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TAFI convention opens in Rhodes, India - Greece tourism ties get fresh push

RHODES: The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has opened its 15th convention in Rhodes, Greece, bringing together Indian travel professionals and tourism stakeholders to strengthen tourism co-operation between India and Greece.

The convention is providing a platform for discussions on expanding two-way tourist flows, im-

proving connectivity and promoting Greece's diverse destinations among Indian travellers. Industry representatives are also focusing on new opportunities for collaboration between travel agencies,

destination management companies, airlines and tourism organisations.

Greece, with its historic heritage, islands, beaches

and growing appeal as a leisure and luxury destination, has emerged as an increasingly attractive market for Indian travellers. At

the same time, India offers significant opportunities for Greek tourism businesses seeking to tap into (Cont. on page - 2)



His Excellency Ravi Shankar, ambassador of India, addressing the TAFI convention in Rhodes, Greece and (right) lighting the lamp to mark the inauguration of the convention.

On the extreme right, Subash Goyal was given the life time award. GLIMPSES ON PAGE 7

NSN Mohan elected as first Asian President of Skål International



NELSON MANDELA BAY: In a landmark moment for Indian and Asian tourism leadership, NSN Mohan will assume the role of President of Skål International for 2027. This marks the first time in the 93-year history of Skål International that an Indian — and indeed an Asian — will take the helm of this globally respected organisation. The announcement was made at the 84th Skål International World Congress in Cuzco, Peru, in the

UNITED IN PROGRESS, GLOBAL IN ACTION TOGETHER, WE SHAPE TOMORROW

NELSON MANDELA BAY (S Africa): NSN Mohan's above theme reflects his conviction that the future of Skål International must be created collectively — by clubs, regions, members and generations working together across borders.

Speaking in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, fol- (Cont. on page - 2)



presence of global leaders Deputy Vice President, in tourism and hospitality. Mohan has been entrusted with the global finance



Delegates at the SKAL International convention with Newly-elected president NSN Mohan at Nelson Mandela Bay in South Africa.

portfolio, where his leadership and foresight have been widely recognised. His election reflects not just individual merit, but also his deep commitment to Skål's vision of professional (Cont. on page - 2)

High air fares drive Indians towards eastern nations

MUMBAI: Indian travellers are increasingly turning to Eastern destinations as airspace closures, soaring airfares and currency depreciation continue to weigh on travel demand to popular Western destinations, six months into the West Asia conflict. According to industry executives and experts, airfares shot up by double digits during the summer season and are expected to remain elevated amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and higher jet fuel prices.

"With international airfares

rising 40pc year-on-year during the summer, ixigo recorded 100pc growth in bookings to Vietnam, 70pc to Sri Lanka, 30pc to Singapore and 20pc to Thailand, while bookings to Japan more than doubled during April-June," said Alope Bajpai, Group CEO, ixigo.

Bajpai added that early festive demand is also encouraging, with travellers showing a clear preference for short-haul destinations: Hanoi bookings have more than doubled, while

(Cont. on page - 2)

DUBAI CROWN PRINCE VISITS CAPT SMIT MACHCHHAR



HE Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, visited flydubai pilot Captain Smit Machchhar in a UAE hospital.

AI Express links Riyadh, Bahrain from Thiruvnanthapuram



THIRUVANATHAPURAM: Air India Express will commence direct services to Riyadh and Bahrain from Kerala capital on Oct 27 with bookings now open, the airport said in a statement here.

The new Riyadh service will address the long-standing demand for direct air connectivity between Thiruvananthapuram and the Saudi Arabian capital, offering greater convenience to passengers travelling between Kerala and Saudi Arabia.

The Riyadh service will

operate three times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, complementing the existing daily Air India Express services to Dammam.

The new Bahrain service will operate twice a week on Thursdays and Saturdays, further strengthening connectivity to Bahrain, which is already served by

daily Gulf Air flights from Thiruvananthapuram.

Thiruvananthapuram currently has more than 250 weekly air traffic movements to the Gulf region, connecting passengers to key destinations such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Shar-

jah, Doha, Muscat, Kuwait and Dammam.

The new services will expand the airport's international network and strengthen air connectivity between Kerala and the Gulf region, while providing passengers with more ger air connectivity and co-ordinated destination marketing in facilitating increased travel between the two countries.

(Cont. on page - 6)

NSN Mohan elected as first Asian...

