Ministry of Tourism

Tourism growth must reach beyond popular destinations and create opportunities for local communities: Union Minister of Tourism & Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

National Digital Tourism Stack and National Mission for Alternative Destinations—Dekho Apna Desh 2.0 campaign launched by Union Tourism Minister on World Tourism Day 2026

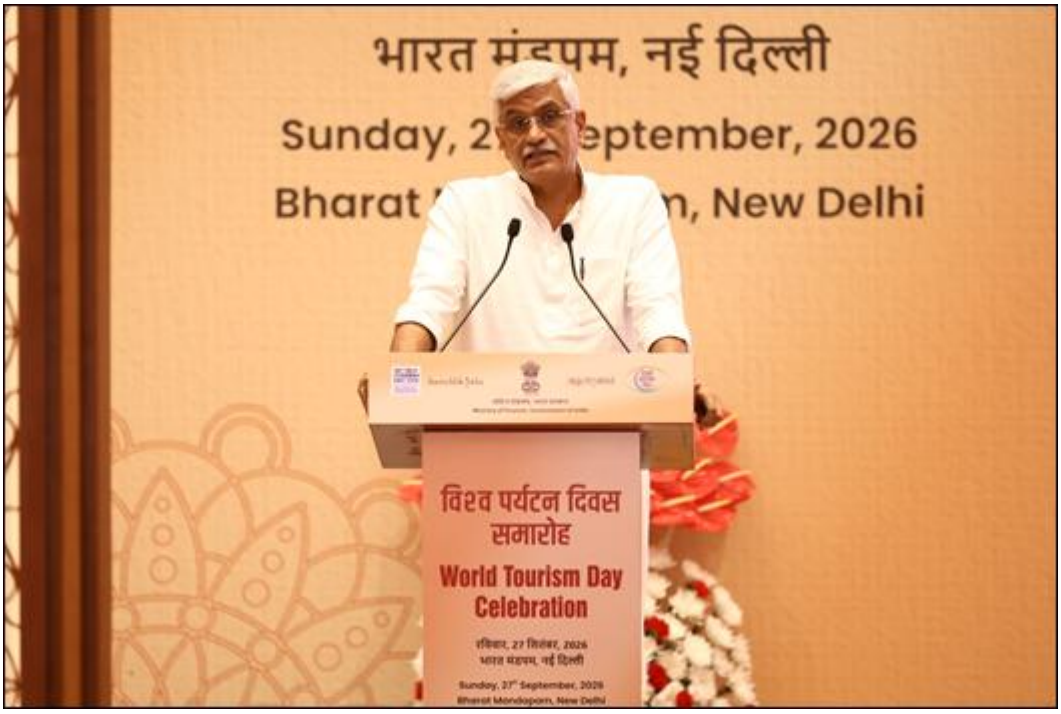
Ministry of Tourism exchanges MoUs with industry partners to strengthen tourism promotion and responsible travel

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The Ministry of Tourism celebrated World Tourism Day 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, today, in the presence of Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, senior officials of the Ministry and the tourism industry representatives.



On this occasion, the Union Minister launched the **National Digital Tourism Stack** and **the National Mission for Alternative Destinations — Dekho Apna Desh Campaign 2.0**. The Ministry also exchanged five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with industry partners for joint tourism promotion and marketing.



Addressing the gathering, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said, “Tourism is no longer just about visiting places; today’s travellers seek authentic experiences—local cuisine, local art, local traditions and meaningful connections that create memories, not merely photographs.” He further stated, “The next phase of India’s tourism journey must ensure that growth reaches beyond popular destinations, creating opportunities for local communities, entrepreneurs, women and youth while making tourism more balanced, inclusive and sustainable.”

Delivering the welcome address, Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, stated, “Artificial Intelligence, digital platforms and data-driven destination management can make tourism more accessible, responsive and personalised. India has considerable experience in Digital Public Infrastructure, and we are now looking at how these capabilities can be brought together for tourism.”

As part of the programme, Dr. Vivek Raghavan, Co-Founder, Sarvam AI, delivered the keynote address on this year’s World Tourism Day theme, “**Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism**.” He stated that AI has the potential to transform every stage of the tourism journey — from discovering destinations and planning a trip to booking, experiencing and sharing it. The opportunity before us is to use technology to make travel more seamless, personalised and accessible, while creating a customized experience for every traveller."

Presentations on the National Digital Tourism Stack and Nationa Mission for Alternative Destinations – a mission for redistribution of tourism demand & promotion of lesser-known destinations — Dekho Apna Desh Campaign 2.0 were made by Shri Bhuvnesh Kumar and Shri Suman Billa, Additional Secretary and Director General, Ministry of Tourism, respectively, followed by interactions with industry representatives.



The **National Digital Tourism Stack**, being developed in collaboration with ONDC and the support of International Centre for DPI Innovation and Advancement (ICDIA), aims to make India's tourism offerings more discoverable, accessible and trustworthy. This shared digital infrastructure will enable tourism providers to make their offerings available across participating platforms, supported by capabilities such as verified identities and supplier credentials, search and discovery, payments, ratings and grievance redressal. Envisaged as a collaborative effort involving the Ministry, States, Union Territories and industry, the programme will be implemented in phases with a pilot planned for January 2027.

To know more, click here.

The National Mission for Alternative Destionations – a mission for redistribution of tourism demand & promotion of lesser-known destinations — Dekho Apna Desh Campaign 2.0 seeks to distribute tourism demand more widely by promoting tourism-ready, lesser-known destinations as alternatives or complements to destinations experiencing heavy tourist footfall. In collaboration with States and Union Territories, the initiative will identify destinations with a distinct appeal, adequate infrastructure and accommodation, and the capacity to receive additional visitors sustainably. The initial focus will be on hill and mountain destinations, coastal and waterfront destinations, heritage and cultural towns, and regional pilgrimage destinations.

The initiative will bring together States, Union Territories and tourism industry partners to develop bookable itineraries and packages covering accommodation, transport, meals and local experiences, while creating opportunities for artisans, self-help groups, guides and other local stakeholders. Joint promotion will adopt a social media-first approach, supported by digital campaigns and industry participation. Visitor data and feedback will inform destination management and help monitor tourist footfall against assessed carrying capacity.

To know more, click here.



On the occasion, the Ministry of Tourism also exchanged five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Airbnb India Private Limited, FlixBus India Private Limited, Glance Digital Experience Private Limited (InMobi Group), Eicher Group Foundation and MakeMyTrip (India) Limited to strengthen destination promotion, community participation and responsible tourism. The partnerships cover homestay development and host skilling with Airbnb; destination promotion and responsible travel through intercity mobility with FlixBus; digital tourism content and responsible visitor messaging with Glance; community-led, heritage-based sustainable tourism in the Himalayan region with Eicher Group Foundation; and promotion of unexplored villages, authentic local shopping and Ministry-identified travel initiatives with MakeMyTrip. The collaborations under all these five MoUs are non-commercial, non-financial, non-binding and non-exclusive.

To know more, click here.



The occasion also marked the launch of a social awareness TV Campaign 2026 on *Swachhta*, featuring the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call to citizens to keep pilgrimage sites, temples and heritage sites clean and promote collective participation in cleanliness efforts. India Tourism Statistics 2026 was also released during the event. The launches were accompanied by the screening of the campaign TVC and a video on the publication.

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