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## GATEWAY TO TIMELESS HOSPITALITY



### KERALA

Kumarakom - Gokulam Grand Resort & Spa  
Kovalam - Gokulam Grand  
Turtle on the Beach Resort  
Trivandrum - Gokulam Grand  
Kozhikode-Gokulam Grand

### KARNATAKA

Bangalore - Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa  
Coorg - Gokulam Grand Resort & Spa

### KERALA

Cochin - Gokulam Park Hotel  
Cochin - Gokulam Convention Centre  
Munnar - Gokulam Park  
Guruvayur - Gokulam Park  
Kasaragod - Gokulam Park  
Nalanda Resort

### TAMILNADU

Chennai - Gokulam Park Sabari  
Chennai - Gokulam Park, Ashok Nagar  
Coimbatore - Gokulam Park

### KARNATAKA

Bellary - Gokulam Park

### KERALA

Guruvayur - Sree Gokulam, Vanamala  
Guruvayur - Sree Gokulam, Sabari  
Guruvayur - Sree Gokulam, Apartments  
Thrissur - Sree Gokulam Residency, Amballur  
Kollam - Sree Gokulam Residency, Oyoor  
Manjeri - Sree Gokulam Residency  
Thalassery - Sree Gokulam Fort

### TAMILNADU

Gudalur - Sree Gokulam Highrange Inn

## Dear Friends

The 45th ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Tourism Forum (ATF) 2026 saw the ASEAN flagship travel trade exchange exhibition TRAVEX 2026 as well as the ASEAN Tourism Ministers meeting generated worldwide attention.

Ten years after hosting the ASEAN Tourism Forum, ATF returned to the Philippines, this time in Cebu, the “Queen City of the South”. The 45th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2026 convened over 5,000 participants, including ASEAN tourism ministers, senior government officials, heads of national tourism organizations, international buyers, airline and transport executives, travel trade leaders, media, and private-sector stakeholders.

The ASEAN flagship travel trade exchange exhibition TRAVEX 2026, gathered 271 buyers from 50 countries across the globe, 124 sellers, and 222 exhibitors at the newly purpose-built Mactan Expo Center in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu.

ATF 2026 once again served as a key platform for regional dialogue and tourism collaboration, bringing together the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Laos for an in-depth media briefing. Eight ASEAN Member States shared tourism updates, highlighting travel trends, priority initiatives, and the cultural and natural assets shaping their tourism directions. As host of ATF 2026, the Philippines opened the country briefing, followed by presentations from fellow ASEAN Member States.

With over 160 countries, strong ticket sales and a high-calibre convention, ITB, Berlin in its 60th year is looking forward to numerous anniversary events, new guided tours, the launch of MIA, a 24/7 chatbot, and headline topics ranging from AI to sustainability. ITB Berlin is growing particularly strongly in Asia, the Arab countries, and in the cruise, travel technology, adventure and health tourism segments. Angola, a country from southwest Africa will be the host country of ITB Berlin 2026. It will be showcasing its cultural diversity, spectacular natural beauty and a vision for sustainable development.

The 19th edition of Dubai Airshow - a meeting point for Aerospace, Space And Defense Ecosystem - hosted over 1,500 exhibitors (21 country pavilions), 148,000+ attendees, 200+ aircrafts on display (ranging from commercial jets and private planes to advanced military assets, UAVs, eVTOL aircraft) including start-ups and 40 Indian exhibitors.

For the first time, eVTOL aircraft — electric vertical take-off and landing models were on flying display. There were 4 eVTOL models that could redefine urban travel. The eVTOL flying display was led by Joby Aviation’s revolutionary aircraft. The first eVTOL is scheduled to be launched for commercial passengers to travel within Dubai city by Dec 2026.

Al Maktoum International Airport will be the world’s largest airport by scale, passenger volume – finally to serve up to 260 million travellers annually and being tech savvy embracing AI, biometrics as well as sustainability technologies.

The Dubai Airshow showcased a full-scale replica of Al Maktoum International Airport and many were in awe at the diverse range of residential zones, business sectors, cultural institutions, hotels, restaurants hospitals etc in southwest Dubai - Dubai World Central (DWC). Initially the airport expansion will serve 150 million passengers annually by 2032.

HANNOVER MESSE, the world's leading trade fair for the manufacturing industry, attracting 4,000 + exhibiting companies is introducing a new exhibition format – the Defense Production Area – dedicated to state-of-the-art manufacturing technologies for the defense sector. This is in addition to the main exhibition areas are Automation & Digitalization, Energy & Industrial Infrastructure, and Research & Technology Transfer.

The success story of wire began back in 1967 with the first ‘wire style exhibition’ in London. Today, wire has over 1,500 exhibitors on around 67,000 square metres and 60,000 international visitors who come to Düsseldorf as movers and shakers and forward thinkers. And because development never stands still, the organisers are setting a new benchmark in 2026: together with Tube, which has been appearing alongside wire in Düsseldorf since 1988, they are expecting over 2,500 exhibitors on 120,000 square metres of concentrated innovation space.



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Pool



Gymnasium



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Complimentary WiFi



Conference Rooms



Steam & Sauna



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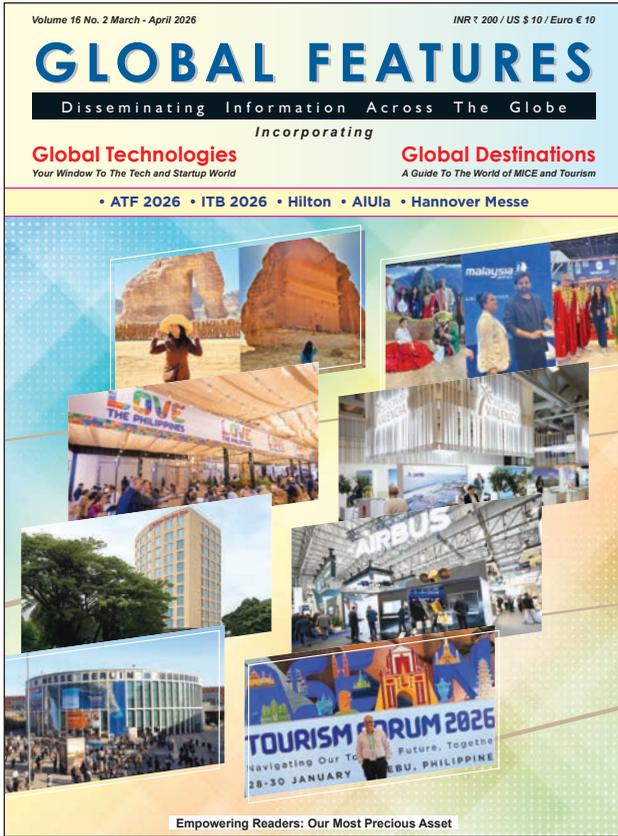
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Empowering Readers: Our Most Precious Asset

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# DISCOVER PRIVATE ISLAND RETREATS AT COMO MALDIVES



## **COMO Cocoa Island: Your Tranquil Oasis**

Nestled in the South Malé Atoll, COMO Cocoa Island is a hidden gem known for its serene atmosphere and unique overwater villas. Arrive in style with a 40-minute speedboat transfer from the Malé international airport.

Indulge in the allure of 33 overwater villas, including the iconic Dhoni Villas, reminiscent of traditional Maldivian fishing boats. With their high ceilings, airy interiors, and expansive windows, these villas provide a seamless connection to the surrounding turquoise lagoon.

The COMO Shambhala Retreat, spanning a third of the island, is a holistic haven offering yoga, Pilates, meditation, and spa treatments to rejuvenate your body and soul.

From diving and snorkelling to sunset and night fishing, adventure awaits at COMO Cocoa Island. With more than 20 dive sites within a short boat ride, explore the mesmerizing marine life in crystal-clear waters.

## **COMO Maalifushi: Tropical Elegance**

Embrace the unspoiled beauty of Thaa Atoll at COMO Maalifushi, a luxury escape accessible by a scenic 60-minute seaplane journey from Malé.

Be captivated by the allure of 33 overwater and 32 beach accommodations, providing unrivaled views of the Indian Ocean. Relish culinary delights at Tai, the Japanese seafood restaurant, or savour tropical flavours at Madi, where Maldivian, Mediterranean, Indonesian, and Thai influences converge. Unearth adventure with diving, swimming alongside gentle whale sharks, or riding the waves at renowned surf breaks. For an intimate escape, venture to the private island of Lavadhoo for a romantic picnic under the stars.

Rediscover serenity at COMO Shambhala, where signature treatments and open-air yoga pavilions await. Families are welcomed with the Play by COMO Space, offering purposeful activities for children aged four to 12. retreats promise an unforgettable escape.

Embrace paradise today. Experience the unmatched allure of COMO Cocoa Island and COMO Maalifushi in the Maldives.

*Among the Maldivian island resorts, COMO Maalifushi (above) and COMO Cocoa Island stand apart with their understated style, captivating the spirit of the Indian Ocean and barefoot chic ambiance.*



# ITB Berlin 2026: Celebrating 60 years of success



**The World's Leading Travel Trade Show ITB Berlin will attract trade visitors from all over the world as almost 6000 exhibitors from 160+ countries will be on display feels Chandragupta Amritkar as he prepares to visit ITB, Berlin for the 15th time.**

With over 160 countries, strong ticket sales and a high-calibre convention, the trade show is looking forward to numerous anniversary events, new guided tours, the launch of MIA, a 24/7 chatbot, and headline topics ranging from AI to sustainability. ITB Berlin is growing particularly strongly in Asia, the Arab countries, and in the cruise, travel technology, adventure and health tourism segments.

## Cruise Segment

In 2026, the focus in Hall 25 is once again firmly on the Cruise segment. This is the main gathering place of international cruise and tour operators. The entire Carnival fleet is represented again, along with AIDA Cruises, Costa Cruises, Princess Cruises, P&O Cruises and other major industry players such as Royal Caribbean, MSC, Norwegian Cruise Line and Disney Cruise Line – a strong reflection of the segment's relevance and significant market momentum. River Cruise Europe brings together numerous contacts and companies from the European river cruise industry at the show.