(Cont. from page - 1) sional collaboration and friendship across borders. It sets a new benchmark for Indian participation and influence in global tourism platforms.

Founded in 1932 and headquartered in Torremolinos, Spain, Skål International remains the world's oldest and largest network of tourism professionals, encompassing over 294 clubs across 75 countries. From its origins in Paris in 1934, Skål has grown into a community bound by camaraderie, cultural exchange and professional excellence. Mohan's election reinforces the relevance of Skål's values in today's interconnected tourism landscape.

India has emerged as

a true powerhouse within the Skål movement. The country now boasts the largest Skål club globally, the highest membership base, and for the first time, the incoming President of Skål International. This achievement reflects decades of dedication by Indian Skålleagues, whose contributions have strengthened Skål's global reputation while showcasing India's leadership in tourism innovation and collaboration.

NSN Mohan's journey embodies perseverance, integrity and vision. His long association with Skål, financial expertise and international outlook have positioned him as the ideal leader at a pivotal time for the organisation. The

Governance Reform Plan of 2023, which emphasised equitable representation and inclusive leadership, further underscores the significance of his rise, with India recognised as an independent and influential region.

This milestone is more than personal triumph — it is a collective victory for India and Asia. It signals a new era of empowerment for Skål India and inspires the next generation of tourism professionals to innovate and lead with purpose. In true Skål spirit — of Good Health, Friendship, Long Life and Happiness — this achievement demonstrates that with resilience and vision, even the most ambitious goals can be realised.

UNITED IN PROGRESS, GLOBAL IN ACTION TOGETHER...

(Cont. from page - 1) lowing the formal transition of leadership, Mohan delivered a forward-looking presidential address centred on service, unity, friendship, innovation and shared responsibility.

Inspired by the enduring spirit of President John F Kennedy's call to public service, Mohan expressed his gratitude to Skål members, mentors, friends and leaders who supported his journey, emphasising that the presidency represents not a personal achievement, but a responsibility entrusted to the worldwide Skål family.

Mohan, a lad from Tel-

angana, said: "This moment is historic. It is the first time that an Asian, an Indian and someone from Telangana has the honour of leading Skål International in its 93-year history. I accept that distinction not as a personal achievement, but as a responsibility."

TOGETHER, WE SHAPE TOMORROW: The theme reflects his conviction that the future of Skål International must be created collectively — by clubs, regions, members and generations working together across borders. The accompanying 2027 tagline will be:

UNITED IN PROGRESS, GLOBAL IN ACTION

Mohan highlighted the profound transformation taking place across the global tourism and hospitality industry, including the rapid development of technology and artificial intelligence, changing traveller expectations, the emergence of new generations of professionals, sustainability and the growing importance of responsible tourism. He called for Skål International to embrace change while protecting the identity and values that have defined the organisation for more than nine decades.

TAFI convention opens...

(Cont. from page - 1) the country's expanding outbound travel market.

The TAFI convention is expected to further strengthen industry-to-industry partnerships and encourage greater co-operation in areas including destination promotion, customised travel experiences, MICE tourism, weddings and luxury travel.

The event also highlights the importance of stron-

ing passengers with more ger air connectivity and co-ordinated destination marketing in facilitating increased travel between the two countries.

With Indian outbound tourism continuing to expand, the convention in Rhodes is seen as an important step towards creating new business opportunities and giving fresh momentum to India - Greece tourism ties.

High air fares drive...

(Cont. from page - 1) airline seat capacity. Indian airlines actively reduced international capacity. Air India group slashed international network capacity by 27pc (145 weekly flights) over the summer months. As per reports, North American routes declined 39pc and European/Asian routes fell up to 57pc. The country's largest carrier IndiGo also reduced its international operations in the summer months.

According to industry executives and experts, airfares shot up by double digits during the summer season and are expected to remain elevated amid ongoing geopolitical tensions and higher jet fuel prices.

Abbas Moiz, Board Member, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), said travel to West Asia, which initially fell after the conflict began, has since recovered month-on-month with regional incentives, while outbound travellers have shifted towards destinations less affected by the conflict.

He added that westbound travel has declined, mainly because of limited

airline seat capacity. Indian airlines actively reduced international capacity. Air India group slashed international network capacity by 27pc (145 weekly flights) over the summer months. As per reports, North American routes declined 39pc and European/Asian routes fell up to 57pc. The country's largest carrier IndiGo also reduced its international operations in the summer months.

