



(Established in 1988)  
India Convention Promotion Bureau  
(Sponsored by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India)

# MICE *Pulse*™

An Initiative of India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB)

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## Mugdha Sinha appointed as Director General of Tourism

In a significant administrative reshuffle, Mugdha Sinha, IAS (RJ:99), has been appointed as the Director General of Tourism at the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Prior to this, she held the position of Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Culture. Known for her dynamic leadership and dedication to promoting India's rich cultural heritage, Sinha brings a wealth of experience and a visionary approach to her new role. Her tenure at the Ministry of Culture was marked by several successful initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting India's diverse cultural assets.

Manisha Saxena, IAS (AGMUT:96), has been named Additional Secretary in the Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. Saxena's previous role as DG Tourism saw her overseeing important tourism projects and initiatives, contributing significantly to India's tourism landscape.

The tourism sector, in particular, is poised to benefit from Sinha's strategic vision and leadership, which are anticipated to drive growth and innovation in promoting India's vast tourism potential.

## 'Tourism is a Catalyst for India's Economic Growth'

### Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat recently underscored the pivotal role of tourism in India's journey to becoming the world's third-largest economy. Speaking at an event in Jammu and Kashmir on August 7, Shekhawat highlighted the sector's immense potential in generating employment across the country. He remarked, "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, we are making efforts to position India as the third-largest economy in the world. So far, we have succeeded in elevating the country from 11<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> place. Tourism will be one of the major driving forces in taking the country from 5<sup>th</sup> to third place."

Shekhawat pointed out the surge in domestic travel, driven by rising incomes, and emphasized the importance of developing new tourist attractions to alleviate overtourism at popular destinations. "All established destinations face congestion due to a sudden spike in tourist arrivals. To decongest these areas, we must develop new destinations and points of attraction," he said. The Minister also called on state governments to create new tourist destinations, with the Centre offering support for infrastructure development.

Furthermore, Shekhawat addressed the 46th Session of the World Heritage Committee in New Delhi in July 2024, a landmark event hosted by India for the first time during Prime Minister Modi's third term. "This international meeting will further strengthen India's soft power and provide an opportunity for global outreach," Shekhawat stated. The event showcased India's diverse cultural and natural heritage, symbolized by the session's logo, inspired by the stone chariot of Hampi.

The Minister concluded by highlighting the significance of the event in enhancing India's global standing, aligning with the tagline, "May our Glory Grow," which reflects the nation's aspirations for broader recognition of its heritage and cultural contributions.





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## ICPB BOARD MEMBERS

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**Vice Chairman:**

**Amaresh Tiwari**

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**Chander Mansharamani**

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**Nimit Soni**

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**Ashish Jagota**

**Naveen Kundu**

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## Benefits of becoming an ICPB Member –

- Increased exposure and opportunities for Business Networking by providing 100+ leads.
- Assistance available for submitting international Bid to bring International Conferences to India.
- Assistance offered for availing different schemes being provided by MoT such as MDA (Marketing Development Assistance Scheme) etc.
- Enhancing Professional Skills through various Training Programs.
- Free listing on ICPB's website and promotion through ICPB Social Media offerings, member's directory, etc.
- Participation in the ICPB events such as CIC, Road Shows, FAM trips etc. and getting opportunity for showcasing products / services to the clients across the world and also networking with potential buyers at nominal cost.
- Become a part of decision making by contributing your inputs for submission of proposals to the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- Use of the ICPB logo (after prior permission from Secretariat).
- Stand eligible to be recommended by ICPB for organising Conferences in India.
- Allied Members can avail Networking and Promotion opportunities amongst the bureau's entire membership.

**ICPB MEMBERSHIP**

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## Message

VICE CHAIRMAN



Dear Industry Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce that our recent Fam trip to Kolkata has marked a significant milestone for MICE tourism in West Bengal. This successful collaboration with West Bengal Tourism has

showcased Kolkata's immense potential as a premier destination for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. The enthusiastic participation of our members, combined with the warm hospitality extended by the state, has been truly commendable.

During this trip, we had the opportunity to explore world-class venues and establish invaluable connections between industry stakeholders and government officials. This initiative not only highlighted Kolkata's capabilities but also set the stage for a more seamless and prosperous business environment in the region. I am confident that this momentum will continue to build, positioning Kolkata as a key hub for MICE activities.