## Hotel Chains

Hall 9 is dominated by major international hotel chains such as BWH Hotels, Accor, Titanic Hotels and Radisson. They are building on their customary strengths and offering visitors a comprehensive insight into their current products and expansion plans. Other brands, including Hilton, Marriott and

InterContinental, are represented in the hall locations of their respective destinations throughout the ITB Berlin grounds. As in 2025, the online platforms Booking.com and Airbnb, this year's official Premium Partner of ITB Berlin, as well as trip.com and Expedia are occupying large stands, showcasing the latest booking and service solutions for travellers and business customers. An exciting new addition is IKEA for Business, which is presenting innovative solutions for hotels and conferences.

## ITB Talent Hub

In 2026, the former CareerCenter becomes the ITB Talent Hub in Hall 4.1. This now has an even greater emphasis on skills development. Partners and exhibitors include the Federal Employment Agency, which is offering free job application photos and checks, plus numerous companies as co-exhibitors, among them AIDA, Robinson, Motel One and Premier Inn. The programme on the stand includes pitch sessions for vocational schools. The Lighthouse Stage will feature formats on alumni paths and career paths in the tourism industry, content on female leadership and a Masterslam on Thursday afternoon. In addition, the Travel Industry Club is hosting talks with managing directors from small and medium-sized enterprises under the slogan 'Mutmacher & Macherinnen' (Encouragers & Doers), while a sustainability panel in cooperation with HWR Berlin will provide the latest outlook on responsible career paths.

## Travel Technology

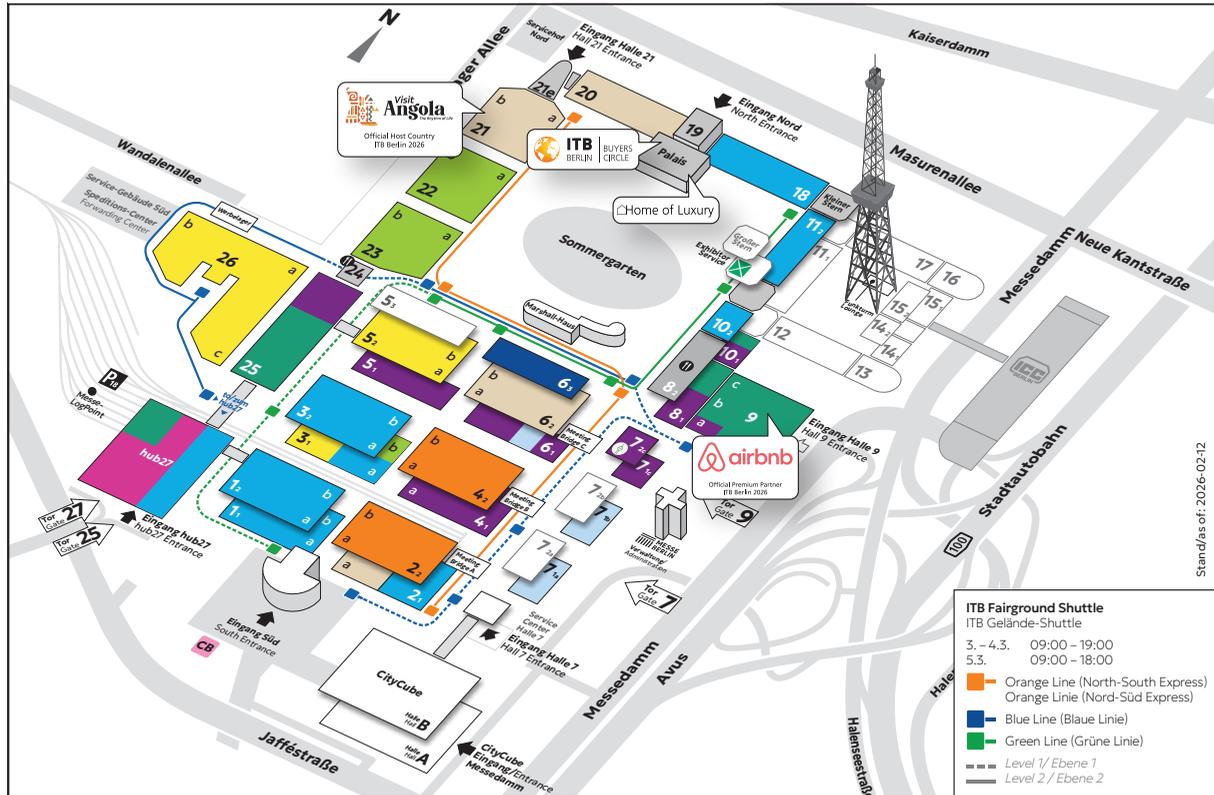
With six fully booked halls in 2026, Travel Technology remains one of the most dynamic segments at ITB Berlin. Global players and start-ups, including Travelsoft, Amadeus and GIATA, are represented in Hall 5.1, while the VIR start-up area is showcasing German innovations. In Halls 7.1c, 8.1 and 10.1, the focus is on hotel software, housekeeping and efficiency improvements. Hall 7.1c brings together hospitality tech giants such as Like Magic and Happy Hotel, as well as new providers such as Hotel Spider and Guest Butler. Hall 8.1 is booming too, with major hotel tech providers represented here. Duetto is expanding its presence, Clock Software and the Leonardo Hotels chain are increasing their floor space, while Hotelplaner is planning a larger presence and coming

# ITB Berlin 2026

3 - 5 MARCH



**ITB**  
BERLIN



- Asia-Pacific**  
Asien-Pazifik
- 3.1** Central - and Inner Asia / Zentral- und Innerasien
- 5.2a** Australia, South Asia, South Pacific / Australien Südasien, Pazifik
- 5.2b** South Asia Südasien
- 26** Far East, Southeast Asia, South Asia / Fernost, Süd-Ost Asien, Südasien
- Africa**  
Afrika
- 2.1, 6.2** North Africa / Nordafrika
- 21b** Africa, Israel / Afrika, Israel
- 20, 21a** Sub-Saharan Africa / Subsahara-Afrika
- Arabian Countries, Middle East**  
Arabische Länder, Vorderasien
- 2.2, 4.2** Middle East / Vorderasien
- Americas, Caribbean**  
Amerika, Karibik
- 3.1b** North America / Nordamerika
- 22a, 23** Middle and South America / Mittel- und Südamerika
- 22b** Caribbean / Karibik
- Germany**  
Deutschland
- hub27**

- Europe**  
Europa
- 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 10.2, 11.2, 18, hub27**
- Tourism Companies**  
Touristische Unternehmen
- Airlines, Airports, Carrier, Cruises, Hotels, Tour Operators, Tourism Companies / Fluggesellschaften, Flughäfen, Verkehrsträger, Kreuzfahrten, Hotels, Reiseveranstalter, Touristische Unternehmen
- 8.1, 9, 10.1, 25, hub27**
- ITB Berlin Convention**  
ITB Berlin Kongress
- 6.1 eTravel Stage**  
eTravel Track  
Hospitality Tech Track  
Tours & Activities Track  
AI Track  
Travel Tech Track
- 7.1a Orange Stage**  
Future Track  
Marketing & Distribution Track  
Responsible Tourism Track
- 7.1b Blue Stage**  
Carrier & Cruise Track  
Tour Operator & Travel Sales Track  
Destination Track  
Hospitality Track
- 7.1b Green Stage**  
Hospitality Track  
ITB Tech Time  
Diversity & Inclusion Track  
Business Travel Track  
Adventure, Youth, Outdoor Track  
ITB Deep Dives

- Segments**  
Segmente
- 4.1** Adventure Travel  
ITB Talent Hub  
ITB Lighthouse Stage  
LGBTQ+ Tourism  
Medical & Health Tourism  
Responsible Tourism  
Youth Travel
- 5.1** Travel Technology
- 6.1** Travel Technology, Tours and Activities
- 7.1c** Travel Technology
- 7.2c** MICE Hub
- 8.1, 10.1** Business Travel
- 25** Travel Technology  
Airlines, Cruises, Tour Operators, Tourism Companies, Travel Technology
- Media Center**  
Medienzentrum
- 6.3** Media Center / Medienzentrum

- Palais**
- ITB BUYERS CIRCLE**
- Home of Luxury**
- 7.2c**
- ITB Späti**
- 8.2, 24**
- Street Food Market**
- Shuttle**
- CB Charter Bus**

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with a golf simulator. PayPal is also new to the hall. Hall 10.1 focuses on payment and financial solutions – with VISA, Stripe and now also Revolut. Some of the hotel software solutions are now located in Hall 9, where Planet has a larger stand and players such as the HBX Group, Mews Systems and, for the first time, Access Workspace are represented. In addition to the exhibition, the focus is on face-to-face dialogue. Networking opportunities include the ITB eTravel Lounge powered by Travelport (Hall 6.1) and the ITB Travel Tech Café powered by GIATA (Hall 5.1).

**ITB Berlin Convention**

Taking as its slogan 'Leading Tourism into Balance', the ITB Berlin Convention 2026 brings 400 leading international speakers together on four stages, featuring 200 sessions and 17 theme tracks. Main topics include AI, above all agentic commerce, polycrises in tourism, regenerative strategies, experiential travel, longevity & well-being, inclusive travel and new payment ecosystems.

**Special anniversary moments on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds**

As ITB Berlin is marking its sixtieth anniversary it all began in 1966 as part of an overseas import trade fair with nine exhibitors from five countries and 250 visitors has today evolved into the World's Leading Tourism Trade Show with well over 5,000 exhibitors.

A special event awaits the community on day one, 3 March at 3 p.m. With the '60- Second Cheer for the Travel Industry', ITB Berlin invites everyone to join a 60-second round of applause throughout the trade show – as a sign of recognition for colleagues, stand neighbours, service staff and everyone shaping the travel industry. From 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m., ITB Berlin invites you to the official 'Cheers to 60 Years of Legacy' after-work party at the south

entrance. Guests can enjoy a free ITB signature drink and a toast to six decades of industry progress.

'Back to the Future – Travel Through Time' brings a real movie highlight to the exhibition halls, with the legendary DeLorean from the cult film in Hall 21e – ready for taking photos and enjoying memories. Visitors can travel virtually through six decades of ITB history – and take a look at the future of travel.

The vintage VW bus in Hall 23, Stand 116 promises a trip down memory lane. A mobile photo spot entitled '60 Years on the Road – Vintage Photo Memories', it offers visitors a personal trade fair souvenir – inspired by a vehicle that has accompanied generations of travellers.

