



Travel & Tourism is Riding High on New Developments

Corporate Travel Updates
March 2023

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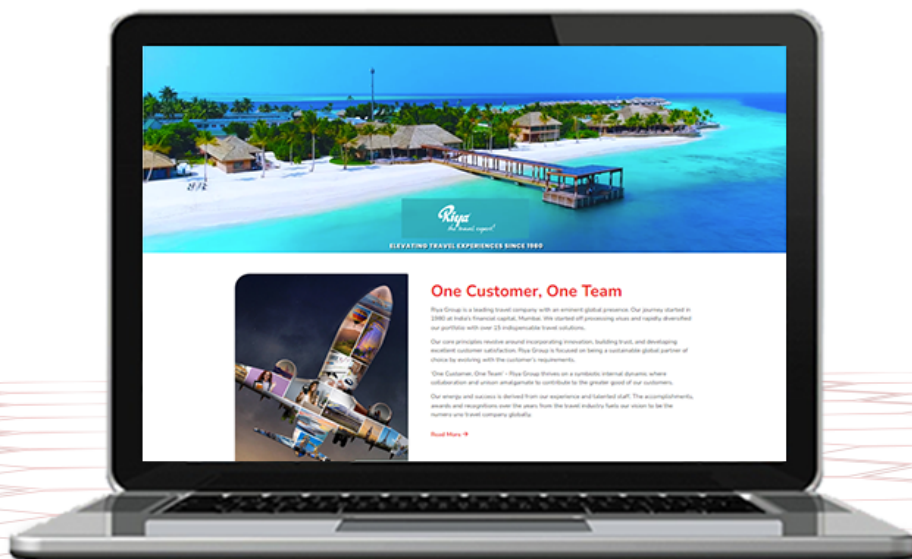
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Mopa Airport holds scope to be regional hub for aviation

Goa's new Manohar International Airport is expected to provide the coastal state an opportunity to become a regional air travel hub as it will have overnight parking facilities for aircraft, making it a potential base for domestic airlines to build a network based in Goa

"To start a new airport operation with immediately 168 flights a week to eight different destinations and 1.5 million customers expected this year speaks to the potential in order to develop the base here as well and for that, we need parking positions and that is part of the discussions.

With the opening of Mopa, Goa has India's first urban centre with two airports. It already has an airport at Dabolim located at the Indian naval station INS Hansa. The civil enclave at the naval air base currently faces capacity constraints due to limited slots and congestion at the terminal. The airport is also unavailable for civilian flights for five hours every day.

Under phase one, the GMR Group-run airport will be able to handle 4.4 million passengers every year and the saturation capacity for the airport after full development has been pegged at 33 million passengers per year. The state-run civil enclave of Dabolim airport handled 8.4 million passengers in 2019-20, as per data from Airports Authority of India.

"The fact that the Mopa airport will be available 24 hours a day for civil operations and the availability of overnight parking facilities will be a game-changer for the aviation landscape in Goa, and airlines are looking at making it a potential regional hub on the back of high demand for travel to Goa and nearby destinations from across the country. International airlines are also looking at Mopa as a potential opportunity especially. It is also very popular among Russian tourists," an industry executive said on the condition of anonymity.

IndiGo has started Mopa with 168 flights a week. Akasa and GoFIRST have also added Mopa airport to their network. IndiGo already operates 436 flights a week from Dabolim; so, the airline will operate a combined 604 flights a week from the two airports in Goa.



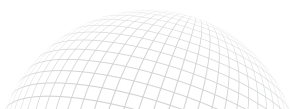


The airline aims to cater to 1.5 million passengers in and out of Manohar International airport in 2023.

"The ambitions for Goa and the potential for Goa are big and will continue to grow and with that, we will be adding flights here, and whenever we have the opportunity in terms of slots and timings. We will add on Dabolim as well," Elbers said.

