

Ministry of Tourism



PHDCCI's 14th International Heritage Tourism Conclave Calls for Community-Driven Cultural Tourism and Policy Innovation

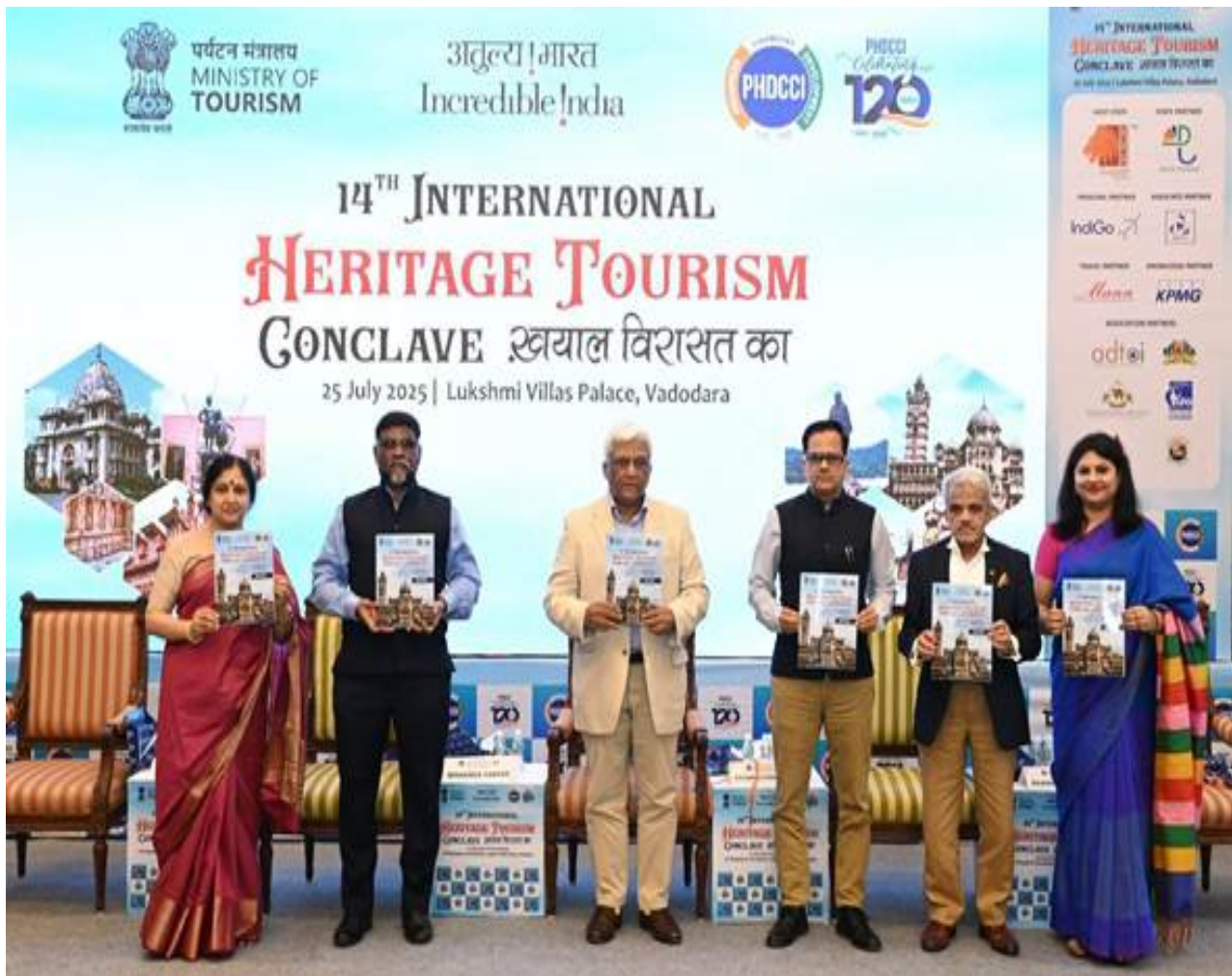
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Against the majestic backdrop of Lukshmi Villas Palace, in Vadodara the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) hosted its 14th International Heritage Tourism Conclave on 25th July 2025 in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Gujarat Tourism, Delhi Tourism, IndiGo, and IRCTC. Themed “खयाल विरासत का”, the conclave served as a vibrant platform for dialogue, action, and advocacy in the realm of heritage-led tourism.



The conclave convened a distinguished gathering of policymakers, royal dignitaries, diplomats, conservation architects, tourism professionals, food historians, and cultural custodians to deliberate on leveraging India's rich heritage for economic revitalization, community development, and cultural continuity.

Inaugurating the event, Mr. Rajender Kumar (IAS), Secretary – Tourism, Civil Aviation, Devasthanam Management & Pilgrimage, Government of Gujarat, outlined Gujarat's proactive vision for inclusive heritage tourism, stating, "We are not only restoring monuments but also ensuring direct benefits to local communities through jobs, infrastructure, and cultural pride."



Representing the regal legacy of Vadodara, His Highness Samarjitsinh Gaekwad, Maharaja of Baroda, emphasized the importance of relevance in heritage conservation: “Heritage must live on through connection with future generations, not just nostalgia.”



Mr. Mohamed Farouk, Regional Director – India Tourism Mumbai, highlighted the Ministry of Tourism’s commitment through flagship schemes like Swadesh Darshan 2.0 and PRASHAD, which link destinations via cuisine, folklore, crafts, and festivals.



Delivering the theme address, Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair – Tourism Committee, PHDCCI, remarked, “Heritage tourism is about identity, economy, and empowerment. Our aim is to catalyse policy innovation and foster public-private partnerships.”

A ceremonial Saraswati Vandana by students of Maharaja Sayajirao University set the cultural tone, followed by the launch of the PHDCCI-KPMG Heritage Tourism Report, underscoring the role of PPPs in revitalizing heritage assets.

Key Sessions and Highlights:

- Vibrant Gujarat Model: Panelists shared community-centric practices, from artisan engagement to adaptive reuse of built heritage.

- Shekhawati Legacy: Discussed challenges and incentives for private heritage owners and restoration frameworks.
- Culinary Tourism: With Prof. Pushpesh Pant and renowned chefs, the session spotlighted food as a cultural artefact and underutilized tourism asset.
- Traditional Gujarati Lunch – ‘Bapor nu Bhojan’: Curated by Chef Pritesh Raut, the meal told stories of Gujarat’s culinary heritage.
- Case Study – Champaner-Pavagadh: Presented by Dr. Amita Sinha, emphasized community tourism and UNESCO site repositioning.
- Women as Cultural Custodians: Featured HH Radhikaraje Gaekwad and HH Kadambaridevi Jadeja, urging support for women-led tourism ventures.
- Architecture & Storytelling: Advocated use of technology and inclusive narratives to attract younger audiences to heritage sites.
- Heritage Transport: Highlighted vintage mobility as a dynamic tourism experience and called for restoration grants.

The conclave also included over 25 B2B meetings connecting tourism boards, hospitality leaders, and cultural entrepreneurs to explore cross-sector collaborations.

A curated contemporary art showcase and a guided Heritage Walk of Lukshmi Villas Palace rounded off the day’s immersive experiences.

Partners and Supporters:

The conclave was held with support from Mann Fleet Partners, ADTOI, FHRAI, HTA Gujarat, IATO, TAAI, VTAA, and PHDCCI Annual Corporate Partners, including Mankind Pharma, KLJ Resources, Yashoda Hospitals, JK Tyre, and others.

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