While we celebrate these achievements, it is also important to address the Union Budget 2024-25 and its implications for our sector. Although the budget's emphasis on skilling and infrastructure development is a positive step, the direct support for tourism, particularly in marketing, has been lacking. The marketing budget has been significantly reduced to just 33 crore rupees, a stark contrast to previous allocations. The government's focus on developing spiritual and Buddhist circuits, such as Gaya to Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, and Odisha, is commendable but leaves other crucial sectors like inbound leisure, wildlife tourism, and the MICE industry underrepresented.

It is clear that a broader vision encompassing all aspects of tourism is needed to fully harness its potential for economic growth and job creation. As we move forward, we will continue to advocate for the support and recognition our industry needs to thrive.

**Amaresh Tiwari**  
Vice Chairman, ICPB

## Message

HON. SECRETARY



Dear Readers,

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the West Bengal government and all stakeholders, especially those from the Biswa Bangla Centre and other key venues, for the exceptional hospitality we received during our recent visit.

It is with great pleasure that I share the news of ICPB opening a chapter in Kolkata. This is a significant step forward, and I am delighted to announce that ICPB has signed an agreement with the West Bengal government to further strengthen our collaboration.

As we move forward, I would like to offer a few suggestions. Firstly, it is crucial to promote West Bengal as one of the premier destinations for MICE tourism. To achieve this, more promotional activities should be undertaken to attract key players in the industry. Secondly, there is a need to specifically target incentive agencies, ensuring that all MICE segments are jointly addressed to maximize the region's potential.

West Bengal has the resources and the charm to become a leading destination in this sector, and with the right strategies, we can make this vision a reality.

**Chander Mansharamani**  
Hon. Secretary, ICPB

## Message

HON. TREASURER



Dear Friends,

Our recent experience in Kolkata has been an eye-opener for many of us. Despite its reputation as being slow-paced and steeped in tradition, Kolkata has clearly evolved, particularly in terms of its Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) infrastructure. The city now has the capability to host significant events.

However, the key challenge for us as India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) seems to be not just in recognizing these advancements but also in actively promoting Kolkata and West Bengal as dynamic and preferred MICE destinations. By effectively marketing these newly developed facilities and the unique cultural appeal of the region, ICPB can help position West Bengal as a leading choice for major events on both national and international stages.

**Saurabh Bhargava**  
Hon. Treasurer, ICPB

## ICPB opens West Bengal Chapter under PPP module with West Bengal Govt

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) and West Bengal Tourism organized a fam trip to Kolkata from July 25-27, 2024, to highlight MICE tourism opportunities. The event featured venue tours, interactive sessions, and the launch of ICPB's Kolkata chapter, fostering collaboration between industry stakeholders and government officials.

The delegation comprised 18 ICPB members, including Mr. Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman of ICPB, Mr. Chander Mansharamani, Honorary Secretary of ICPB, and Mr. Saurabh Bhargava, Treasurer of ICPB, along with other senior members and industry stakeholders. This three-day tour focused on covering all dimensions of MICE tourism in Kolkata.

Upon their arrival in Kolkata, the delegation received a warm welcome from West Bengal Tourism before

heading to Eco Park in New Town. Eco Park, one of the greenest open spaces in Kolkata, spans an area of 194 hectares (480 acres) and includes a 42-hectare (100 acres) water body with an island. The park, ideated by Chief Minister Ms. Mamata Banerjee and developed by the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO), features attractions such as the 7 Wonders, the Solar Dome with 2,000 active solar panels, and boat rides around Eco Park Island. The park also offers banquet facilities for weddings and other events, making it a must-visit destination.

The second day of the trip was dedicated to exploring some of the finest MICE venues in Bengal, such as:

- Biswa Bangla Convention Centre: The delegation was given a comprehensive tour of the convention centre's various conference halls, the grand auditorium, and



the expansive exhibition centre.

- Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium, Alipore: This location, with its multiple auditoriums and halls, is ideal for conferences and other events.
- Biswa Bangla Mela Prangan: The final stop of the day featured a vast exhibition hall, mini auditoriums, workstations, boardrooms, and a food court. This venue is a one-stop destination for large exhibitions and conferences.

The final day was marked by an engaging interactive session organised by West Bengal Tourism. Senior officials from West Bengal Tourism, HIDCO, and ICPB delegates participated in one-on-one interactions, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration between industry stakeholders in MICE tourism and government officials. The event concluded with a significant milestone: the signing of an MoU between ICPB and West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (WBTDC) and

the launch of the Kolkata chapter of ICPB. This new chapter will serve as a vital connector between the state and the association, leading to a more seamless business environment.