"Overnight facilities are something we are today exploring together with the airports once we have the opportunities, we surely would like to make a more permanent base here, also adding to other bases, that should be later in the year but not right at the start but clearly an opportunity moving forward," he added.

While Goa has become the first urban center with two operational airports situated at a distance of 90 km, the airport ecosystem is expected to have more such examples by 2024-25 with the operationalization of Jewar airport for Delhi-NCR region and Navi Mumbai airport for Mumbai and nearby area.



Air India's deal with Boeing and Airbus to create 10,000 jobs in India

Air India's latest deal with Airbus and Boeing is just not a landmark moment for job creation in the US and UK, it is a great opportunity for job creation in the India market as well. The industry currently employs over 2.5 lakh employees and we expect the demand for both tech and non-tech talent to rise by 10-15% owing to the manpower needed to operate on a large scale.

"This deal will directly impact the Indian talent industry by creating tremendous employment opportunities across various domains. We expect at least 10,000 new jobs in both tech and non-tech roles to be created in the aviation sector in the next 2 years in the country. The aviation industry generates multiple jobs each year, whether it lies within the industry or through aviation's supply chain." added Sachin Alug, CEO, NLB Services.

India currently has 141 operational airports and the Government of India is expected to invest \$1.83 Bn in the development of airport infrastructure to build nearly 60 more airports by 2026. All these developments together are expected to boost the overall sector, enabling India to cement its positioning as one of the top three aviation markets in the world.

India is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world. The demand for certain profiles like Aircraft maintenance engineers, Aerospace engineers, Flight engineers, Pilots, Flight attendants and Ground staff will grow in the next few years. Industry reports suggest that the country will require around 2,210 new aircrafts in the next two decades and also pegged annual domestic air traffic growth to be nearly 7 per cent through 2041.



Domestic air traffic nearly doubles in Jan: DGCA



India's overall domestic air passenger traffic nearly doubled in January 2023 as compared to the same period last year, with 125.42 Lakh passengers being carried out in the month as compared to 64.08 Lakh during the same period last year, an annual and monthly growth of 95.72% each, the latest DGCA data shows.

In terms of passenger load factors, Spicejet led the chart at 91%, down from 92.7% in December. It was followed by GoFirst at 90.9% and Indiaone Air at 90.9%. In on-time performance, IndiGo topped the chart with an OTP of 84.6% in January 2023, followed by Akasa Air at 79.9% and Vistara at 76.6%.

The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines for January 2023 has been 1.41%, with Fly Big seeing a cancellation rate of 3.91%, followed by 2.09% and Alliance Air at 1.97%. The weather conditions remained the top reason for flight cancellation, followed by commercial and technical reasons cited by the airlines.

According to the DGCA data, India's largest airline IndiGo carried 68.47 Lakh passengers, grabbing a market share of 54.6%, followed by Air India at 11.55 Lakh passengers (market share of 9.2%) and Vistara at 11.05 (market share 8.8%).

During January 2023, a total of 418 passenger-related complaints had been received by the scheduled domestic airlines. The number of complaints per 10,000 passengers carried for January 2023 has been around 0.33, with Alliance Air (6.9), Star Air (3.7) and Fly Big (1.4) topping the chart.

India's domestic air travel in the full year 2022 significantly improved to 48.8% as compared to 2021 and reached 85.7% of the pre-Covid 2019 levels, as per the International Air Transport Association (IATA) data. India's domestic aviation market's share in the global industry stood at 2% in 2022, with Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPK) rising 48.8% and available seat kilometres (ASK) surging 30.1%. The domestic US market led the chart at 19.2% market share globally, followed by China at 6.5% and India at 2%.

As India's economy expands at a rapid pace, the demand increasing travel is also expected to increase dramatically, prompting airlines to ramp up their fleets. As per the latest CAPA India report, Indian carriers will place orders for 1,500-1,700 aircrafts over the next 24+ months, starting imminently, because the Indian market, in the post-COVID era, is attracting global attention as arguably the most promising aviation market.