"In contrast, eastbound travel is booming, with destinations such as Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong performing strongly. Short-haul destinations, including Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan, are also doing extremely well," said Moiz. He explained that travel to Dubai, one of the most visited outbound destinations, fell by more than 50pc in the conflict's early months, but as conditions stabilised, incentives from the region supported steady month-on-month growth.

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Canadian Dollar	66.79	68.31
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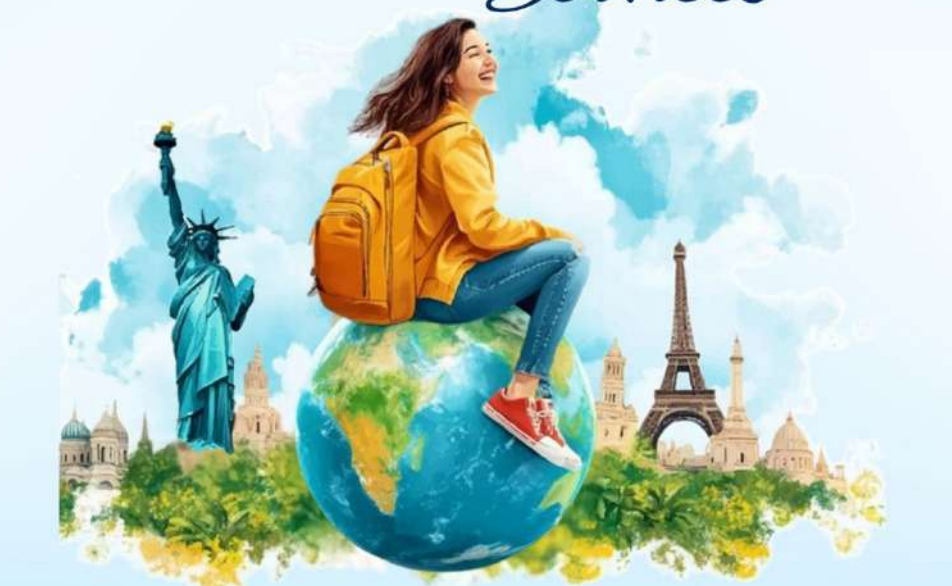
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Hotels in Delhi register strong demand for weddings

NEW DELHI: Hotels are witnessing strong demand for weddings ahead of the winter season, with bookings being made well in advance as sought-after properties report double-digit growth in wedding business and near-full availability during key months.

Noor Mahal Delhi NCR Karnal, branded as India's first Autograph Collection Hotel by Marriott International, has seen its wedding business grow around 15pc from last year, with substantial business already confirmed for 2027 and enquiries extending to Nov next year, its Executive Director Roop Partap Choudhary said.

"We are witnessing encouraging momentum in the wedding segment, with approximately 15pc growth over last year, accompanied by an expanding and more diverse customer demographic," Choudhary said.

More significantly, he

said, families were committing to wedding venues much earlier than before, giving hotels visibility well beyond the immediate season.

"Perhaps the most significant development is the widening of the booking window, increasingly reflecting the planning patterns of established international destination wedding markets. We already have substantial wedding business confirmed for 2027 and are receiving enquiries extending as far as November 2027," he said.

Choudhary said the property was also witnessing a shift in the nature of wedding celebrations, with families opting for longer events and greater personalisation. Weddings currently account for about 60pc of Noor Mahal's overall business mix, he said. The early booking trend is not confined to Karnal.

Roseate Hotels & Resorts

CEO Kush Kapoor said its Delhi resort was seeing particularly strong demand for the winter wedding season, with key months already substantially committed.

"We already are chock-a-block with the weddings; entire Nov is almost blocked, entire February is already blocked now. Weddings are very heavy for the winter season in the Roseate, which is the resort we have in Delhi," Kapoor said.

For hotels, the wedding segment provides demand across rooms, banquets, food and beverage and event-related services, particularly as celebrations increasingly span multiple functions and days.

The trend comes ahead of the main winter wedding season, when auspicious marriage dates in the Hindu calendar traditionally drive demand for venues, accommodation, banqueting and other hotel services.



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GULF FAQs

How can one be sure that the UAE job offer is genuine?

Receiving a job offer to work in the UAE is an exciting milestone, but it is essential to ensure that the offer is genuine and officially recognised. In the UAE, all legitimate job offers must be issued through the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE).