At the north entrance, the 'Say ITB – Iconic Polaroid Moment' installation showcases anniversary activities in oversized polaroid style. Another community highlight is the 'ITB Berlin Goodie Bag Hunt': every day, the social media team will hide a bag of surprises on the grounds. A clue on the official Instagram channel leads to the trail – and whoever finds it first gets to take the bright orange bag home.

The Powered by ITB – Energy Balls, to be distributed at the entrances throughout the trade fair while stocks last, will ensure an energy boost for visitors.

*ITB Berlin 2026 will take place from Tuesday, 3 to Thursday, 5 March*



**Angola: Host Country of ITB Berlin 2026**

Angola, a country from southwest Africa is showcasing its cultural diversity, spectacular natural beauty and a vision for sustainable development. Taking as its slogan 'The Rhythm of Life', Angola is presenting itself as an authentic destination for adventurers, nature lovers and culture enthusiasts. From the imposing Kalandula Falls to the endless dunes of the Namib and the wild Atlantic coast, the country boasts impressive natural beauty with great tourism potential. At the same time, music, dance and living traditions are key to Angola's cultural identity: kizomba, semba and kuduro reflect the country's creative energy.

"With Angola as the Host Country of ITB Berlin 2026, a hidden gem will suddenly be in the international spotlight", said Deborah Rothe, Director of ITB Berlin. "We are delighted to soon be able to offer the country a prominent stage, where participants can experience the rhythm of Angola, its natural beauty, cultural diversity and hospitality with all their senses."

"It is a great pleasure and honour to be able to present Angola at the World's Leading B2B Travel Trade Show and meet so many interested trade visitors here," said Julia Kleber, CEO of the KLEBER Group and official representative of the Angola Tourism Board. "We are very proud to represent Angola as the official tourism board and raise its profile as a new, authentic destination in international tourism."

Events kick off with the opening press conference and opening gala on 2 March. On 3 March, the show will officially begin with an opening tour at 9.30 a.m., along with a ribbon cutting ceremony on the Angola stand (Hall 21, Stand 112). High-ranking representatives from politics and tourism will open the guest country's presentation. From 2 to 3 p.m., Angola will present itself as a tourist destination at the CityCube Berlin (Hall A1) and provide insights into its strategic vision for long-term, responsible tourism development.



ITB Berlin 2026 Partner Country Signing Contract  
From L to R: Dirk Hoffmann, COO Messe Berlin, Marcio Daniel, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Angola, Julia Kleber, CEO Kleber Group



RHYTHM LONAVALA



RHYTHM GURUGRAM



RHYTHM KUMARAKOM



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## ATF 2026 and TRAVEX 2026 taste success in Cebu



The 45th ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Tourism Forum (ATF) 2026 saw the ASEAN flagship travel trade exchange exhibition TRAVEX 2026 as well as the ASEAN Tourism Ministers meeting generated worldwide attention feels **Chandragupta Amritkar**

Arriving in Cebu, Philippines, well past midnight, we found there was a long immigration queue. But the ASEAN team, along with the Philippines Department of Tourism, had organised a special counter for ASEAN delegates. Immigration was quick, and as Indian citizens can enter the Philippines visa-free for up to 14 days for tourism, with options for a 30-day stay if holding a valid AJACSSUK visa (Australia, Japan, Canada, Schengen, Singapore, UK, or USA). I did not need a visa, and the immigration lady with a smile stamped the passport.

In the arrivals area, we were welcomed with smiling faces and a band playing melodic tunes at 2 am in the morning. Felt quite welcoming. As one of the hosted media, I was led to my media transportation bus. Check-in was smooth, and I had a relaxed sleep knowing that the next few days are going to be hectic.

Ten years after hosting the ASEAN Tourism Forum, ATF returned to the Philippines, this time in Cebu, the “Queen City of the South”. The 45th ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2026 convened over 5,000 participants, including ASEAN tourism ministers, senior

government officials, heads of national tourism organizations, international buyers, airline and transport executives, travel trade leaders, media, and private-sector stakeholders.

ATF 2026 and TRAVEX 2026 Taste Success in Cebu

Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. opened ATF 2026 with a focus on advancing sustainable and inclusive tourism. Anchored by the theme “Navigating Our Future, Together”, the Philippines’ ASEAN chairmanship is guided by five strategic thrusts under the banner SAIL ASEAN: strengthening trade and investment linkages; accelerating digital transformation; integrating ASEAN’s MSME development agenda; leveraging the creative economy and innovation; and advancing sustainable and inclusive growth.

The opening ceremony was held at the Mactan Shrine and attended by ASEAN tourism ministers. Senior government officials from China, India, and South Korea were also present, along with Philippine First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos.

### Five-year successor tourism blueprint

As part of ATF 2026, the ASEAN has formally signed into force its five-year successor tourism blueprint to further regional cooperation and transformation post-pandemic. The ASEAN Sectoral Plan (ATSP) 2026-2030 succeeds the ATSP 2016-2025. “The ASEAN Tourism Sectoral Plan will serve as the development across the region from privileged to have been selected as the surveys for the plan, devising Development Bank and the ASEAN Garcia Frasco.

The strategic plan outlines the for a sustainable and inclusive five interrelated focus areas: the tourism workforce, accessible product, and market diversification, As ASEAN Chair for 2026, commitment to advancing regional cooperation that strengthens tourism’s contribution to economic growth, expands quality employment, and positions Southeast Asia as a resilient and competitive tourism region.



framework for sustainable tourism 2026 to 2030. The Philippines was lead country coordinator in taking the plan in partnership with Asian Secretariat,” said Secretary Christina

region's collective vision and plans tourism industry, structured around resilient tourism, empowerment of and seamless travel, digital tourism, and sustainable tourism.

the Philippines reaffirmed its

## TRAVEX 2026

The ASEAN flagship travel trade exchange exhibition TRAVEX 2026, gathered 271 buyers from 50 countries across the globe, 124 sellers, and 222 exhibitors at the newly purpose-built Mactan Expo Center in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu. The newly opened Mactan Expo is developed by Megaworld and is located within the Mactan Newtown township.

Christina Garcia Frasco, Secretary, Philippines Department of Tourism (DOT) led the opening ceremony, alongside Minister of Tourism of Indonesia Widiyanti Putri Wardhana, ASEAN Tourism Association President Eddy Krismeidi, Tourism Promotions Board COO, Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles, representatives from ASEAN member states, local officials, and dignitaries, all united by a shared regional vision—to promote ASEAN as a unified tourism destination.

The three-day TRAVEX showcased tourism enterprises, tour operators, destination marketers, MICE venues, airlines, government agencies, and buyers from ASEAN, including the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the regional bloc's newest member state, Timor-Leste. The great news is that Singapore is scheduled to

be the host country for ATF 2027. Though the HPL group of hotels had Concorde Hotel Singapore presence on their booth along with 6 of their hotels across Malaysia, Thailand, and Cambodia, but it was on a hotel group booth.

“TRAVEX showcases the diversity and maturity of ASEAN tourism offerings. It is a platform that brings together not only



destinations and products but also aspirations, partnerships, and shared responsibility for the future of tourism in our region,” said Secretary Frasco, affirming that the travel trade event is more than a business but an opportunity that leads to tangible outcomes, lasting collaborations, and a stronger ASEAN tourism community.

Over the three days, there was a comprehensive line-up of official functions and networking events over lunch and dinner. The closing ceremony was held at the NUSTAR Convention Centre in Cebu City.

The Cebu City Police Office (CCPO) ensured a safe event with over 5,000 personnel deployed. The 2026 forum reinforced Cebu's capacity to host major international, multi-sectoral business events (MICE).

*Singapore will assume ASEAN chairmanship and host ATF 2027.*

## The 13th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers

The 13th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers (M-ATM Plus India) was held in conjunction with the 29th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) in Cebu, Philippines. The Meeting was co-chaired by Christina Garcia Frasco, Secretary of Tourism of the Philippines, and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Tourism, India. The Meeting recognised the growing strategic value of the ASEAN-India tourism partnership in supporting regional economic resilience. The Meeting observed steady growth in two-way travel, driven by rising demand for cultural and experience-based itineraries and improved air connectivity. India continues to be one of ASEAN's most dynamic visitor markets, while ASEAN travellers are showing increased interest in India's heritage, wellness, and nature-based destinations. India received 867,210 visitors from ASEAN in 2024 and 809,075 visitors from January to November 2025 (provisional). At the same time, 5.9 million Indian travellers visited ASEAN in 2024, with 4.7 million recorded up to Q3 2025, reflecting sustained confidence in ASEAN as a preferred destination.

The Meeting reviewed progress under the ASEAN-India Tourism Work Plan 2023– 2027, noting positive developments in knowledge exchange, tourism marketing cooperation, tourism crisis communication networking, and the sharing of statistics, research, and policy references. The Meeting noted with satisfaction the adoption of the ASEAN-India Joint Leaders' Statement on Sustainable Tourism. It also encouraged continued implementation of the Work Plan to support sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism development.



## Focus on key initiatives by ASEAN countries during ATF



From visa-free access to new air routes, ATF 2026 highlighted how ASEAN destinations are strengthening tourism cooperation and visitor experiences feels **Chandragupta Amritkar**

ATF 2026 once again served as a key platform for regional dialogue and tourism collaboration, bringing together the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Timor-Leste, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Laos for an in-depth media briefing. Eight ASEAN Member States shared tourism updates, highlighting travel trends, priority initiatives, and the cultural and natural assets shaping their tourism directions. As host of ATF 2026, the Philippines opened the country briefing, followed by presentations from fellow ASEAN Member States.

### Philippines: Visa-free entry for Indian, Taiwanese, and Chinese nationals

As an archipelago of more than 7,600 islands, the Philippines remains a force in the ASEAN region with initiatives focusing on improving visitor experience, safety, and service quality.

In order to promote frictionless travel Philippines has introduced visa-free entry for Indian, Taiwanese, and Chinese nationals; Visa waivers for cruise passengers; the introduction of a digital nomad visa targeting long-stay remote professionals; Planning a rollout of a VAT refund scheme for tourists. Health and wellness tourism has been strengthened through the launch of a 24/7 Tourist Medical Concierge, which has already assisted more than 20,000 tourists from 76 countries.