Air India has already made the first move, with the airline scripting history in the aviation space by ordering to buy 540 aircraft from US aircraft maker Boeing and French aerospace major Airbus. The new aircraft will modernise Air India's fleet and onboard products, and dramatically expand its network. The deal is also expected to provide many career opportunities for Indian aviation professionals.

The Centre this month informed Parliament that India is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world, and has already become the third largest domestic aviation market. To boost the market, said MoS Civil Aviation Gen VK Singh (retd), the government is providing a stable policy environment and incentivising competition-led growth, including the National Civil Aviation Policy (NC AP 2016), new MRO guidelines, liberalised Flying Training Organisation (FTO) guidelines, Helicopter Operation Policy.

At present, there are 30 international airports in the country, and the government has accorded 'in-principle' approval for setting up of international greenfield airports – Bhogapuram in Andhra Pradesh, Dholera and Hirasar in Gujarat, Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra and Noida (Jewar) in Uttar Pradesh.



World's Most Powerful Passports 2023: India's position

In the list of world's most powerful passports 2023, India has been ranked in the 85th position. The country gives visa-free entry to 59 destinations worldwide. In the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, India was ranked at 82nd spot, 84th, 85th and 83rd, respectively.

36% rise on visas processing across India after Covid-19 pandemic: US Officials Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs Julie Stufft said that India is the number one priority that they are facing right now. She assured that they are committed to getting out of this situation. Highlighting the percentage progress this year, she shared that they have issued 36 per cent more visas after Covid-19 pandemic in India.

India is the main priority for the United States, US Visa officials said adding that there has been around 36 per cent rise on visa processing across the country after Covid-19 pandemic. While addressing a presser organised by Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies on Tuesday, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services in the Bureau of Consular Affairs Julie Stufft said, "India is the number one priority that we are facing right now. We are absolutely committed to getting out of this situation. Anyone in India seeking a visa appointment or visa have to wait for that's not certainly our ideal."

She further stated, "So far this year, we have issued 36 per cent more visas than we did before the Covid-19 pandemic in India. And that is a huge percentage of progress." She also said that they are doing everything to reduce the wait time.

"All the non-visitor time or student-visa have very very low wait times and that that's really key. Our H-1B and F student's wait time were just as high almost six months ago and so we brought down the wait time," she added.

The H-1B visa, under the Immigration and Nationality Act, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Talking about the India-US relationship, Deputy Assistant Secretary for India Nancy Jackson said that people-to-people is the most important tie between US and India.

"As I look at the relationship it strikes me that people-to-people ties between our two nations are really the bedrock of what is one of the most consequential relationships in the world and that is the India-US relationship. And we can't underscore that enough and so addressing the view wait time that we were facing is critical. Not only to maintain these people-to-people ties but also to expand in that space. So because of that, this issue remains a top priority," she added.

Earlier this month, the US Embassy in India said that Indians who are travelling abroad can get a visa appointment at the US Embassy or consulate of their destination. It cited the example of Thailand, saying that the country has opened appointment capacity for B1 and B2 visas (business and travel) for Indians.

On January 21, the US Mission in India launched the first in a series of special Saturday interview days to reduce wait times for first-time visa applicants. The US Embassy in New Delhi and Consulates in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad all opened consular operations on Saturday to accommodate applicants who require in-person visa interviews.

RANKED 85

The US Mission will continue to open additional slots for appointments to take place on select Saturdays, according to the statement released by US Embassy in India. These additional interview days are among the measures that have been taken to address the backlog in visa processing caused by Covid-19.

The US Department of State has implemented remote processing of interview waiver cases for applicants with previous US visas. According to the statement, dozens of temporary consular officers from Washington and other embassies will arrive in India to increase processing capacity in January-March.



Sustainable Tourism is the need of the hour

Ecotourism is a postulation of sustainable development, which is a process of socio-economic changes that meet the needs of the present without endangering the well-being of the future.

