

## **Travel and tourism will be the biggest beneficiary of IT exemption of up to 12 lakh: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**

Union Culture & Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has stated that travel and tourism will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of the recent budget announcement, which raises the personal income tax exemption to INR 12 lakh. This move is expected to boost disposable income for the middle class, encouraging higher spending on travel and holidays.

Speaking at the 32nd edition of the South Asia Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) in Delhi, Shekhawat emphasized that the benefits would extend beyond tourism, positively impacting real estate and white goods industries as well.

### **Strengthening India's Inbound Tourism**

For the first time, the minister underscored the urgent need to promote inbound tourism. While many countries rely on Indian travelers for their tourism economy, India must adopt a serious and proactive approach to attracting global visitors.

### **Tapping into India's MICE Tourism Potential**

Shekhawat also highlighted India's growing potential in MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism. He noted that world-class MICE infrastructure has emerged in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, creating an opportunity to position India as a global hub for business tourism. He urged stakeholders to attract major international events, broadening India's tourism scope beyond heritage and monuments.

### **A Thriving Tourism Landscape**

With a booming economy, expanding middle class, and significant advancements in infrastructure—including new airports, highways, high-speed trains, and increased airline capacity—India's tourism sector is poised for substantial growth. Shekhawat projected that India's tourism industry will grow at a CAGR of 24% over the next decade.

## Policy Initiatives for Sustainable Growth

On the policy front, the government has announced the development of 50 world-class tourist destinations and extended Infrastructure status to the hospitality sector to attract investment. Additionally, the government is incentivizing states to develop greenfield destinations, aiming to decongest popular tourist hotspots and promote sustainable tourism.