Bilateral tourism agreements with Brunei, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Qatar are expected to lower travel advisories, facilitate new air routes, and encourage cooperation in policy, standards, investment, and product development.



During the media briefing, Verna C. Buensuceso, Undersecretary for Tourism Development, DoT, Philippines, outlined the country's recovery, policy direction, and medium-term priorities while underlining the strategic importance of the sector.

The Philippines tourism development has entered a strong recovery phase following the pandemic, with International arrivals increasing from 163,879 visitors in 2021 to almost 6.5 million visitors projected for 2024–2025. “We are not just recovering, we are actually building momentum. Each step forward proves that the Philippines has the demand, the products, and the people,” said Buensuceso.

The DoT highlighted new and expanded international routes connecting Manila and Cebu with San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver, New Delhi, Guam, Perth, Brisbane, and Paris. Chartered flights from Russia and Mongolia have been introduced, while domestic connectivity has expanded through new routes linking Clark, Cebu, Davao and Iloilo with island destinations such as Coron, El Nido, Siargao, and Boracay.

Gastronomy tourism is advancing through the Philippine Experience programme, a national culinary roadmap and international promotion following inclusion in the Michelin Guide. Other growth sectors include cultural and creative tourism, diving supported by improved safety systems, golf tourism across more than 117 courses, sports and film tourism, MICE travel, and cruise tourism.

Maria Margarita M. Nograles, COO, Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, outlined TPB's role as the Department of Tourism's marketing and B2B engagement arm. “We are the marketing arm of the Philippine Department of Tourism in charge of our travel trade shows and strategic business-to-business engagements here at home and abroad,” she said.

Its 2025–2028 strategy follows a whole-of-nation approach using research-driven promotion, expanded branding, and positioning the country as a leading MICE destination.

### Visit Malaysia 2026 Kicks Off at ATF 2026

Tourism Malaysia had a great presence at TRAVEX 2026 with the Malaysian delegation led by YB Dato Sri Tiong King Sing, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC).



Malaysia was represented by a robust delegation of 80 participants from 44 organisations, comprising state tourism bodies, hotels and resorts, travel agencies, airlines, and product owners. The event was used to promote Visit Malaysia 2026 and to warmly welcome ATF participants to the country. Visit Malaysia 2026 underscores Malaysia's commitment to sustainable tourism development, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs).

Malaysia's tourism industry continues to demonstrate strong growth momentum, with international visitor arrivals reaching 42,196,892 throughout 2025, representing a 11.2 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2024.

During a media briefing, Malaysia's representatives emphasized that medical tourism is now a strategic pillar of the country's broader tourism and healthcare agenda, anchored by the upcoming Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism (MYMT) 2026 campaign.

### Timor-Leste: Newest Member of ASEAN

One of the main attractions for the media during ATF 2026 was the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) media briefings spread across two days. This enabled the media to get an idea of the country from official dignitaries from numerous countries.

Timor-Leste, which became the 11th and newest member of ASEAN (in Oct 2025) used the ATF 2026 platform to bring in global visibility to the country. Antonio da Silva, DG, Ministry of Tourism, Timor-Leste, highlighted the country's tourism strategy that focuses on quality over quantity or mass tourism.

The country has welcomed over 123 million international visitors in 2024 and generated billions in tourism revenue. Marine tourism will be a major focus where tourists can witness 1,200 reef fish species, 400 coral species, whales, and dolphins.



Timor Leste currently offers 2,400 keys, with around 600 located in the capital of Dili. Antonio da Silva said, "ATF 2026 provided us with immediate access to ASEAN's established marketing channels and an unparalleled platform to introduce Timor-Leste to regional and international tourism stakeholders as Southeast Asia's 11th member nation. We are eyeing 200,000 visitors annually by 2030 with a focus on quality tourism without pursuing mass tourism".

### Singapore Tourism Strategy 2040

Singapore has unveiled its Singapore Tourism Strategy 2040. The Tourism Strategy 2040 focuses on a long-term vision to position Singapore as a world-class destination offering distinctive experiences while remaining a vibrant and liveable city for residents. The plan aims to increase tourism receipts to between S\$47 billion and S\$50 billion by 2040. "We have plans to strengthen sustainable growth, deepen business events performance, and enhance visitor experiences while building stronger capabilities across the tourism industry," said Kwan Su Min, Director of Communications Marketing Group at the Singapore Tourism Board (STB).

Between January and November 2025, the country received about 15.5 million international arrivals, representing a 3 percent increase year-on-year (YoY), and is expecting the year total to reach around 18 million visitors. In the first half of 2025, Singapore generated S\$15.7 billion in tourism revenue with an average stay of approximately 3.5 days and occupancy averaging 82.4 percent from a room supply of around 74,000.



The Tourism Strategy 2040 focuses on a long-term vision to position Singapore as a world-class destination offering distinctive experiences. The plan aims to increase tourism receipts to between S\$47 billion and S\$50 billion by 2040, with growth driven primarily by visitor spending rather than large increases in arrivals. Business events and conventions form a cornerstone of the strategy. Singapore aims to triple MICE tourism receipts by 2040. MICE visitors typically spend nearly twice as much as leisure travellers, making the segment particularly valuable.

### Visit Vietnam 2026

Vietnam has become a very popular destination for Indians, especially with direct flights and good connecting flights.

# ITB Berlin 2026: 60 years of connection



In 1966, the first ITB Berlin took place with just nine exhibitors, marking the beginning of what would become the world's leading travel trade show.

*As the count down for the 60th anniversary of ITB, Berlin, numerous posts highlighting key milestones that have shaped the industry. Even after 6 decades, ITB Berlin is recognized as the world's leading platform for airlines, hotels, and technology providers, to network and share ideas. A major platform for innovation and market trends in the industry that tourism builds bridges.*

*Dive into the history and future of the world's leading travel trade show that have shaped global tourism – from the introduction of the jet age to the launch of Instagram.*

*Join the celebration*



On 9 February 1969, Boeing took flight with the first jumbo jet, opening the skies to longer journeys, more destinations, and cheaper fares for travelers everywhere. A game changer that made exploring the world easier than ever.



The 1970s marked a milestone in travel history: Package holidays became wildly popular, revolutionizing the way people explored the world. Travelers booked through agents, pre-paying one inclusive price, then spent more enjoying their destination.



In 1973, Maureen and Tony Wheeler took their travel knowledge and wrote it into a guide, thus establishing Lonely Planet. Their first guide was called Across Asia on the Cheap, and has since developed more than 800 guides for a diverse range of countries.



In 1979, Texas International Airlines became the first to introduce a frequent flyer program. The program encouraged both business and leisure travelers as well as created a sense of loyalty to fly to different destinations. From free flights to frequent flyer perks, travel more rewarding.



In 1999, the European Union established the Euro as the common currency. This change united Europe with a single currency and made travel across borders smoother than ever.



In 2007, Airbnb was born when two roommates in San Francisco, struggling to pay rent, offered air mattresses and breakfast to travelers. Fast forward to today, and millions of people have found unique stays and unforgettable experiences all over the world.



# History, innovation, and unforgettable moments

From the first airline frequent flyer program in 1979 to the opening of the Euro tunnel in 1994, the organisers plan to take you on a journey through six decades of travel history with a double spread that has shaped the travel industry.

From the world's largest travel trade show, getting the global tourism industry professionals, including tour operators, to discuss business at a single venue on a single platform. Established in 1966 it continues to serve as the heartbeat of the travel and tourism industry. The event even today is driven by curiosity, passion, and the belief that

travel trade show - on a very special journey through time. On this double spread we highlight the events from the birth of the Euro to the birth of ITB Berlin, and the rise of platforms like Airbnb.

Join us for the 60th edition from 3 - 5 March 2026 in Berlin



**1979:**  
First Airline Frequent Flyer Program

In 2010, Instagram launched and forever changed how we share and experience travel. From stunning sunsets to hidden gems, Instagram turned the world into a visual playground, inspiring wanderlust one post at a time. Over the years social media has grown changing the way we travel.



**1983:**  
First Commercially Available Mobile Phone



**2015:**  
First Robot Hotel in Japan

In 2015, Japan introduced the world to the first hotel staffed primarily by robots. The Henn-na Hotel greeted guests with multilingual robots, including a bow-tie-wearing velociraptor and humanoid androids. Automated trolleys transported luggage, facial-recognition technology replaced room keys, and in-room robots managed lighting and provided information.



**1990s:**  
Biometric Security and Paperless Flying



**1994:**  
The Channel Tunnel Connects a Continent

Throwback to 2016, travelers! That's when the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set a new global vision for climate action, equality, and community empowerment.

Considered as an economical destination like Thailand, the ministry plans to attract higher-spending visitors. Visit Vietnam 2026 programme is expected to showcase ethnic cultures, natural ecosystems, and signature events, including coffee festivals and international water sports competitions.

Currently, tourism accounts for over a quarter of Vietnam's total service export earnings, with aims to receive 25 million international arrivals and more than 150 million domestic tourists by 2026.

The numerous UNESCO-recognised heritage sites provide an immersive cultural experience throughout the country. The tourism products mainly focus on nature experiences – beaches, islands, highlands, caves, adventure tourism (trekking, camping, diving, etc.). Vietnam currently has more than 100 golf courses and expects the number to exceed 200 within the next few years. MICE tourism is another focus.

In his media presentation, Nguyen Quy Phuong, Director of International Relations and Tourism Marketing at the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT) focused on safety and ease of travel across Vietnam with an aim to make Visit Vietnam 2026 a grand success.

#### MaiA@ Indonesia

Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to promoting tourism by participating in TRAVEX. Indonesia had a 54-square-meter

Wonderful Indonesia Pavilion themed “Go Beyond Ordinary.”

Tourism Minister Widiyanti Putri Wardhana said Indonesia's presence at ATF TRAVEX underscores its focus on promoting national tourism potential while accelerating digital transformation across the sector. MaiA (Meticulous Artificial Intelligence of Indonesia) is part of the Tourism 5.0 priority program and is designed to deliver smart, data-driven services tailored to travelers' needs through the Indonesia travel platform.

“As we enter 2026, Indonesia's tourism sector is entering a new phase of growth and transformation. We are proud to introduce a major milestone in Indonesia's digital tourism journey, MaiA. We are targeting 16–17.6 million foreign tourist arrivals in 2026,” said Widiyanti.



