

Tourism booms in India, China despite geopolitical tensions

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Dhaka: The global travel and hospitality sector is poised for steady growth in 2025, driven by emerging markets such as India, China, and Southeast Asia, despite ongoing geopolitical uncertainties, according to industry veteran Chris Hartley.

Hartley, CEO of Dubai-based Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), noted that while mature markets like Europe and North America remain stable, the strongest growth opportunities lie in developing regions, including South America.

"China took longer than expected to recover, but it is now in full rebound mode. We also see tremendous potential in India over the next few years," Hartley said.

Emerging markets like Indonesia offer significant business

opportunities, particularly in Southeast Asia, but growth prospects extend well beyond the region.

Countries like Vietnam are rapidly becoming travel hotspots, while South American destinations continue to gain momentum. "If you're looking for long-term growth, watch the recovery of China, the travel boom from India, and the rise of new destinations across Southeast Asia," Hartley added.

GHA, the world's largest alliance of hotel brands, operates on an airline alliance model. Hartley's remarks follow GHA's announcement that it has onboarded Rotana, one of the UAE's largest hotel brands, as a member.

Hartley said this move gives the 30 million members of the GHA Discovery loyalty program access to 80 new properties across the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and Turkey. "With Rotana joining, we will be close to 950 hotels, and we have high hopes to hit 1,000 hotels very soon," he said.

The group expects to surpass 1,000 hotels by 2026, driven by increasing demand for flexible loyalty programmes. "It is an exciting time for loyalty programmes in general, which are very much at the heart of the growth of the hospitality sector because that's what engages consumers with hospitality brands," stated Hartley.

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