Employers are legally required to use a contract form approved by MOHRE when applying for your work permit. These official job offer forms include a unique serial number or barcode, allowing you to easily verify their authenticity online.

While your final employment contract may include additional benefits beyond those listed in the initial offer, the offer letter remains the legal basis for the contract. The terms and conditions

Is your UAE job offer genuine?

in both documents must match.

What should a UAE job offer letter include?

According to MOHRE, every valid offer letter issued by the ministry must explicitly include the following details:

How to confirm your job offer is valid? If you are currently outside the UAE and have received a job offer, you can take the

following steps to protect yourself and ensure the offer is legitimate.

* Check with the UAE embassy. Your first step should be to contact the UAE embassy or consulate in your home country. Embassy officials can assist you in verifying whether the employing company and the offer itself are genuine.

* Use MOHRE's Online

Enquiry Service. You can independently verify your job offer directly through the official MOHRE portal. Follow these steps: Visit the official MOHRE website. Navigate to the services section, choose employee services, and select the transactions inquiry service. Select the option to enquiry for job offer. Enter the following required details: Transaction Number (found on your offer letter), Company number:

From Date and To Date. Permit Type (As an employee verifying a job offer, select "All Work Permits")

What the results mean: After submitting the information, the system will display the offer letter if it is officially registered with the ministry. If the

letter does not appear in the system, the offer may be fraudulent or the employer has not submitted it properly.

Essential checklist before you accept: Before signing or accepting any employment offer, ensure you have ticked boxes on the following safety measures: Match the details: Double-check that the salary, job title and benefits shown on the MOHRE system exactly match what the employer promised you during interviews.

*Watch for fees: Ensure the employer does not ask you to pay for recruitment, visa or processing fees. Under UAE labour law, all of these costs must be borne entirely by the employer. *Look for the barcode: Verify that the offer is issued on the official MOHRE template and clearly displays a barcode or transaction number.



UAE annual leave rules explained: when can you carry days forward?

The UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation outlines that employees receive at least 30 days of paid annual leave per year, can carry unused days to the next year with employer approval, and must be compensated for unused leave upon termination, with specific rules for part-time workers and leave scheduling.

The ministry has clarified the conditions under which employees may carry forward annual leave, stating that unused leave may be transferred to the following year with the employer's approval, in line with regulations. In such cases, payment for carried-over leave is calculated on the basis of the

employee's basic salary, the ministry said, stressing that employers may not prevent workers from taking their annual leave for more than two consecutive years, unless the employee chooses to carry it forward or receive a cash allowance in lieu, in accordance with executive regulations.

Under article 29 of Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 on the Regulation of Labour Relations, employees are entitled to no fewer than 30 days of fully paid annual leave for each year of service, after completing six months with the employer. Workers with ser-



vice exceeding six months but less than one year are entitled to two days' leave per month worked.

If an employee's service ends before using accrued leave, they are entitled to payment for unused days, as well as leave for the proportion

of the final year worked. All such payments are calculated based on the basic salary.

The ministry added that part-time employees are entitled to annual leave in proportion to their actual working hours, as specified in their employ-

ment contracts and the executive regulations. As a general rule, annual leave should be taken within the year it falls due. Employers may determine leave dates in line with operational requirements, in agreement with the employee or on a rotational basis, provided the worker is notified at least one month in advance. The law also states that public holidays or other legally mandated leave falling during annual leave are counted as part of the leave period, unless the employment contract or company regulations provide more favourable terms for the employee.

TN households lead in overnight travel

NEW DELHI: Households from Tamil Nadu account for almost a quarter of all overnight trips made by Indians for holidays, comfortably higher than Maharashtra in second and Karnataka in third. Meanwhile, families from UP, West Bengal and Bihar are together responsible for more than 30pc of all "health and medical" related overnight trips, a new government survey conducted from

July 2025 to June 2026 showed, with the numbers also indicating a growing divide in the travels of rural and urban Indians.

The previous survey was conducted from July 2014 to June 2015. As per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (MoSPI) Domestic Tourism Expenditure Survey an estimated 10 crore overnight trips were made in the 365 days prior to

households being quizzed. These were for a variety of "leading purposes" or main reasons: holidaying, leisure and recreation; pilgrimage and religious; health and medical and shopping.

