Sikkim.



Mr Rakesh Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism was written regarding setting up of India Pavilion in Kazakhstan International Exhibition «Tourism and Travel» (KITF-2024) held in Almaty on April 24-26, 2024

IATO informed that KITF-2024 was being held since 2001 and was the largest professional tourism venue in Central Asia and the main event in the country's tourism sector, which was attended by large number of tour operators from all part of the world. The exhibition will provide a great opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of brands to potential customers, build new business relationships, and promote the tourism potential of our country.



ALLIANCES



IATO appealed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India regarding promotion of Tourism to Lakshadweep

IATO appraised that post his recent visit to Lakshadweep and his message to the nation to visit Lakshadweep has created a lot of interest amongst the tourism industry stakeholders who have taken it very seriously. On behalf of its members, IATO assured that it will promote Lakshadweep in their itineraries.

Many queries have started coming in but IATO is not able to cater to the queries due to some inherent issues, which the government needs to address:-

Flight Connectivity: Flight connectivity is a major concern. Presently there is only one flight of Alliance Air which is thrice a week. We need at least 2-3 flights a day to/from Lakshadweep to meet the requirement

Hotel Accommodation: There are not enough good quality hotels in Lakshadweep. Government needs to create land bank for building 3 to 5 star category hotels. Stakeholders are encouraged to build hotels by providing tax holidays for 5 to 10 years.

Tourism and Sports Activities: There are not enough tourism and sports activities. Govt. needs to make some tourist spots with tourism and sports including water sport activities.

Requirement of Police Clearance Certificate: Police Clearance Certificate is required for any Indian tourists to visit Lakshadweep which takes 15 – 20 days to get the certificate. Thereafter, one has to apply for the permit submitting the same was not required for those who book their accommodation at any hotel/resort run by the Lakshadweep Administration. Lakshadweep is a part of our country and there should not be any requirement of Police Clearance Certificate, and any government photo id like Aadhaar Card should be good enough to visit Lakshadweep.

IATO mentioned that his new ideas are not being implemented down the line and his written orders to the authorities can only give right direction to revive inbound tourism to India. The examples are of Statue of Unity in Gujarat and now Ayodhya, which in years to come, would be the most visited tourist destination.

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Smt Diya Kumari, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister and Tourism Minister of Rajasthan regarding Promotion of Palace on Wheels and cases filed against Tour Operators promoting Palace on Wheels

IATO apprised that recently, selling of Palace on Wheels had become a crime as some of IATO members who were selling/promoting Palace of Wheels through their website, court cases/FIRs have been filed against them by RTDC after the new vendor M/s. CUBE CONSTRUCTIONS have been given rights to operate Palace on Wheels.

For last 4 decades, IATO members were promoting and selling Palace on Wheels and there was no problem as all bookings were going to RTDC. Now with the new vendor taking over the operations of Palace on Wheels, they are trying to dictate their own terms

and conditions for booking of Palace on Wheels. Court Cases/FIRs have been filed against the tour operators for selling Palace on Wheels through their website, without any notice.

As per the procedure, tour operators should have been called for a meeting and matter should have been discussed and decision could have been taken and conveyed to the tour operators.

Hon'ble Minister was requested to kindly intervene in the matter and clear cut orders be issued clarifying whether Rajasthan Govt./RTDC want tour operators to sell/market Palace on Wheels or not so that accordingly IATO members could be advised.

IATO also requested that court cases/- FIRs filed against some of the tour operators be withdrawn immediately as they were undergoing mental trauma due to this act of RTDC on the advice of M/s. Cube Constructions.



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A request to H H Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh Ji of Jaipur to withdraw sudden increase of Entry Fee for City Palace, Jaipur

The fee was hiked from INR 700 to INR 1000 per person (foreigner), which was already implemented. IATO was not against this increase but it should be rational and with sufficient advance notice. As for the running season, all contracts of IATO members with the foreign tour operators have been signed till 31st March 2024. Foreign tour operators/foreign tourists will not agree to the increased entry fee and it will have burden on the tour operators, who will have to shell out the increased amount from their own funds. The Increase can be made with effect from 1st April 2024 which should be reasonable and not more than 20 per cent on the existing entry fee.



Shri Rajesh Ranjan, IDAS, CAO and Joint Secretary (Ceremonial), Ministry of Defence was written regarding Purchase of Republic Day Parade

Beating the retreat tickets by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India recognised tour operator for foreign tourists. India's Republic Day Celebrations on 26th January every year held a big attraction among the International tourists who visit Delhi especially to experience this colourful event in India followed by Beating the Retreat on 28th - 29th January.

