

Countries roll out the red carpet for Indian travellers

Varuni Khosla

varuni.k@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

International tourism boards are vying for a slice of the growing Indian travel market, easing visa procedures, launching targeted marketing campaigns, and offering special deals to attract the affluent Indian traveller.

This surge in interest comes as India's outbound tourism market looks lucrative with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.4% between 2023 and 2032 to reach \$44.8 billion, according to *Unlock the Potential: A look into Outbound Tourism*, a Nangia Andersen Ltd report. It was at \$15.16 billion in 2022.

Tourism authorities are keen to court Indian travellers and businesses, with international boards visiting India, hoping to get new business. They are introducing simplified visa processes, launching local campaigns on television and digital platforms, and tapping social media influencers.



India's outbound tourism has a projected CAGR of 11.4% between 2023 and 2032. REUTERS

Mint spoke with half a dozen tourism boards, including those from Hong Kong, and Saudia Arabia who said they are making efforts to recover to their pre-pandemic visitor levels. This is not surprising as Indian tourists have been a significant source of revenue for neighbouring countries and even for those further away.

About 27 million Indians travelled abroad in 2019, before the pandemic, the report added. Over 20 million travelled overseas in 2022 with UAE, Saudi Arabia and US

being the top foreign destination for Indian tourists.

Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia are competing for the attention of Indian tourists this season by adopting visa-free entry policies.

Thailand waived visa requirements for Indian travellers in November 2023, allowing a 30-day stay until May 2024. Sri Lanka followed with visa-free access to Indian visitors and nationals from six other countries, valid through the end of March 2024. Malaysia, too, announced visa-free entry for Indian and Chinese citizens from December 2023.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong is considering launching an advertising campaign targeting Indians. "The Indian traveller profile is changing, and we see that in the spends on travel, they make now. It is a very important market for us. This is why we are contemplating a television and OTT advertisement soon," Puneet Kumar, director, South Asia, and Middle East at Hong Kong Tourism Board, said.

COUNTRIES ROLL OUT RED CARPET FOR INDIAN TRAVELLERS

Varuni Khosla

varuni.k@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: International tourism boards are vying for a slice of the growing Indian travel market, easing visa procedures, launching targeted marketing campaigns, and offering special deals to attract the affluent Indian traveller.

This surge in interest comes as India's outbound tourism market looks lucrative with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.4% between 2023 and 2032 to reach \$44.8 billion, according to *Unlock the Potential: A look into Outbound Tourism*, a Nangia Andersen Ltd report. It was at \$35.16 billion in 2022.

Tourism authorities are keen to court Indian travellers and businesses, with international boards visiting India, hoping to get new business. They are introducing simplified visa processes, launching local campaigns on television and digital platforms, and tapping social media influencers.

Mint spoke with half a dozen tourism boards, including those from Hong Kong, and Saudia Arabia who said they are making efforts to recover to their pre-pandemic visitor levels. This is not surprising as Indian tourists have been a significant source of revenue for neighbouring countries and even for those further away. About 27 million Indians travelled abroad in 2019, before the pandemic, the report added. Over 20 million travelled overseas in 2022 with UAE, Saudi Arabia and US being the top foreign destination for Indian tourists. Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia are competing for the attention of Indian tourists this season by adopting visa-free entry policies.

Thailand waived visa requirements for Indian travellers in November 2023, allowing a 30-day stay until May 2024. Sri Lanka followed with visa-free access to Indian visitors and nationals from six other countries, valid through the end of March 2024. Malaysia, too, announced visa-free entry for Indian and Chinese citizens from December 2023.