And while households who travel are doing so more frequently now, the fraction of rural families taking trips has reduced. As per the latest survey, the percentage of rural households who took at least

one overnight trip declined to 35.2 pc from 36.6pc in 2014-15. Meanwhile, the percentage for urban households rose from 35.7 pc to 37.7pc.

Further, for every 100 rural households, the number of overnight trips for holidays and recreation completed in the last 365 days declined to four in 2025-26 from five in 2014-15. For urban families, the number increased from 12.7 to

13.5.

As such, urban households are taking more holidays than before, while rural families are taking fewer such trips. The latest Domestic Tourism Expenditure Survey covered 2.46 lakh households from across the country, except villages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands which are difficult to access. Of the surveyed households, 1.43 lakh were from rural areas and 1.04 lakh from urban.

Full-body scanners on trial at Bengaluru, Kochi airports

NEW DELHI: Air passengers could eventually witness a change in the way security screening is carried out at Indian airports, with trials of full-body scanners currently going on at Bengaluru and Kochi airports.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is collecting data from these trials, including details on the number of alarms generated. The findings will be assessed and the scanner's algorithms refined before a decision is taken on their introduction at airports said BCAS Director General Rajesh Nirwan.

Nirwan stated that full-body scanners have been

mandated for eight airports, although details of those airports were not immediately available. Kochi is not among the eight airports where the scanners have been mandated.

Full-body scanners aim to identify suspicious objects or items carried on a passenger's body during airport security screening. However, the technology has not yet been deployed at airports despite being proposed a few years ago. Several issues over passenger privacy have resulted in delays.

Commenting on the privacy concerns, Nirwan said one of the issues involved the image generated during scanning. The



technology is now being made "image agnostic", meaning the screen would display a model of the person instead of the person's actual body image.

If the scanner discovers something suspicious, it would flag the particular area on the model where the object has been detected. This approach is

intended to address one of the key privacy concerns with full-body scanning technology.

BCAS is also scrutinising how the scanners react to items commonly worn by people in India. Concerns have been raised that ornaments, including a mangalsutra, could trigger alarms.

Right time for NRIs to send remittances

DUBAI: Continued declines in Asian currencies are helping UAE expats make their money go further on remittances. The Indian rupee, Philippine peso and Pakistani rupee are all lingering near lows not seen in years.

The Indian rupee has slightly strengthened in the last 24 hours trading at Dh26.2. Now you will have to pay Dh38.17 in exchange for Rs1000. According to exchange houses, a growing number of families are staggering their transfers, sending some money immediately and waiting on the balance to see where rates go.

Mumbai Airport plans to cut 265 international weekly slots from Oct 25

MUMBAI: The standoff between Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) and airlines over the relocation of operations linked to Terminal 1 redevelopment has intensified, with the airport operator proposing to temporarily discontinue 265 weekly international departure slots from Terminal 2 (T2) from Oct 25.

According to a communication sent by MIAL to airlines, international departure capacity at T2 will be

reduced by 33pc with the figure rounded up to the next whole number. The schedule covers 46 airlines and 770 weekly international departure slots, of which 265 are proposed to be temporarily discontinued.

IndiGo faces the largest reduction, with 74 weekly slots affected. Air India faces a reduction of 33 slots, while Akasa Air and Air India Express face cuts of 11 and seven slots respectively. SpiceJet is set to

lose five slots.

Among international carriers, Emirates and Etihad Airways are each facing reductions of 10 weekly departures. MIAL has asked airlines to identify the specific departure slots they want to temporarily discontinue by 4 pm on Oct 6.

If an airline does not respond within the deadline, the airport operator said it would decide which slots to remove based on operational, capacity and

implementation considerations.

The final allocation plan will subsequently be shared with the concerned stakeholders. The proposed cuts are linked to the redevelopment of Mumbai airport's Terminal 1. MIAL plans to begin reallocating vacated resources at T2 from Oct 26, including check-in counters, baggage belts, boarding gates and operational office space, to scheduled domestic operators.

AI Express links...

(Cont. from page - 2) travel options, the statement said. The new direct Riyadh service is expected to particularly benefit the large expatriate community from southern Kerala and neighbouring Tamil Nadu working and residing in Saudi Arabia by providing a more convenient travel option between Thiruvananthapuram and Riyadh. Thiruvananthapuram International Airport is managed by TRV (Kerala) International Airport Limited (TIAL), a special purpose vehicle under Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL).

GLIMPSES OF TAFI CONVENTION IN GREECE

