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## India to announce new tourism policy to build capacity

The Government of India is coming out with a new tourism policy to strengthen and build capacity of tourism sector to provide better services and facilities to the tourists visiting the country, this was stated by Rakesh Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India at the inaugural session of the 'Tourism Week' at the India Pavilion in EXPO2020 Dubai.

Elaborating on the tourism policy, Verma added, "The policy will create five missions including National Green Tourism Mission, to mainstream sustainability in tourism sector; National Digital Tourism Mission, to digitalize the sector; Sectoral Mission on skill development, to ensure that the country has the best trained and qualified manpower to maintain high standards of service; National Mission on Destination Management, to focus on ensuring synergy and coordination amongst public and private stakeholders and National Mission on Tourism MSMEs to support and facilitate the start-ups, micro, small and medium enterprises."



**Rakesh Kumar Verma**

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## IATO appeals one nation, one travel policy for international travellers

IATO urges the government to have a one nation one travel policy for international travellers. It has been noticed that the confusion is being created due to travel guidelines/advisories being issued by various state governments for foreign/international travellers. To end this, IATO requests government to have one central policy which is binding on all the state governments.



**Rajiv Mehra**

Rajiv Mehra, President IATO, said, "Every state has a different policy which only compounds the confusion amongst the international travellers. While travelling to India, foreign tourists think of India as one destination and they plan their travel to India as per guidelines of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and as per advice given by the Indian tour operators. But multiple state-level policies discourage international tourists to travel to India which is already down to negligible levels due to pandemic."

## Kerala government resumes houseboat services after a long gap

In a bid to boost tourism in the state, the Kerala government has resumed houseboat services after a long gap. The services remain suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic for a long time. Given the number of unpredictable lockdowns and travel bans across the country, the houseboats went out of service in Kerala. The pandemic hit the boat owners really hard as they lost out on tourists. But now with a hike in the number of travellers, the boat owners have something to look forward to.



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## Railway Minister announces tourist circuit trains for the Northeast

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the introduction of 'Tourist Circuit Trains' in the North-eastern region of India. The union minister also mentioned that a study was underway to improve the rail connectivity in the Northeastern region.

The minister cited the attempt to promote the 'the rich heritage of northeast and showcasing its beautiful culture to the entire world' for the decision. He added that studies are being conducted to establish strategic railway lines to highlight the beauty of northeast, and start more passenger, intercity and Jan Shatabdi Express-like trains.

## Thailand reopens Maya Bay for tourists after more than 3 years

Thailand has reopened Maya Bay, a white sand beach made famous by the 2000 film The Beach starring Leonardo DiCaprio, more than three years after closing it to allow its ecosystem to recover from the impact of thousands of visitors each day.

Authorities shut the whole of Maya Bay to the public in 2018, saying coral reefs and beach areas had been damaged by constant tourist activities. But since the start of this year some visitors have been allowed to return. "The sharks have come back, coral reefs are regrowing, and the water is clear again," said Yuthasak Supasorn, the governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. To ensure it remains protected, authorities said only up to 375 visitors will be allowed to visit at one time and swimming will be prohibited for now.