They look forward to witness the ever-cherished Republic Day Celebrations this year also. For issuance of tickets for the foreign tourist, a couple of years ago, there used to be a counter at India tourism office, 88 Janpath, New Delhi, where IATO tour operator members who were recognised by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India were able to purchase tickets for their foreign tourist groups by giving passport details of each individual. However, for past few years, ticket counter at India tourism Office 88 Janpath has been

ALLIANCES

discontinued for the reasons not known to IATO. This has resulted in our tour operators who are bringing foreign tourists in groups were not being able to purchase Republic Day Parade and Beating the Retreat tickets.



Separate counter for sale of tickets for the foreign tourists needs at India Tourism 88 Janpath

A separate counter for sale of tickets for the foreign tourists needs to be set up either at India tourism 88 Janpath, New Delhi or at a centrally located place in New Delhi. Tour operators who were recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India are allowed to purchase the tickets for their foreign tourists in advance on production of a letter stating that these tourists would be on visit to India and all arrangements are being handled by them. A copy of the passport of all such foreign tourists would be attached with the letter of tour operator for the security purpose.





Manipur 7seven Sisters R K SHARMA



With W Ibohal (Tourism Director, Manipur), Past President Pranab Sarkar Sir and NE Chapter Chairman Nirmalya during the International Tourism Mart, Shillong

Iato Mahendra Singh K K HOLIDAYS J...



It was an honour to welcome Ms. Manisha Saxena Director General (Tourism) Ministry of Tourism GOI on her visit on 18th November 2023 at IHM Jaipur to attend Stakeholders meeting.

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TRADE REPORT



Heritage Tourism has a growing interest for travellers

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu addressed the joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament. The President, in her address, highlighted the achievements and various initiatives taken by the Government of India during the last 10 years for development of tourism sector, pilgrimage destinations and historical sites across the country.



MoT participates in global travel exhibition FITUR at Madrid, Spain

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is participating in FITUR, one of the

important global travel exhibitions held from 24th – 28th January 2024 at Madrid, Spain, with a big delegation from the Union Government, State Governments and private travel stakeholders. India's participation at FITUR is a significant move aimed at increase of inbound tourism to pre-pandemic levels from the main identified source markets in the world.



'Bharat Parv' returns for its 9th Edition with a cultural extravaganza

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is organises the 9th edition of 'Bharat Parv,' and the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) is privileged to be associated with the nine-days celebration yet again as in previous editions. The event is being managed by Ashok Events, the events vertical of ITDC. Held at the Lawns and Gyan Path, in front of the Red Fort, Delhi, from January 23rd to 31st, 2024, this event stands as an integral part of the Republic Day celebrations.



Spiritual tourism will be responsible for India's economic boost

According to an SBI Research research published on January 21, the Centre's Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRA-SHAD) project, together with a number of state government initiatives, is expected to contribute to the growth of the spiritual travel industry in India. It is anticipated to have a major effect on the Indian economy. The report also stated that increased tourism in conjunction with the recently constructed Ram temple in Ayodhya might bring in an extra ₹25,000 in tax income for the state in FY25.



Shri Sarbananda Sonowal chairs the first Inland Waterways Development Council meeting

The Inland Waterways Authority of India, under the Ministry of Ports, Ship

ping, and Waterways (MoPSW), hosted the inaugural 'Inland Waterways Development Council' meeting on January 8, 2023, in Kolkata. The day-long meeting on board the vessel MV Ganga Queen, by Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH, brought together key figures from across the waterways states and central government including Shri Shripad Naik and Shri Shantanu Thakur, Ministers of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways.



MoT conducts training in Chilika Lake, a Ramsar Site in Odisha

Ministry of Tourism (MoT) in collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) launched the fifth training under the Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme on 6th January 2024 for local community members, boat owners, and Forest department officials of Chilika Lake in the presence of Dr Sagnik Chowdhury, Regional Director (East), Ministry of Tourism, Dr M Ramesh, Scientist 'E', MoEF&CC, Dr Md Sabir Hussain, Nodal officer and Head, IITTM Bhubaneswar, Dr Amlan Naik, DFO Chilika Wildlife Division and Addl CEO, Chilika Development Authority

TRADE REPORT

(CDA), and other officials from CDA, and Forest Department, Govt of Odisha.



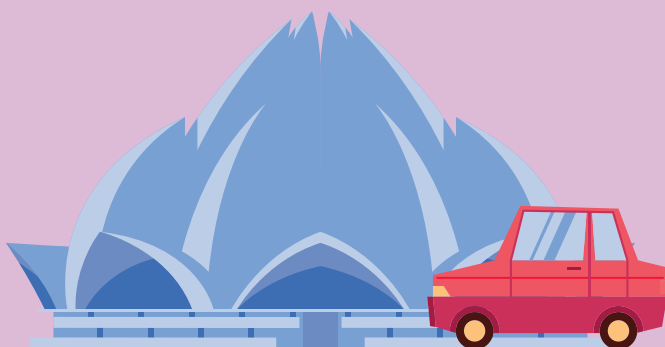
Indian hospitality industry to witness a remarkable growth

It is anticipated that the global hospitality market will develop significantly between 2024 and 2031. The market has been growing consistently as of 2022, and with more major players putting their ideas into practice, there is hope for continued expansion during the projected time frame. The hotel industry is expecting 2024 to be even more successful than 2023 was. According to industry experts, the Indian hospitality and tourist sector had a strong growth year with domestic travel leading the way. Going forward, they anticipate rapid employment.



