



GHA DISCOVERY



GLOBAL HOTEL ALLIANCE AND THE LEELA PALACES, HOTELS AND RESORTS SPOTLIGHT INDIA'S RISING GLOBAL TRAVEL POTENTIAL AS INDIAN GUESTS STAY AND SPEND MORE AT HOME AND ABROAD

- *GHA DISCOVERY India-based membership crosses landmark one million*
- *The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, in its 40th year of celebrating true Indian luxury, announces expansion into Coorg and Jaisalmer along with a new address to its private membership club- Arq By The Leela.*
- *Indian travellers spent \$75mn on global hotel stays in 2025, up 25% year-on-year*
- *More Indians are heading overseas, with UAE, Thailand and Singapore their favourites*
- *Revenues at GHA DISCOVERY hotels spike 22% to hit \$82mn in 2025*

Delhi, India, 27th March 2026: Indian travellers are staying and spending more both at home and abroad, reinforcing India's position as one of the world's fastest-growing and most influential travel markets, according to new insights from [Global Hotel Alliance](#) (GHA) and established hotel brand partner, [The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts](#).

A key growth market for the [GHA DISCOVERY](#) loyalty programme, India-based membership soared 53% in 2025 and crossed the one-million mark in 2026. Indian members generated \$75 million in global hotel revenues last year, up 25% versus 2024, and international stays continued to exceed domestic stays, accounting for 54% of total member driven revenue.

Top destinations for two years' running were the UAE, Thailand and Singapore, with Indian members spending \$43.2 million internationally in 2025 compared to \$38.8 million domestically.

In India, GHA DISCOVERY's 16 hotels, delivered strong performance, generating \$82 million in loyalty generated revenue in 2025, up 22% year-on-year, supported by domestic demand and experience-hungry international travellers, led by US and UK members.

This growth reflects broader momentum in India's travel sector. More than 32.7 million Indians travelled abroad in 2025, up 5.9% on 2024, provisional Ministry of Tourism data reveals, while domestic travel now exceeds pre-pandemic levels and inbound tourism is expanding, particularly across luxury, cultural and wellness segments.

Speaking at the [Skift India Intelligence Summit](#), held at **The Leela Palace, New Delhi**, on 26 March, Chris Hartley, CEO, Global Hotel Alliance, and Anuraag Bhatnagar, CEO, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, highlighted the key drivers behind this growth, fuelled by the rapid rise of Indian travellers staying at GHA DISCOVERY's global portfolio of 1000 hotels.

Continuing the conversation at a press conference the following day (27 March), **Chris Hartley, CEO of GHA said:** "India has rapidly become one of the most important and influential travel markets in the world. We are seeing strong growth in membership and spending, alongside a

clear shift towards more international travel. At the same time, our hotels in India are performing exceptionally well, reflecting robust domestic demand and growing international interest, and reinforcing India's importance to our global network."

As it enters its 40th year, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts continues to evolve in step with the rising aspirations of the global and domestic traveller. Marking this milestone, the brand has announced its expansion into new destinations including Coorg and Jaisalmer bringing its signature blend of Indian luxury and immersive experiences to culturally rich, high-demand leisure markets. This evolution is underpinned by strong operating performance and high guest advocacy, with The Leela achieving a Net Promoter Score of 86, among the highest in the luxury hospitality sector.

This growth extends beyond destinations into new formats of hospitality. Building on the success of its debut in Bengaluru, The Leela is expanding its private membership club, Arq By The Leela, with new addresses in the pipeline reflecting a growing appetite for exclusive, community-led luxury experiences among India's affluent and globally exposed travellers. The club is set to open its doors in Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai as the year unfolds. Designed to bridge the gap between traditional business clubs and more social, lifestyle-led spaces, Arq By The Leela offers a highly personalised environment where members can seamlessly transition from business to leisure.

Anuraag Bhatnagar, CEO, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, said: "As we mark 40 years of The Leela, our journey reflects the evolution of India's luxury traveller, who is increasingly global in outlook yet deeply drawn to immersive, culturally rooted experiences. Our expansion into destinations such as Coorg and Jaisalmer, alongside the growth of Arq By The Leela, reflects a clear shift towards more personalised, experience-led luxury. At The Leela, about 50% of our revenues today come from experiences beyond rooms, spanning dining, wellness and curated programming. Partnerships such as Global Hotel Alliance play a critical role in connecting us to a global base of high-value travellers, while allowing us to retain the distinct identity of Indian luxury. As we grow, our focus remains on building destination-led experiences that are both globally relevant and deeply rooted in India."

Indian members show strong preference for family-trips, loyalty and premium experiences

Growing Indian member travel demand for privacy and exclusivity was one top trend identified in GHA DISCOVERY's Q1 2026 loyalty research among members, with 21% of those surveyed willing to pay for more private or managed experiences, compared to 16% globally.

India is also the leading market globally for family-driven travel, with 49% of members prioritising time with family and friends, versus the 38% global average, while leisure travel continues to gain traction, with 81% of Indian business travellers extending work trips for leisure.

Engagement with loyalty programmes is among the highest worldwide – 93% of Indian members say they would choose a hotel with a global loyalty programme, and 90% perceive GHA DISCOVERY as a luxury offering.

Looking ahead, GHA DISCOVERY is well positioned to capitalise on India's travel market growth. Its expanding portfolio in India – including The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts, Anantara

Hotels & Resorts and Araiya Hotels & Resorts – offers the diverse, high-quality experiences increasingly sought by both domestic and international travellers. At the same time, its growing global network of properties and partnerships positions the programme to capture rising outbound demand, set to expand five-fold by 2040.

For more information visit [Global Hotel Alliance](#), [GHA DISCOVERY](#), [The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts](#).

GHA DISCOVERY is complimentary to join, and travellers can [sign up online](#) or download the GHA DISCOVERY app and register on their mobile phones. Travellers can also connect with GHA DISCOVERY on Instagram, Facebook and WeChat.

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About GHA and GHA DISCOVERY:

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) is the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands with over 50 brands and 1000 hotels in 100 countries. Its award-winning loyalty programme – GHA DISCOVERY – provides more than 35 million members with recognition, D\$ rewards and exclusive experiences across its hotels and partners, both with and without a stay.

Through membership in GHA, brands expand their global reach, drive incremental revenue and reduce dependence on third-party channels, all while maintaining management independence and individual positioning. For more information, visit globalhotelalliance.com or ghadiscovery.com.

About The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is India's largest institutionally owned and managed pure-play luxury hospitality brand. Backed by the Brookfield Group, The Leela operates 15 award-winning properties across India's premier leisure and business destinations. Recognized globally for architectural excellence and bespoke services, The Leela has been ranked the #1 hospitality brand globally by Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards in 2020 and 2021, and among the top three in 2023 and 2024. The brand remains committed to delivering timeless Indian hospitality through world-class luxury experiences. For more information, please visit our website www.theleela.com and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).