

Direct flights between India and PH soon

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 29 January, 2025



Manila : The much-anticipated direct flights between India and the Philippines are expected to begin later this year.

During the Indian Republic Day reception in Taguig City on Monday(January 27), Indian Ambassador to the Philippines, Shri Harsh Kumar Jain, suggested that people-to-people connections are set to grow further, with the likely launch of direct flights between the two countries in the coming months.

India's flag carrier Air India and IndiGo are being eyed to cater the non-stop flights.

This development comes as Manila rolls out new measures to tap into Indian outbound tourism as it recalibrates to meet targets amid a decline in Chinese arrivals.

The Philippines previously launched the e-Visa system for Indians

nationals and is also working to come out with an action plan specific to the India-Philippine tourism relations.

In the same event, Frasco said flights between Manila and New Delhi are indeed possible “within the year” based on the direction negotiations between relevant agencies are currently going.

“But what the Department of Tourism is also advocating is are not just flights to Manila, but flights direct to our other destinations that include Cebu and Clark,” she said in an interview.

“The reports given to me emanating from the Department of Transportation is that there is a very big possibility that it will be within this year and that the flight will be to Manila,” she added.

Meanwhile, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) is also increasing its engagements with Indian stakeholders in the Philippines as it ramps up promotions for the market.

“We are looking now at India and we are working closely together. At the TPB, we have a number of trade shows and business missions in India, and we are working closely with the Indian Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines,” TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Nograles said in a separate event on the same day.

Around 79,000 Indian visitors traveled to the Philippines in 2024, marking an over 12 percent growth compared to the previous year but still fewer than the numbers recorded by other neighboring Southeast Asian states.

Based on ASEAN data, more than 4.2 million Indians traveled to Southeast Asia alone in 2024.

On top of wooing leisure travelers, the DOT is also positioning the country as a wedding and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) destination for the Indians.

“The MICE capacity of our island destinations are actually ideal for these types of events. And the beauty of our destinations is napaka-diversified ng tourism offering natin at napaka-family friendly (they have diversified tourism offerings and are family-friendly),” Frasco said.

“So, whether you're single, a couple, or a small or big family, the

Philippines has something for you depending on where you go," she added.

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