Ministry of Tourism kicks off Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme 2023

Ministry of Tourism (MoT) in collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched an Alternative Livelihood Programme under the Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme-2023 on 8th December 2023 (Friday) in Sultanpur National Park, a Ramsar Site in Haryana. Under this initiative, IITTM, an autonomous body under MoT, in collaboration with MoEFCC will build the capacity of local community members around different Ramsar sites in order to strengthen nature tourism at these sites and provide alternative livelihood to the local community. With the help of State Forest Deptt., a total of 30 participants have been identified from the local communities located around Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary to impart this training and subsequently certify them as nature-guides.



MEDIA COVERAGE

19:59 • 39%

'Opening of e-visas for Canadian national a booster shot for our inbound tourism': Rajiv Mehra, IATO President

© November 22, 2023



Sharing his views on the resumption of e-tourist

visa for Canadian nationals, Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO, says, "We are happy and pleased with this development as opening of visas for Canada which is one of the largest source market for India, will be a big booster shot for our inbound tourism. Hopefully, the tourist flow from Canada will begin by January. Also, we will urge the government to allow e-visa for Chinese visitors. While other visas are open for the Chinese travellers, the absence of e-visa is still an impediment for them. Hopefully, the government will consider this as well."

indianexpress.com

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-r...>
indianexpress.com

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-resumes-e-visa-services-canadians-9037591/>

"Opening of visas for Canada, which is one of the largest source markets, would be a booster shot for in-bound tourism. Hopefully, by January, the tourist flow from Canada will begin," said Rajiv Mehra, president, IATO (Indian Association of Tour Operators).

2023 INBOUND TOURISM AT 50-70% VS 2019 LEVELS

Tour Cos Request PMO to Campaign for Brand India

Seek relaxed visa regime, aggressive marketing, among other measures, to woo foreign tourists

Setting Sights on Overseas Visitors

Industry writes to PM Narendra Modi, seeking steps for revival of inbound tourism

THE BIG ASK
Aggressive

The screenshot shows a news website with a 'news' header. It features several articles and advertisements:

- Australian getaway:** A travel package for 10 days, 8 nights, including Melbourne, Gold Coast, and Sydney, priced at \$1548.
- Uttar Pradesh receives 32 CR tourists in first nine months of 2023:** An article with a photo of a historical site.
- 'Insurance limited to large MICE events in India, time to develop product to safeguard industry':** An article by Navens Kundra, Managing Director of EtoCash Travel, discussing the need for better insurance products for the MICE industry.
- AIR INDIA | Sabre THE WAIT IS OVER:** An advertisement for Air India's domestic flight service.
- agoda AHMEDABAD TOPS INDIA'S EMERGING DESTINATIONS WITH 44% GROWTH:** An advertisement for Agoda highlighting Ahmedabad's growth.
- IATO members to attend FITUR in Spain, association's annual day scheduled in mid-Feb:** An article by Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO, about the association's annual day and participation in FITUR.

Inbound travel picks up as winter

Feroz Gandhi
New Delhi

As winter takes hold, India's tourism industry is experiencing a notable surge in inbound travel signaling a strong rebound.

Travel companies, including Ixigo, EaseMyTrip and Cleartrip, have witnessed a substantial year-on-year increase ranging from 22 per cent to 62 per cent.

Ixigo witnessed a 62 per cent surge in bookings and searches compared with the previous year, while EaseMyTrip and Cleartrip witnessed increases of 30 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

Nishant Puri, CEO and Co-Founder of EaseMyTrip, said, "New year advance bookings have also started soaring by approx 30 per cent compared with last year. This number will jump exponentially as we near the new year weekend."

Karthick Prabu, Head of



HOLIDAY SPREE. Ixigo saw a 62% surge in bookings and searches compared with the previous year, while EaseMyTrip and Cleartrip saw rise of 30% and 22%, respectively

Strategy at Cleartrip, said Delhi remains the top entry gateway to India, followed by Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai/Madras, and Hyderabad.

SURGE IN ARRIVALS

He said arrivals to India have remained mostly stable compared with last year, with only seasonal or festive rushes witnessing a 30-40 per cent increase.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, foreign tourist arrivals from January to Oc-

tober 2023 reached 72,43,680, marking a significant increase from 46,55,140 in the same period in 2022. The growth trajectory shows a 55.6 per cent increase compared with 2022 and a 15.9 per cent change compared with the pre-pandemic levels in 2019.

