

As Indian tourists visiting Maldives decline, tourism body plans road shows to boost travel

In a bid to entice Indian tourists back to the Maldives, a prominent tourism body in the island nation has unveiled plans to conduct road shows across several key Indian cities. This initiative arises as the influx of Indian visitors to the Maldives has witnessed a decline in recent times.

The Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO) has announced its intention to engage in discussions with India's high commissioner in the Maldives, Munu Mahawar, to explore avenues for enhancing travel and tourism collaboration between the two countries.

The decision to intensify efforts to attract Indian tourists comes in response to significant backlash against the Maldives sparked by derogatory remarks directed at India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media by three Maldivian officials. This backlash resulted in numerous cancellations of reservations and a decrease in planned visits to the Maldives by Indian tourists, including several celebrities.

Statistics from the Maldives' Ministry of Tourism indicate that India, once among the top countries in terms of tourist arrivals, has now slipped to sixth place. Currently, China leads with the highest number of tourists, followed by the United Kingdom, Russia, Italy, and Germany.

Following discussions held at the Indian High Commission in Male, MATATO has outlined plans to collaborate closely with the Indian High Commission to bolster tourism initiatives. This includes launching extensive road shows across key Indian cities and arranging influencer and media familiarization trips to the Maldives in the upcoming months.

MATATO has underscored the significance of India as a pivotal tourist market for the Maldives and has expressed keenness to partner with prominent travel

associations and industry stakeholders in India to showcase the Maldives as a premier travel destination.

This initiative unfolds amidst tensions between the Maldives and India, with Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu previously requesting the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the country, citing sovereignty concerns. Muizzu has announced intentions to repatriate all Indian military personnel from the Maldives by May 10.