## HPL Hotels@ATF 2026

One of the prominent hotel groups present at ATF 2026 was the Hotel Properties Limited (HPL) hotels. Headquartered in Singapore, a listed company controlled by Ong Beng Seng, HPL Hotels & Resorts is a hospitality management company operating a portfolio of properties across Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

“ATF 2026 was very fruitful; we managed to meet with many of our long-haul partners and shared with many new buyers the latest developments and activities at our hotels in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Melaka, Cameron Highlands, Langkawi, Tioman, Pattaya and Bali” said Michael Chua, VP Sales & Marketing.



The latest addition to the HPL group, The Boathouse Tioman was also on display and attracted quite a few visitors. Nestled on the southwest coast of Tioman Island in Kampung Nipah the resort features 31 luxurious bungalows across 30,000 square meters and is just a short ferry ride away from either Mersing or Tanjung Gemok. Known for its untouched rainforests, pristine beaches, and vibrant coral reefs, Tioman Island is a true jewel among Malaysia's islands. There were plenty of Indian buyers and Michael felt it was great interacting with them. “As India and China are one of our top contributing markets into Malaysia, Singapore, Pattaya, Phuket, and Bali. We are happy to meet with many potential key buyers from these two markets. We understand and know how to look after both our Chinese and Indian guests and particularly catering

to the various dietary requirements of our Indian guests. And finally to quote - Where love sets the table, food taste best,” said Michael.

The list of HPL participating hotels and their representatives for ATF 2026 included Michael Chua, VP Sales & Marketing, HPL Hotels & Resorts; Brenda Lee-McColl, DoSM, Concorde Hotel Singapore; Amilia Alias, DoSM, Concorde Hotel Shah Alam; Rohaizad Puteh (Zad), EAM Sales & Marketing, Hard Rock Hotel Bali; Raja Jurina, Director of Sales, Concorde Hotel KL; Sarinthip Khlongkhleao (Celine), DoSM, Hard Rock Hotel Pattaya; Agnes Tay, Hotel Manager, Casa del Rio Melaka; Fauzi Romli – Resort Manager, Casa del Mar Langkawi; Minako Koreeda – Director of Sales, The Boathouse Phuket; Samantha Koh, Hotel Manager, The Lakehouse Cameron Highlands; Norazian Musa, Sales Manager, The Boathouse Pulau Tioman.

# A business friendly hotel

A lovely property with a wonderful GM, makes a stay at Hilton Garden Inn, Mumbai a great experience feels **Chandragupta Amritkar**

**W**ith Mumbai getting its first Hilton Garden Inn (HGI), I was excited that Hilton was finally expanding in Mumbai – though it's only second property in Mumbai. I have been covering Hilton hotels for several years, across five habitable continents (except Australia) and numerous cities including Frankfurt (11 times), Munich (4 times), Addis Ababa (thrice), USA, Berlin, Amsterdam, Rome, Rio, Dubai, Mumbai, Delhi, etc. Also had the pleasure of interacting with Christopher Nassetta, President and CEO of Hilton in Berlin and discussing some finer points.

So when I connected with Aman Dhoundiyal, GM, HGI Mumbai International Airport to get some insights his warmth over a telecon was clearly felt – someone whom one would love to meet. He was kind enough to invite me to experience HGI.

Arriving at HGI, the façade is impressive. Developed in partnership with Fariyas Hotels & Resorts, the 140-room hotel is located on the Sahar road. The check in was smooth and I was allotted a nice room. This new hotel not even a year old in India's financial capital is already creating waves due to its being an affordable branded property providing high-quality accommodations close to the airport.

The lobby is comfortable with a ToGo, a 24/7 convenience store with all the basic needs and packed juices and energy bars. Making it a guest's delight, who doesn't need to step out for basic/extra amenities.

While Aman was in a meeting, I was invited to their restaurant, Together & Co. and was introduced to Malvika Kulkarni, Asst. MarCom Manager, HGI Mumbai International Airport. Located adjacent to the lobby this HGI solo restaurant Together & Co. was seeing some good footfall as it was soon heading towards the lunch hour. I was informed that while it's an all dining restaurant, its open 24x7, ideal for guests to relish a quick snack as per your palate anytime right in your hotel.



Joining us over lunch the soft spoken **Aman Dhoundiyal, GM, HGI Mumbai International Airport**, with almost two decades of experience across hospitality brands like Marriott (+Starwood), Oberoi, IHG etc, and even independent hotels like Jehan Numa Palace, introduced me to the variety of gastronomy options in the restaurant. In a tête a tête with him, he spoke fondly of his property.

## What is your biggest USP?

We cater to both leisure and business cliental. Our biggest USP is our location - located a couple of kilometres from the International Airport. For those coming for exhibitions and trade shows NESCO Convention Centre and Jio World Convention Centre are conveniently located. For leisure travellers famous

sights like Mahakali Caves and popular beaches are not far off.

## Your food is quite yummy.

We love it and so does our guests. It remains a major plus point thanks to our wonderful chefs who provide them with immersive culinary experiences. Apart from the Indian delicacies and regional cuisine our chef's expertise

ranges from Pan-Asian to European classics. We have awesome dessert choices too. Our brunch is also attracted locals as we provide wide selections including mocktails. Our bar lounge provides a refreshing cocktail.

## Hiltons Loyalty program is quite popular

Yes. That is another reason for our guests especially international to prefer a Hilton hotel. Our guest reward program lets guest earn both hotel points and airline miles for the same stay at nearly 7,000 Hilton hotels globally. With the Hilton Honors Event Planner Bonus Program, event planners can earn Hilton Honors Bonus Points and airline miles for qualifying events.

## What other pointers would you like to highlight?

Many guests expect international-quality service with a local touch. Our collaboration with Fariyas Hotels & Resorts brings together their regional expertise and Hilton's global strength just provides that.

With ergonomic workspaces, a rooftop swimming pool, and a fully equipped fitness center, the hotel is designed to cater for all guests. With our versatile meeting rooms and event spaces, the hotel is well-suited for business meetings, training sessions, and intimate social gatherings.



## Walking Through Art: Desert X AIUla's Living Landscape

I've always believed that some art landscapes are too vast for a ceiling to contain, and AIUla is the ultimate proof. For its fourth edition in 2026, **Desert X AIUla** is stripping art of its traditional "white box" constraints and letting it breathe in the wild. The exhibition stretches across Wadi AlFann, AIUla's rising hub for monumental land art. Guided by co-curators Wejdan Reda and Zoé Whitley, alongside Artistic Directors Neville Wakefield and Raneem Farsi, this edition draws inspiration from the legendary Lebanese-American writer Kahlil Gibran, who once beautifully described dreams as "Space Without Measure."

The very first art we experienced was by Mexican-born artist **Hector Zamora**, his artwork aptly named *Tar HyPar*, turns the valley itself into an instrument, becoming the desert's heartbeat. It was an especially fun moment when the drummers started a tune and people joined in, singing, dancing, vibing. We watched as the valleys, often associated with silence, became alive with echoes of music. *Murmur of the Pebbles* by **Basmah Felemban** focuses on the tiny stones we usually crunch under our boots without a second thought. She thoughtfully observes, "The pebbles carry the knowledge of our ancient rivers. The pebbles carry the waves with them." Saudi artist **Mohammad Alfaraj** reflects on the agricultural heritage of Al Ahsa in 'What was the Question Again?' - stories of the land and the people who tend to it are woven together in a maze of greenery and shade.

New Delhi-based artist **Vibha Galhotra** confronts environmental change and urban transformation in her art, *Future Fables*. She has taken rubble and fragments from old buildings and encased them

in a sophisticated steel framework. It's a place to sit, reflect, and wonder what stories we will leave behind for those who walk these valleys a century from now. The most compelling displays are the never-before-seen works by Saudi modernist legend **Mohammed AlSaleem** (1939–1997). Temporarily on loan from the Riyadh

Art collection, his works—*The Thorn*, *AlShuruf Unit*, *The Triangles*, *Flower Bud*, *Al Ahilla* draw inspiration directly from the desert's DNA.

**Sara Abdu's** *A Kingdom Where No One Dies* features rammed-earth walls that look like natural rock formations. However, the ridges and peaks of these walls are actually modeled after the sound waves of her own voice reciting poetry. It is a literal "echo" frozen in earth, allowing us to walk through the physical shape of a spoken word.

Cuban-born artist **Maria**

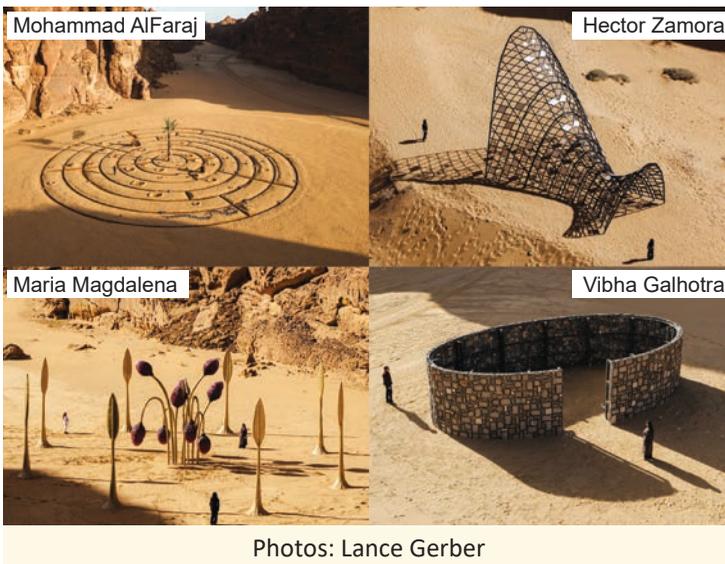
**Magdalena Campos-Pons** brings a burst of color to the desert with *Imole Red*. This towering, red-hued sculptures is inspired by both Yoruba traditions and the intense colors of AIUla sunset. For *The Water Song*, **Tarek Atoui** created a series of "half-excavated" instruments that seem to be emerging from the desert floor. It's a reminder that beneath the dry sand, there is a history of flow and life that still hums if you're quiet enough to hear it.