It is basically a small-scale, low-impact form of travel that seeks to preserve the natural world by ensuring that biodiversity, ecosystems and local communities remain protected and unspoiled.

The negative environmental impacts of conventional tourism are substantial. It includes the depletion of local natural resources as well as increases the pollution and waste management issues. Erection of concrete structures at hill stations puts enormous stress on local land use, and can lead to soil erosion, increased pollution, and natural habitat loss, and moreover, puts pressure on endangered flora and fauna of the area. These effects can gradually destroy the environmental resources on which tourism itself depends.

We need to develop a sustainable approach towards our tourist destinations, especially the health resorts. Any activity conducted or development done in these health resorts should be conducted, keeping in mind their long-term implications on its ecosystem. The authorities should promote luxurious eco-friendly glamping and resorts over raising concrete hotels in hill stations, use of plastic should be totally banned in tourist zones, promotion of local cultures and activities should be given emphasis. If we lose our precious jewels (lake, rivers glaciers, and meadows) they cannot be bought back even after spending enormous money and resources. The changes that would occur due to a non-sustainable approach towards nature would be inevitable and irreversible. We really need to undertake collective efforts in promoting ecotourism globally over conventional tourism. It is indeed the need of the hour.

Quoting the magical lines of the Kashmiri sufi saint, Sheikh Noor-ud-Din – ‘An Posh Teli Yeli WanPoshi’ (Translation: Food will thrive only, till the woods survive).



Travel to Turkey – earthquake and aftermath

Devastating earthquakes that struck northwest Syria and Turkey on February 6 have caused more than 37,000 fatalities and tens of thousands of injuries.

More than five thousand six hundred buildings collapsed across southeastern Turkey because of the earthquakes, the deadliest since Japan's Fukushima in 2011.

It has left people without shelter and in desperate need of food, blankets, and fuel to flee the city and find safety. Currently, a state of emergency has been declared for the following three months in the ten provinces of Turkey.

Moreover, rescue workers continue to search amid heaps of wreckage in the bitter cold and heavy snow for survivors. International nations are sending sniffer dogs, specialized crews, and equipment to support rescue operations.

Future of Turkey Tourism:

The primary tourist destinations in Turkey, such as Antalya and Istanbul, are situated far away from the affected areas. Turkish authorities have not yet given any indications that travel to the main tourist destinations in the nation has been impacted or halted.

There are still international flights going to and from Turkey. The airport in Istanbul is still open and running normally.

On the other hand, a preliminary UNESCO investigation has revealed that some structures at the Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape and Diyarbakir Fortress World Heritage Site have collapsed.

The earthquake destroyed the historic Gaziantep Castle, one of the most well-known sites in the Turkish city. Nearby world heritage sites including Tell of Arslantepe, Nemrut Dağ, and Göbekli Tepe have been reportedly impacted.

The threat of terrorist strikes against Istanbul's churches, synagogues, Embassies/Consulates, and other locations frequented by foreigners has also increased recently. Although the Turkish government is investigating the matter, visitors should make informed decisions.

Individuals traveling to Turkey are advised to exercise caution, heed the guidance of local security officials, keep an eye on media reports, and stay updated with travel advice.

Due to the earthquake, Turkey is currently in a three-month state of national emergency. Therefore, it is crucial to keep in mind that the repercussions and unforeseen consequences of the earthquake will likely be felt for some time to come.

Riya Travel creates a buzz at SATTE 2023



After a two-year hiatus, Riya Travel participated in SATTE 2023, which is South Asia's Biggest Travel & Tourism event. The biggest names in travel and tourism were present in all their galore from 9th to 11th February. Riya Travel received overwhelming support from associates and travel partners at our booth. This year was extra special; Mr. GMJ Thampy, Founder and CMD of Riya Group was present on the first day along with the leadership team and our product experts. Here is a glimpse of the events at SATTE 2023.





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