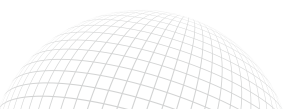# CORPORATE TRAVEL UPDATES
October 2024

All the Latest Developments in the
Travel & Tourism Industry

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Tata Group steps up its competition with Indigo!
Air India & Vistara economy planes will be transferred to AI Express

The Tata Group will transfer planes from Air India and Vistara to expand Air India Express's fleet to better compete with Indigo. The brand will focus on the no-frills segment while consolidating its aviation business into two airlines: Air India & Air India Express. The fleet expansion is expected to be completed by mid-2025.

Effective November 14, IndiGo to launch 'IndiGoStretch' on the Delhi-Mumbai route

IndiGo introduces 'IndiGoStretch' to introduce a new business class service launching November 14 on the Delhi-Mumbai route. It offers comfortable seating, healthy meal options, and an additional baggage allowance.

SpiceJet launches 32 new flights for winter schedule starting October 27, 2024

SpiceJet announces 32 new flights for its winter schedule starting October 27, 2024, including domestic routes and two daily non-stop services between Delhi and Phuket. The expansion aims to enhance connectivity and offer more travel options. Additionally, SpiceJet will add 10 new planes by November and has introduced new UDAN flights.

Air India and Singapore Airlines deepen partnership

Air India and Singapore Airlines (SIA) to significantly expand their codeshare agreement, adding 11 Indian cities and another 40 international destinations to their network. From 27 October 2024, Air India and SIA have codeshare on each other's flights between the Singapore Airlines network across Australasia, the Far East and South East Asia and the Indian cities of Bengaluru and Chennai. This would increase their total weekly scheduled codeshare services between the countries from 14 to 56.

Malaysia Airlines to resume Kolkata-Kuala Lumpur direct flights after 18 years

Effective December 2, Malaysia Airlines will restart direct flights from Kolkata to Kuala Lumpur. The airline will operate five weekly flights. The move aims to boost trade and tourism, also special promotional fares are available. This brings Malaysia Airlines' direct connectivity to India to ten destinations, with 76 weekly flights between the two countries.

Finnair boosts long-haul capacity to Asia and the US

Finnair to bolster its long-haul schedule in summer 2025 by adding more flights on existing routes to China, Japan and the US. Finnair will increase flights from Helsinki to Osaka from five per week to daily from 30 March, while services to Nagoya will double from two to four per week. The airline also flies daily to both Tokyo airports, Haneda and Narita. In China, the carrier's flights from Helsinki to Shanghai will increase from three to four per week for the summer of 2025.

Malaysia Airlines & IndiGo link codeshare agreement for enhanced connectivity

Through this partnership, Malaysia Airlines will extend its reach within India by adding its flight code "MH" to seven additional domestic destinations, including Kolkata, Varanasi, Patna, Tiruchirappalli, Goa, Bhubaneswar, and Visakhapatnam. This complements the airline's current direct services to major hubs such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Hyderabad.

Aer Lingus expands transatlantic network

Ireland-based carrier Aer Lingus is adding another transatlantic route to its network, with a Dublin to Indianapolis service set to launch in May 2025. The IAG-owned airline will operate four flights per week – on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday – on the route to the Indiana city from 3 May.

The new route follows the carrier's recently announced plans to commence direct flights to Nashville next spring and marks its 19th direct route to North America from the Irish capital.

Navi Mumbai International Airport welcomes its first aircraft

In a significant achievement, an Indian Air Force aircraft made a successful landing on the south runway of Navi Mumbai International Airport, a project developed by Adani Group. The test landing marks major progress, with the airport slated to be operational by early 2025, capable of handling 90 million passengers annually.

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport reports 5.3 pc traffic growth in H1 FY25

Passenger traffic at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport grew by 5.3 % year-on-year to 26.68 million in April-September of the current fiscal year. International travel increased by 11 %. Domestic travel grew by 3 %. Mumbai Airport handled 163,973 air traffic movements, a 3 % increase from last year.

The USA and European airlines approach Air India to develop their generative AI chatbots

Major US and European airlines have sought Air India's expertise in developing generative AI chatbots. Air India's AI.g, which autonomously handles 97 % of custom queries, has been operational since May 2023. Additionally, Air India has filed for its first patent for a 'one-click booking' feature, set to launch by December.

VFS Global to launch Indonesia e-visa on arrival service for Indians & 96 other nationalities

This digital platform allows travellers to complete the entire visa process online before their departure, eliminating the need for time-consuming paperwork on arrival. By visiting the VFS Global website, applicants can submit required documents, pay fees, and receive their pre-approved e-VoA via email before their trip. The pre-payment of visa fees also ensures quicker processing through immigration counters and E-gates at Indonesian airports, offering a seamless entry experience.

Hilton to make Udaipur debut with 1st Hilton Hotels & Resorts property in the 'City of Lakes'

Hilton currently operates two hotels in Rajasthan — Hilton Jaipur and DoubleTree by Hilton Jaipur Amer — and this signing follows the brand's recent introduction of the Waldorf Astoria and Conrad Hotels & Resorts in Jaipur. Hilton Udaipur will feature 118 elegantly designed rooms and suites set within lush gardens, celebrating Udaipur's architectural and cultural heritage. Aiming to cater to the burgeoning destination wedding market, the property will offer expansive event spaces totalling over 2,200 square meters, including grand lawns and courtyards.

IHG projects growing corporate demand after solid Q3

Third-quarter system-wide room revenue generated by business transient travel at IHG Hotels & Resorts properties increased 2 % year over year, executives said on Tuesday this week, adding they expect further demand growth into 2025. On the whole, third-quarter systemwide average daily rate and revenue per available room each increased year over year while occupancy decreased slightly. The increase in third-quarter business travel room night revenue was additionally pronounced in IHG's Americas region, where it grew 3 per cent year over year.

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