**Ibrahim El-Salahi** contributes a "forest" of carved wooden forms. This installation, called *Haraza Tree*, part of his 'meditation trees' series, is inspired by the *Haraza Acacia* from the banks of the Nile but also symbolizes the *Acacia* present in AIUla's canyons. The **Bahraini-Danish** explores kinetic installation, *Bloom*, featuring spinning forms that interact with the harsh sunlight to cast ever-changing shadows across the terrain. We engaged directly with the art by spinning its wheels and fell in love with the orbital dance of the cosmos.

My favorite was *The Living Pyramid* by **Agnes Denes**, a 30-foot-tall monumental structure currently located within AIUla's lush oasis. Previously displayed in many countries, including London, Germany, and Luxembourg. This time, it is sown with local flora such as rosemary, verbena, and wild grasses, and the pyramid will evolve throughout the exhibition. As Wejdan Reda said, "We invite visitors to discover the land through fresh perspectives and moments of reflection shaped by its light and history."

These inspiring artists continue to redefine how art can exist in dialogue with nature, history, and community. Here, you don't just view the art. You live it, you breathe it, and for a fleeting moment, you become a part of its boundless history.

**Pooja Amritkar**



Photos: Lance Gerber



## Between the Earth and the Sky: Vertigo by Villa Hegra

“You shouldn’t miss Vertigo during Desert X AlUla.” Ferial Fodil, CEO of Villa Hegra, had insisted during our visit to the joint Saudi-French cultural foundation. And I am glad I listened to her suggestion.

Directed by Rachid Ouramdane and presented by Villa Hegra - Vertigo blurred the boundaries between contemporary dance, aerial acrobatics, and highline performance. We took our seats on the neatly stacked blankets and pillows on the sand, and as the sun began to set, the act began. High above us, four bodies emerged slowly, stealthily. They stepped onto near-invisible lines suspended between towering rock formations.

My anxiety was, quite literally, on the rocks. French highliner Nathan Paulin, known for pushing the limits of extreme sports, brought both technical mastery and poetic vulnerability to the performance. There was something hypnotic about the way they moved, and every time they turned or twisted or jumped, one could feel a collective gasp ripple through the audience.

Presented in partnership with Chaillot – National Dance Theatre, with the support of Dance Reflections by Van Cleef &



Apels, the stage became alive with elite acrobats, contemporary dancers, and children from the AlUla community. Their bodies swept across the stage so effortlessly that it created the illusion of weightlessness. The atmosphere was amplified by the work of Christophe Chassol. His composition provided the heartbeat for the movement. The tunes were soothing yet intense as they echoed off canyon walls. Hearing a Bollywood tune in the middle of the AlUla desert was a pleasant surprise, and it synced so perfectly with their movements.

And as the acrobats moved in perfect unison on the ground, a lone performer was slowly hoisted into the air, rising through the dark to meet the highliner suspended above. It showed the beautiful bridge between the earth and the void.

When the act ended, and the performers descended slowly, as if returning from another world, applause erupted - loud, emotional, and long. I found myself clapping with shaky hands, adrenaline still buzzing through my system as I saw gravity itself become negotiable.

*Pooja Amritkar*

## Exploring AlUla: History, Culture and Flavours

AlUla has been a crossroads of civilizations for thousands of years. Ancient traders once passed through here, and today, curious travellers like me come searching for stories hidden in the sands.

The iconic **Elephant Rock**, over 50 meters tall, is a massive sandstone formation that looks exactly like an elephant with its trunk touching the ground. What makes it even more fascinating is



that it was shaped entirely by wind and water erosion over millions of years. The desert around it stretches endlessly, golden and raw. Standing beneath a formation that has stood for millions of years,

it is very easy to feel tiny!

**Hegra**, Saudi Arabia’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site, was once the southern capital of the Nabataean Kingdom, the same civilization that built Petra 2,000 years ago. Massive tombs are carved directly into giant rock formations, with detailed facades that still stand strong against time. I was amazed at how advanced the Nabataeans were, especially in water management and architecture in such a dry region.

**Daimumah** focuses on sustainability and nature, and offers a slower, more mindful side of AlUla. We walked through green



farms surrounded by desert mountains, learning about local agriculture and traditional practices. The highlight was a fresh lunch prepared with local ingredients. I did not know beetroot chips could taste so delightful!

Evenings at **Al Jadidah Arts District**, the creative heart of AlUla, are all about colorful murals, art galleries, cozy cafés, string lights, and soft music. Dinner at Villa Fayrouz impressed me with the variety of vegetarian options. Not usually a hummus fan, but at Fayrouz I couldn’t stop eating it! Everything, from fattoush salad to warm bread, was delicious and flavorful. Fine-dining experience at Maraya, with its mirrored walls reflecting the starry desert sky, was quite surreal.

AlUla surprised me in so many ways – such a unique blend of art, nature, history, culture, food, and ancient tombs - there’s a lot to see and even more to experience.

*Pooja Amritkar*

# Culture, Connectivity, and Tourism at OTM 2026

The energy at OTM 2026 was electric, filled with music, culture, and insightful conversations feels

**Pooja Amritkar**

Recognised by NielsenIQ as the Leading Travel Trade Show in India and Asia for two consecutive years, OTM has clearly grown into something powerful. This year, it hosted more than 2,200 exhibitors from over 60 countries, and more than 50,000 travel trade visitors.

Many countries participated exclusively, including Cambodia, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Mauritius, Oman, Philippines, Egypt, Qatar, Seychelles, Singapore, Switzerland, Namibia, and Uganda. Over 1,000 hosted and VIP buyers attended, creating focused B2B meetings across leisure, corporate travel, MICE, weddings, and niche travel segments.



Africa also had a strong presence. Several African tourism boards participated officially, positioning India as a core source market for leisure, wildlife, and experiential travel. From Tanzania's safaris to Namibia's dramatic landscapes and South Africa's diverse offerings, the continent is clearly investing in long-term partnerships with Indian travel businesses.

The Malaysia Pavilion occupied a massive footprint. With traditional music and graceful dance performances, it felt like Malaysia had brought a small piece of its culture right into Mumbai.

Malaysia Airlines made its debut at OTM 2026 as a Partner Airline with the largest-ever booth at the event. Conceptualised as an immersive pavilion Malaysia Airlines showcased its next-gen cabins and premium services, including the new business class seats of the airline (scheduled on flights from Kuala Lumpur to Brisbane). The airlines MHcorporate SME tactical campaign was much appreciated. Aimed at enhancing value for business travellers it offers several benefits for corporate customers. They even hosted cricket legends Zaheer Khan and Harbhajan Singh at their booth. As a sports fan, seeing these icons was a total "pinch-me" moment.. Quite fittingly, they won the "Best Experiential and Immersive Pavilion" award.

During a session, the Thailand Tourism Authority outlined its goal of attracting 2.55 million Indian visitors. They launched their "Healing is the New Luxury" campaign, focusing on wellness travel and destination weddings. Following the increase in Indian arrivals since the pandemic, the Moroccan Pavilion held exclusive

meetings to align its products with Indian luxury travel agents. Their booth, with its beautiful and authentic design, transported visitors straight to the streets of Marrakech. The Sabah Tourism Board introduced the 'North Borneo Cycling Paradise' initiative, specifically designed to lure Indian travelers away from the cities and into the scenic highlands

Bintan introduced itself alongside Singapore Tourism Board as a short-haul island travel option for Indian visitors, combining urban and beach experiences. Close by, Peru's dancers added to the celebration. Their colourful outfits and energetic movements drew a huge crowd. The Egypt booth was a major highlight, centered around the buzz of the fully operational Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Giza.

At the Taiwan pavilion, the atmosphere was interactive and warm. They had cultural activities that allowed visitors to participate instead of just observing. Paul Shih, Director of Taiwan Tourism Administration, defined Taiwan's tourism theme, "Waves of Wonder, as "waves" representing Taiwan's many layers, and "Wonder" meaning surprises at every turn.

Air India made a massive statement this year, highlighting their total brand transformation. Other airlines like VietJet, Qatar Airways, Uganda Airways, Egypt Air, and Aegean Airlines highlighted their connectivity and upcoming routes.



The domestic section was a vibrant tapestry of states - Uttarakhand, Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Odisha, Rajasthan, Goa, Uttar Pradesh dominated the floor. The travel technology segment was a hive of innovation, featuring companies that are changing how we book, manage, and experience trips such as TBO.com, Stamp My Visa, unimoni forex card, etc.

Sanjiv Agarwal, Chairman & CEO, Fairfest Media, said, "OTM 2026 continues to reflect the reality of global travel today, where India is no longer an emerging opportunity but one of the most sought-after and strategic travel markets globally."

OTM stands as a reflection of India's growing global influence in travel. It was definitely enlightening to meet media, travel trade professionals, exhibitors, and thought leaders all under one roof.

*The next edition of OTM is scheduled to take place from 1st to 3rd February 2027.*

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TAKING  
IS THE ONE  
THAT CHANGES  
YOU



*The Maldives By*

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# wire and Tube 2026: A hotspot for innovation



The success story of wire began back in 1967 with the first 'wire style exhibition' in London. When wire took place for the second time in 1970 in 1986 to move wire to a new, even more centrally located site: Düsseldorf. What began in Düsseldorf in 1986 with 488 visionary exhibitors and 21,000 trade visitors became the driving force for an entire industry. Today, wire has over 1,500 exhibitors on around 67,000 square metres and 60,000 international visitors who come to Düsseldorf as movers and shakers and forward thinkers. And because development never stands still, the organisers are setting a new benchmark in 2026: together with Tube, which has been appearing alongside wire in Düsseldorf since 1988, they are expecting over 2,500 exhibitors on 120,000 square metres of concentrated innovation space.

With the new special area World of Cables, they are also creating a platform for the first time that puts finished wire and cable products, i.e. end products, in the spotlight and shows how these essential components are changing entire industries.

## The new wire & Cable FORUM

The international wire and cable industry can look forward to another highlight in 2026: the new wire & Cable FORUM will be presented for the first time in hall 13 at Düsseldorf Fairgrounds.

Following the success of the Tube FORUM 2024, wire is thus sending another strong signal for knowledge transfer and networking. The new wire & Cable FORUM will be a central meeting place for everyone who wants to actively shape the future of the wire and cable industry. International industry



experts will give exciting presentations providing insights into current developments – from digitalisation and automation to sustainability and new materials and production processes. The programme will be complemented by inspiring panel discussions and a wide range of networking opportunities that promote direct exchange between speakers, exhibitors and trade visitors. Admission to the forum is free for all trade fair visitors.

