

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2025**

- The 1st Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting in the field of Tourism and Media (under the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council) between India and Saudi Arabia was held on 4th December 2025 in virtual mode. The meeting deliberated on following agenda on potential areas in cooperation in Tourism, Media, Hospitality and Culinary education
- The 1st Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in the field of Tourism between India and Russia was held on 18th December, 2025, on the sidelines of the Meet Global MICE Congress from 17-18 December, 2025 in Moscow, Russia. The Indian side was lead by Mr. M.R. Synrem, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. The Working group meeting discussed way forward on Bilateral Tourism Cooperation and potential areas in Hospitality and joint Tourism promotion.
- Hon'ble Minister of Tourism and Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism jointly reviewed the progress of the projects sanctioned under 'Swadesh Darshan2.0 (SD2.0)', 'Challenged Based Destination Development (CBDD)-a sub- scheme of SD2.0', 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI Scheme) with the states & UTs on 15.12.2025 and 18.12.2025.
- The Ministry has taken up the issue of e-Visa portal with MHA and MEITY. This is a long-standing issue which is faced by tourists who apply to India for a visa and the current portal is cumbersome. Some suggestions have been sent to MEITY upon their request. MEITY has convened a meeting on the subject and has promised delivery of an integrated portal (covering visa, FRRO, immigration etc.) in six months, whereas our request has been to do only the e-Visa which can be done quickly and is not very onerous. Integrating multiple complicated NIC portals from the back-end is not easy and is a highly complicated task which is prone to failure. MoT also offered to provide private sector resources for making the E-Visa happen at no or limited costs to government. However MHA wants to retain this within NIC itself and how open it will be to functional changes in the forms etc. is debatable.- which leads to the worry that what might get produced is a minor iteration of what exists today, especially because the forms which are required do need considerable change. It may be noted that this is a niggling issue which can be easily tackled like was done for e-passports. It is important because this is the first electronic face of India that any visitor comes across.
- IHMs are national-level institutions similar to IITs and IIMs for hospitality management and have produced several well-regarded alumni in India and abroad. Over the years for various reasons they have gone down in terms of quality and an effort has been started to revamp them. This is across multiple themes such as employability assessment, getting more recruiters to hire and pay at least minimum wages, working on possible collaborations with established Indian management and global institutions

of excellence in similar areas, for curriculum and experience strengthening, to name a few.

- The on-ground delivery of projects under Swadesh Darshan and Prasad are extremely mixed and of poor quality in several places and the ministry has started visiting states for a review of these also. At the same time it is being contemplated whether a third-party audit can be conducted on the ground at the site for these projects so that the next iteration of these schemes can be better designed. Also under contemplation is whether the framework being used for assessment of these schemes can be modified and made more effective.
- Extremely preliminary first contact has been made with Global Theme Parks for assessing their requirement for a mega investment in India, if at all there is an interest.

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