Alok Bajpai, Co-founder and Group CEO of Ixigo, attributed this surge to the concerted efforts by the Indian government. "This surge is a testament to the

TRAVTALK

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

Navigating 2024: Sustainability & experiences lead the way

Staycations, bleisure to gain momentum

MICE, adventure, eco and wedding tourism will continue to gain the momentum as investments in tourism infrastructure and destination development will be the desired agenda for the travel trade, Union government and states. Certain trends in 2023 that shall continue and stay relevant in 2024 is continuous address on hygiene and safety, staycations, and bleisure. There will be an integration of remote work and travel, with more people choosing to work with flexible options. Overall, there is a positive outlook and a lot of hopes for the upcoming year.



Rajiv Mehra
President, IATO

13th September, 2023

4 IATO expresses gratitude to the Ministry of Home Affairs and Bureau of Immigration

Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO shares, that the Ministry helped in streamlining entry of tourists from Taiwan visiting Sikkim entering through Rango Check Post.

RAJIV MEHRA, President
Indian Association of Tour Operators

www.twotv.in

Million in Winters

Insight into the Incredible

www.indiaah.in

DECEMBER 2023

TRAVEL WORLD ONLINE MEANS BUSINESS

IATO applauds Ministry's intervention for smooth entry of Taiwanese tourists into Sikkim

The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) expressed profound gratitude to the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Bureau of

visit and residence permit services con-

MEDIA COVERAGE



वहीं इंडियन एसोसिएशन ऑफ टूर ऑपरेटर्स के वाइस प्रेसिडेंट रवि गोसाईं में 'ईटीवी भारत' को बताया कि मालदीव के मंत्रियों द्वारा प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के प्रति जो विवादित बयान दिए गए हैं, इसको लेकर भारतियों में काफी रोष है. सोशल मीडिया पर लोग इसका जमकर विरोध कर रहे हैं. इसका प्रभाव पर्यटन पर दिखने लगा है. जब दोनों देशों के बीच स्थिति सामान्य होती है, तभी पर्यटन अच्छा होता है. फिलहाल लोगों ने बुकिंग्स को कैंसिल नहीं किया है. इसके पीछे की वजह यह है कि इसके लिए लोगों को भारी कैंसिलेशन चार्ज का भुगतान करना होगा. लेकिन भविष्य में इसका असर जरूर देखने को मिलेगा. विवादित बयान से लोगों आहत हुए हैं. भारत के प्रधानमंत्री के लिए इस तरह की टिप्पणी करना ठीक नहीं है.



नवंबर 2023 में 31,505 भारतीय पर्यटकों ने लक्षद्वीप
 लक्षद्वीप की लोकप्रियता बढ़ते चले जा रही है। लक्षद्वीप की पर्यटन संख्या में तेजी से वृद्धि देखी जा रही है। नवंबर 2023 में 31,505 भारतीय पर्यटकों ने लक्षद्वीप की यात्रा की। यह संख्या पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में 15% बढ़ी है।

कोविड-19 में पर्यटन घटा
 लक्षद्वीप की पर्यटन संख्या कोविड-19 के दौरान काफी कम रही थी। पर्यटकों की संख्या में वृद्धि देखी जा रही है। लक्षद्वीप की पर्यटन संख्या में वृद्धि देखी जा रही है। लक्षद्वीप की पर्यटन संख्या में वृद्धि देखी जा रही है।

लक्षद्वीप में पर्यटकों का रुझान
 लक्षद्वीप में पर्यटकों का रुझान बढ़ रहा है। लक्षद्वीप में पर्यटकों का रुझान बढ़ रहा है। लक्षद्वीप में पर्यटकों का रुझान बढ़ रहा है। लक्षद्वीप में पर्यटकों का रुझान बढ़ रहा है।

582 ने पिछड़ा सड़क
 लक्षद्वीप में 582 किलोमीटर लंबी सड़क का निर्माण हो रहा है। लक्षद्वीप में 582 किलोमीटर लंबी सड़क का निर्माण हो रहा है। लक्षद्वीप में 582 किलोमीटर लंबी सड़क का निर्माण हो रहा है।



Opinion: In Row With Maldives, Lessons For India
 The India-Maldives relationship has dived a...
www.ndtv.com



Describing the hidden potential of domestic tourism, Rajiv Mehra, president, Indian Association of Tour Operators, says, "Beach tourism exists in Goa, Kerala, Andaman in our country but it can be improved at other places

Comparing Lakshadweep with the Maldives, Mr Mehra says, "Lakshadweep has poor infrastructure and connectivity. A lot needs to be developed there to match Maldives. There are other rules such as mandatory police clearance certificates, which take two weeks. These are not in Maldives and if one stays in the