‘With the new wire & Cable FORUM, we are creating a place where innovation and networking come together in a unique way,’ says Daniel Ryfisch, Director wire & Tube at Messe Düsseldorf. ‘Our goal is to offer the global wire and cable industry an even stronger platform for knowledge transfer and partnership-based exchange – right in the middle of the lively trade fair action. For exhibitors and visitors, this means even more visibility and business potential.’

With a strong focus on content and real added value for the industry, the world's leading trade fair Tube 2026 will kick off on 13 April 2026 in Düsseldorf. For the first time, the Stainless Steel & Nickel Alloy Tube & Pipe Market Insights Day 2026 will be held at the event focusing the attention of the international tube industry on what matters now and in the future: markets, trends and strategic perspectives for stainless steel and nickel alloy tubes.

## Electric vehicles in the fast lane

A new era of mobility is electrifying the automotive industry. All around the world, electric cars are in the fast lane, with adoption and demand continuing to rise. This is great news for the environment, because battery-powered vehicles don't produce any direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. And if the electricity comes from renewable sources, their carbon footprint drops to zero. Electric cars and the



energy transition are a match made in heaven! This synergy is made possible by high-performance components from the cable and pipe industry.

The market potential for e-mobility is enormous. For example, cables are needed to plug vehicles into charging stations, and to carry electricity from the charging port to the battery. Cables transport current through the inverter to the electric motor. Interior wiring supplies power to high-voltage components like air-conditioning compressors, or electric heating and cooling systems. High-performance wires and cables are essential to keep vehicles running smoothly.

*wire & Tube Expo will take place from 13 to 17 April in Düsseldorf*



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FORUM STAGE  
TUBE  
HALL 1, A47

FORUM STAGE  
WIRE & CABLE  
HALL 13

ENTRANCE EAST



World of Cables  
in Hall 13



- Halls 1, 3, 4**  
Tube Accessories
- Halls 1, 3, 4**  
Tube Manufacturing and Distribution
- Halls 5, 6**  
Bending and Forming Technology
- Halls 6, 7a**  
Pipe and Tube Processing Technology
- Hall 7a**  
Plants and Machinery
- Hall 7**  
Meet China's expertise



- Halls 9-13, 15**  
Wire, Cable, Wire Products and Technology
- Hall 14**  
Meet China's expertise
- Hall 16**  
Fastener Technology and Spring Making Technology including Products
- Hall 17**  
Mesh Welding Technology

ENTRANCE SOUTH



Plastic Tubes & Pipes Area  
in Hall 1C35



# HANNOVER MESSE 2026: Introducing a new exhibition format

HANNOVER MESSE, the world's leading trade fair for the manufacturing industry, attracting 4,000 + exhibiting companies is introducing a new exhibition format – the Defense Production Area – dedicated to state-of-the-art manufacturing technologies for the defense sector. This is in addition to the main exhibition areas are Automation & Digitalization, Energy & Industrial Infrastructure, and Research & Technology Transfer.

## The Defense Production Area

This new specialized platform will feature companies showcasing actionable solutions to help the defense and security industry scale its manufacturing capacity rapidly, efficiently, and with a focus on security – embedded in the industrial environment.



The Defense Production Area in Hall 26 will provide a central platform for manufacturers and suppliers with technologies, machines, systems, or components that are used in the manufacture of security-relevant products.

“HANNOVER MESSE shows how artificial intelligence, digitalization, and automation are making the factories of today and tomorrow more efficient, flexible, and productive,” says Dr. Jochen Köckler, Chairman of the Managing Board of Deutsche Messe AG. “The new Defense Production Area offers visitors from the defense and security industry in particular a central location to learn about solutions for scaling their production safely and efficiently.”

Visitors will discover solutions spanning the entire industrial value chain, from automation and additive production to digitalization and innovative materials. This new platform fosters direct connections between suppliers and users, facilitating targeted dialog on industrial production for security-critical applications.

Attractively located in Hall 26, the Defense Production Area offers powerful synergies with directly neighboring segments dedicated to robotics, logistics, IT/OT security, IIoT, and Wireless & Cloud.

The cooperation partner is Defence & Security Equipment International Germany (DSEI Germany), which is set to debut at the Hannover Exhibition Center in March 2027.

## Technology transfer

Technology transfer is essential for manufacturing companies to remain competitive, because research enables new digital tools, innovative materials and scalable production processes. HANNOVER MESSE brings theory and practice together, promoting cooperation between industry, science and politics.

One of the three main exhibition clusters is “Research & Technology Transfer” in Hall 11, where institutions, universities, young companies, and entrepreneurs present their innovations, projects and prototypes for manufacturing now and in the future.

The focus is on the results of basic and applied industrial research as well as the transfer of market-ready technologies into industrial applications. Visitors discover pioneering developments in fields such as artificial intelligence, bionics, intelligent textiles, nanotechnology, new materials, and quantum technology. Visitors also benefit from direct synergies with topics such as additive manufacturing, renewable energy, green hydrogen, lightweight construction, and robotics.

“Advances such as artificial intelligence, collaborative robots and extremely resilient, ultra-lightweight materials highlight the importance of research and development in manufacturing. Such technologies enable efficient, precise and energy-saving processes in factories and plants,” explains Iris Moser, project director of research and technology transfer at HANNOVER MESSE. “HANNOVER MESSE showcases these and many other technological breakthroughs. Visitors learn how to integrate new and further-stage developments into the adjacent exhibition areas ‘Automation & Digitalization’ and ‘Energy & Industrial Infrastructure’. Hall 11 is the ideal location for representatives from established companies, associations, political organizations, media outlets, and investment firms to discover new, market-ready research and potential partners.”





**Startups: More than 200 young companies provide inspiration**

Startups drive industry forward by quickly implementing innovations and introducing new technologies that encourage established companies to modernize. They promote competition, create jobs and have the potential to become market leaders. More than 200 young companies exhibit at HANNOVER MESSE’s Startup Area in Hall 11. Their offerings range from energy management and predictive maintenance software to an AI-controlled manufacturing platform and the world’s first reusable system for transporting small satellites into low Earth orbit. The program will also include pitches, masterclasses and networking events.

**Brazilian President Lula da Silva to open HANNOVER MESSE 2026**

The official opening ceremony of HANNOVER MESSE 2026 will see Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, inaugurate the event together with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz.

*HANNOVER MESSE 2026 is scheduled from April 20-24*

**HANNOVER MESSE**  
20 – 24 APRIL 2026



**AUTOMATION & DIGITALIZATION**

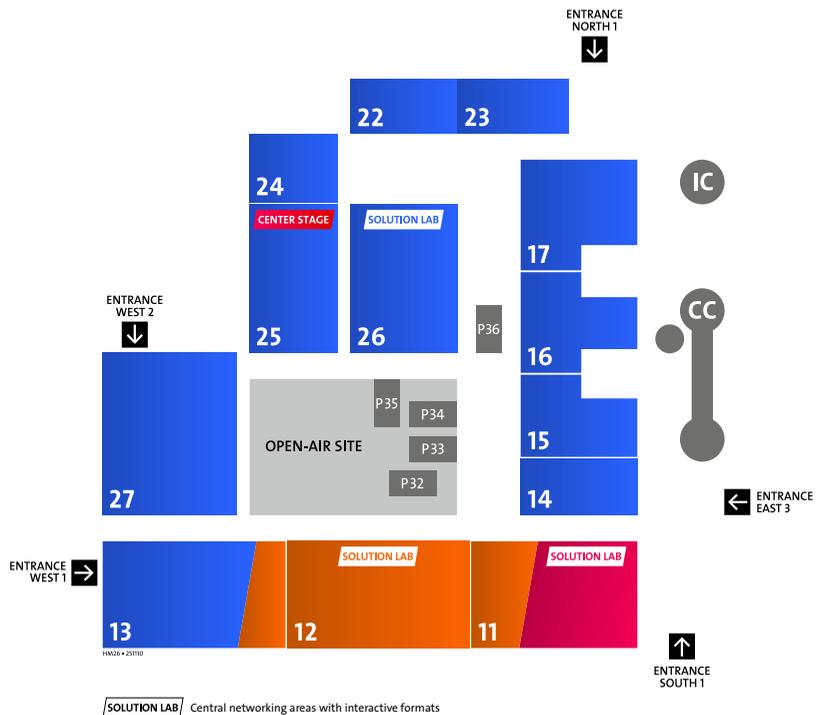
- AI in Manufacturing [Hall 27](#)
- Automation Systems & Components [Halls 13, 22 – 25, 27](#)
- IIoT, Wireless & Cloud [Halls 14 – 16, 26](#)
- Industrial Software [Halls 14 – 16](#)
- Industrial Supply & Engineering Solutions [Hall 17](#)
- IT/OT Security [Hall 26](#)
- Production Logistics [Hall 26](#)
- Production Technology for Defense [Hall 26](#)
- Robotics & Assembly Automation [Hall 26](#)

**ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Energy Infrastructure & Storage Technologies [Hall 12](#)
- Hydrogen Technologies [Hall 11](#)
- Power Engineering & Energy Automation [Halls 12 + 13](#)

**RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER**

- Research & Innovation Transfer [Hall 11](#)
- Startups [Hall 11](#)



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## Dubai Airshow 2025: The future is here



The 19th edition of Dubai Airshow - a meeting point for Aerospace, Space And Defense Ecosystem - hosted over 1,500 exhibitors (21 country pavilions), 148,000+ attendees, 200+ aircrafts on display (ranging from commercial jets and private planes to advanced military assets, UAVs, eVTOL aircraft) including start-ups and 40 Indian exhibitors, reports our Editor, **Chandragupta Amritkar**

The largest ever edition of Dubai Airshow under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, VP and PM of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai opened with 8,000 square meters of new exhibition space to accommodate demand, industry leaders are convening in Dubai to define the future of aerospace, space, and defence. From major fleet expansions to cutting-edge technology showcases, the event delivered defining moments that propel aerospace forward.