Sharing his thoughts on the success of the event Mr. Amaresh Tiwari said, "The success of this fam trip to Kolkata marks a significant milestone for MICE tourism in West Bengal. Our collaboration with West Bengal Tourism has highlighted the immense potential of Kolkata as a premier destination for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. The enthusiastic participation of our members and the warm hospitality extended by the state have been truly commendable. This trip not only showcased world-class venues but also fostered invaluable connections between industry stakeholders and government officials. We are confident that this initiative will pave the way for a more seamless and prosperous business environment in the region."



# Biswa Bangla Convention Centre: A Premier Venue for MICE Tourism in New Town, Kolkata



wedding festivities, or cultural programs, this versatile space offers the perfect setting. The centre boasts a variety of facilities, including a main auditorium with a seating capacity of 3,200 (of which 3,000 seats are available for public use, with 200 reserved for HIDCO), two mini auditoriums each seating 400 guests, four elegant banquet halls, a cafeteria, an art gallery, a spacious pre-function area, and a beautifully decorated atrium.

Nestled in the vibrant city of Kolkata, home to the iconic Howrah Bridge, the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in New Town, West Bengal, India, stands as a beacon for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism. Developed by the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation (HIDCO) and inaugurated in 2017, this state-of-the-art facility was designed to attract and accommodate a diverse array of events, from intimate gatherings to large-scale conferences.

Strategically located near the renowned Jatragacchi Bridge, the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre is your ideal venue for hosting an array of social and cultural events. Whether you're planning close-knit celebrations, pre-

The banquet halls are tastefully adorned with classic furnishings and contemporary décor, creating an elegant ambiance for any occasion. These versatile spaces can accommodate anywhere from fewer than a hundred to over a thousand guests, depending on the specific hall. The Biswa Bangla Convention Centre offers a sophisticated atmosphere with thoughtfully designed seating arrangements, ensuring comfort and style for all attendees.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the convention centre excels in functionality. It provides in-house catering and décor services, complemented by exceptional hospitality. The facility includes a substantial exhibition space, ideal for large-scale events, and is home to the region's first single indoor auditorium with a seating capacity of 3,200—a truly impressive venue for performances, conferences, and more. Additionally, multi-level underground parking ensures that events of all sizes are seamlessly managed.

The Biswa Bangla Convention Centre stands as a premier venue in New Town, Kolkata, blending modern amenities with aesthetic elegance. It is an excellent choice for those seeking to deliver an exceptional experience in MICE tourism.

## New ICPB Members in August 2024

### Active Members

- Herodeep Production House
- YaSh Led Technology Pvt. Ltd.

## ALPCORD wins 'Best MICE Operator' Award

**C**hander Mansharamani, MD, ALPCORD, delightfully shared that his company recently won the Best MICE Operator Award at the Global Tourism Awards 2024.



## AVIATION UPDATE

- Air India Express has launched six new daily direct flights. The new flights will operate on the Chennai – Bhubaneswar, Chennai – Bagdogra, Chennai – Thiruvananthapuram, Kolkata – Varanasi, Kolkata – Guwahati, and Guwahati – Jaipur sectors.
- India's regional airline, flybig, has announced the launch of flights between Moradabad and Lucknow. The airline will operate thrice-weekly flights between Moradabad and Lucknow on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- Air India Express, from September 3, 2024, will operate six weekly flights, each connecting Dhaka to Kolkata and Chennai.
- IndiGo has announced Jaffna, Sri Lanka as the newest addition in its international route network. The airline will start non-stop daily flights between Chennai and Jaffna, starting September 01, 2024.
- Air India and Merlin Entertainments have entered a partnership whereby members of Air India Flying Returns loyalty programme will earn Reward Points when they buy tickets to LEGOLAND theme parks.
- IndiGo has launched daily direct Coimbatore-Singapore flight from Oct 27, 2024 and additional frequencies from Chennai to Singapore and Colombo starting from Oct 15 and Mumbai-Kuwait from Oct 29, 2024.

## ITC Hotels expand presence in Rajasthan with WelcomHotel Pushkar



**I**TC Hotels growth trajectory continues to rise as it signs a Welcomotel property with SRK Hospitality in Pushkar. Expected to open in 2026, Welcomhotel Pushkar, spread across 3 acres, will offer 96

well-appointed guestrooms, with ample banquet facilities and various food and beverage offerings including an all-day dining restaurant, lobby lounge, a specialty restaurant and bar.

## Fortune Hotels signs a new property in Rishikesh



**F**ortune Hotels has announced its latest signing in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. With stellar views of Holy Ganges, this under development property will open in June 2025. Poised to feature stylish well-appointed rooms and suites, this upscale retreat is designed to cater to the diverse needs of the modern-day traveller, be it the soul seeker or an adventure enthusiast.

### Editorial Board

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