Tim Hawes, MD, Informa Markets said: “Dubai Airshow 2025 opened with an electrifying start, showcasing the remarkable growth and cutting-edge innovation driving the aerospace industry forward. This year’s edition is our most ambitious yet, offering a global platform for next-generation technologies that enhance efficiency, sustainability, and advanced mobility. Day one delivered major orders, and we expect even more transformative announcements in the coming days as industry leaders gather in Dubai to shape the future of aerospace.”

EDGE Group utilised the platform as an opportunity to launch 42 new products and solutions, delivering one of the most ambitious launches in its history. EDGE Group has also signed numerous agreements, including MoU’s with Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) to explore future collaboration across aerospace, defence, and related high-technology sectors, as well as with L3Harris Technologies to develop innovative solutions that will contribute to the UAE’s growing defense capabilities.

Tawazun Council, representing the UAE Ministry of Defence and Abu Dhabi Police, announced 20 major contracts totaling AED 18.016 billion during the first three days of Dubai Airshow 2025. These agreements, signed with leading local and international industry players, underscore the UAE’s commitment to strengthening its defence ecosystem and fostering private-sector participation in developing innovative, sustainable solutions for the future of national security.

Airbus had a great outing with adding new customers, partnerships and collaborations. Gabriel Semelas, President, Airbus Africa and Middle East, comments: “Dubai Airshow

is always an exceptional platform for industry innovation and collaboration, uniting the pioneers shaping the future of aerospace. This year continued that momentum, and we’re proud to have signed landmark agreements – such as welcoming flydubai and Buraq Air as new customers and seeing Etihad Airways become the latest A330neo customer, while expanding its A350 fleet. We also secured new partnerships and extended our long-standing collaborations with Strata and Mubadala, reflecting the UAE’s growing role in the global aerospace supply chain. As the Middle East continues to witness major growth and investment, the Airshow remains the ideal place to see this transformation in action.”

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and CEO of Emirates Airline said that Emirates airline would be more than happy to add more seats to Indian destinations.

The General Directorate of Identity and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) – Dubai issued a special stamp on the passports of participating delegates and visitors from abroad to Dubai Airshow 2025.

This year night sessions were introduced featuring a Drone Show and Airshow After Dark. The other point of interest was the Space Pavilion along with a two-day Space Conference.





### Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Pavilion

AAM took centre stage as visitors chance to explore electric aircraft and the future of urban transportation. For the first time, eVTOL aircraft — electric vertical take-off and landing models were on flying display. There were 4 eVTOL models

that could redefine urban travel. The eVTOL flying display was led by Joby Aviation's revolutionary aircraft. The first eVTOL is scheduled to be launched for commercial passengers to travel within Dubai city by Dec 2026.

And probably it's the next revolution in travel and hospitality industry as well as for the business community to solve travel woes. For hospitals it can be a boon and a big relief for patients and their relatives.

### Starlink Wi-Fi on airlines is expanding its network

During Dubai Airshow Emirates airline created waves when it announced that it will deploy Starlink WiFi across its entire in-service fleet, comprising 232 aircraft in the next two years,, beginning with Boeing 777 aircraft, at the conclusion of the show. The Starlink Wifi service will be free for all Emirates customers, across all cabins on Starlink-equipped aircraft, with one-click access that requires no payment or special Skywards membership.

The Boeing 777-300ER was on display at the Dubai Airshow so that visitors could experience high-speed connectivity first-hand while on the ground.

Starlink is Elon Musk's satellite internet service, operated by his company SpaceX providing a simple 'one-click-access' to passengers.

Starlink connectivity will enable Emirates customers to stream content, game, make calls, work, and browse social media throughout their journey on both seatback screens and personal devices simultaneously. This seamless integration delivers connected experiences at scale across all cabin classes. The airline will fit-out approximately 14 aircraft per month with Starlink, with installation on the Airbus A380 fleet commencing in February 2026.



Sir Tim Clark, President Emirates Airline said: "Partnering with Starlink is another defining moment in our continuous commitment to ensuring our customers 'fly better'. We're introducing the world's fastest Wi-Fi, elevating what passengers can expect from inflight connectivity, like seamless productivity, real-time communication with loved ones, and uninterrupted connection to their digital lives."

Chad Gibbs, VP of Starlink Business Operations, SpaceX, said: "With Starlink onboard your Emirates flight, you'll be able to stream, game, and have seamless video calls, just as you can do on the ground. We're excited to transform Emirates' travel experience and support the rapid installation of Starlink while maintaining focus on delivering overall quality of service."

It's also been shown that Wi-Fi speeds from in-flight Starlink internet are actually faster than you might get at home. If that seems counterintuitive, consider that Starlink's fleet of 7,000 low-Earth orbit satellites are a lot closer to your in-flight connection than the 22,000 miles that separate your connection at home with geostationary satellites.

Delivering download speeds of 100–250 Mbps (with peaks up to 450 Mbps), upload speeds of up 10-25 mbps, and latency under 99 ms, Starlink enables all passengers to enjoy activities such as

### Several orders and deals were announced during the show

- A multi-billion-dollar commercial order from Emirates - an order for 65 Boeing 777-9 aircraft, powered by GE 9X engines, worth US\$ 38 billion.
- Ethiopian Airlines committed to purchase 11 additional 737 MAX jets enabling the airline to grow its regional and international networks and expand its Addis Ababa hub.
- Boeing and TAAG Angola Airlines announced an agreement to extend training programs for pilots.
- Airbus Helicopters welcomed Bristow Group, a global leader in innovative and sustainable vertical flight solutions, as the newest operator of the Airbus H160. It will introduce up to five H160s into its fleet for offshore energy missions across Africa.
- The UAE's Tawazun council also announced eight deals totalling AED 3.766 billion, including contracts signed with Global Air Navigation Services (GANS), GAL, International Golden Group (IGG), Maximus Air, and Abu Dhabi Shipping Agency LLC (ADSA).
- flydubai placed a new order for 60 GEnx-1B engines from GE Aerospace to support its upcoming fleet of 30 Boeing 787-9 aircraft.
- flydubai and Airbus signed a landmark agreement to purchase 150 A321neo aircraft, with options for 100 more, marking the first time the airline has placed an order with Airbus. The agreement is valued at US\$ 24 billion, and deliveries will start in 2031.
- Etihad Airways placed an order for six A330-900s – making it the latest A330neo customer – along with seven additional A350-1000 aircraft and three A350F.
- Gulf Air announced an order for 15 Boeing 787 Dreamliners
- AerCap announced that South African low-cost carrier FlySafair signed a lease agreement for five Boeing 737 family jets, three 737 MAX and two 737NG.

video streaming, video calls, VPN access, and online gaming—simultaneously.

Starlink's optical space lasers transmit data throughout the Starlink constellation, providing continuous service in areas far from SpaceX ground stations - providing coverage for your flights over the open ocean and in polar regions.

Starlink is spreading its wings. A growing number of airlines are using Starlink Wi-Fi, including Hawaiian Airlines, United Airlines, WestJet, and Qatar Airways. Other airlines that are rolling out or have announced plans to use Starlink include Emirates, British Airways, Air France, SAS, Virgin Atlantic, China Airlines etc.

**AI Maktoum International Airport to be the world's largest airport**

AI Maktoum International Airport will be the world's largest airport by scale, passenger volume – finally to serve upto 260 million travellers annually and being tech savvy embracing AI, biometrics as well as sustainability technologies.

The Dubai Airshow showcased a full-scale replica of AI Maktoum International Airport and many were in awe at the diverse range of residential zones, business sectors, cultural institutions, hotels, restaurants hospitals etc in southwest Dubai - Dubai World Central (DWC).

The airport expansion will serve 150 million passengers annually by 2032, with a final capacity of 260 million travellers. Plans are afoot to use advanced engineering, biometric processing, AI-based security screening, have sustainable design, integrate transport systems including Etihad Rail.

DWC is expected to be five times the size of the existing Dubai International Airport (DXB) with five parallel runways and an astonishing 400 aircraft gates. But the best part is that Etihad Rail (UAE's national railway project) will have a scheduled stop at AI Maktoum International Airport. Etihad Rail will connect key cities - Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Al

Ain, Ruwais, Al Mirfa, Al Dhaid, Ghuweifat (Saudi Arabia), and Sohar (Oman).

A major international boost to Dubai's aviation future was announced today at Dubai Airshow 2025 as the UK Export Finance (UKEF) issued a US\$3.5 billion Expression of Interest letter to support participation of UK's businesses in the US\$35 billion expansion of AI Maktoum International.

Emirates airline will also invest \$10-12 billion (Dh36.7-Dh44 billion) in AI Maktoum International Airport. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and CEO of Emirates Airline is confident that it will be smooth sailing in terms of funding the transition from Dubai International Airport to AI Maktoum International Airport by 2032.

Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports said, "The AI Maktoum International Airport expansion project represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rethink how an airport should work and how the journey of the future should feel."

The expansion of AI Maktoum International Airport will deliver an airport designed for the next 50 years of aviation growth.



UK Minister for Trade Sir Chris Bryant, Khalifa Al Zaffin, executive chairman of the Dubai Aviation City Corporation and Dubai Airports CEO Paul Griffiths

*Dubai Airshow returns from 15-19 November 2027 at DWC, Dubai*

**Christmas cake mixing ceremony @ Gokulam Park Sabari OMR**

The cake mixing ceremony in hotels is a festive, pre-Christmas ritual. This traditional ritual is fast turning into a joyous event involving fun, social, and media-friendly gathering for hotels to create festive cheer and community bonding. It was no different at Gokulam Park Sabari OMR that hosted the traditional Christmas cake mixing ceremony where chefs, invited guests and media were made to don Santa hats and mix ingredients for Christmas cakes.

Hosted by the groups MD, Baiju Gopalan, and co-ordinated by the Cluster GM, Anand Ramachandran and Corporate Chef Arul Selvan the group invited dignitaries from the city, police force, hospitality professionals, corporate heads, principals and heads of colleges and universities, editors and TV channel heads.

The hotel had a wonderful Christmas décor and all of us relished cake mixing ceremony with the Santa uniform and caps. Kids enjoyed the event and a small award ceremony at the hands of Baiju Gopalan was

also held. Post that all the guests were invited to a special high tea prepared by the corporate chef that included snacks, desserts, wines, and tea & coffee.

Gokulam group that runs 25 hotels in southern India holds this festive ritual annually across its select properties.



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