Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, New Delhi

Webinar

on

"Spiritual Tourism: A Catalyst for Indian Tourism Economy"

Date: -26th Feb. 2026

Banarsidas Chandiwala Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, New Delhi, organised a webinar on "Spiritual Tourism: A Catalyst for Indian Tourism Economy" on 26th February 2026. The webinar aimed to explore the growing significance of spiritual tourism in the contemporary tourism landscape and its potential to contribute to India's tourism economy while fostering cross-cultural understanding and international cooperation.

The programme featured eminent international academicians and tourism experts, including Prof. Piotr Zmyslony, Vice President (Europe), Euro Asia Tourism Studies Association (EATSA), Poland, and Prof. Yanki Hartijasti, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Indonesia. Through their insightful presentations, the speakers examined the evolving dimensions of spiritual tourism, changing generational travel preferences, the relationship between spirituality and well-being, and the potential of spiritual tourism to strengthen cultural ties between nations. The webinar provided a valuable academic platform for understanding how India's rich spiritual and cultural heritage can be positioned as an important contributor to sustainable tourism development and global engagement.

In the **first session**, Prof. Piotr Zmyslony discussed "Spiritual Tourism as a Bridge Between India and Central-Eastern Europe." He highlighted the cultural similarities between India and Poland, particularly their shared respect for traditions, history and hospitality. He also discussed the changing preferences of Generation Z, which increasingly favours personalised and experiential spirituality over institutionalised religion. The session explored key travel motivations such as family bonding, self-development, spiritual reflection and cultural exploration. The speaker further highlighted faith-based pilgrimages, cultural-spiritual heritage and contemporary spirituality and wellness as important dimensions of spiritual tourism.

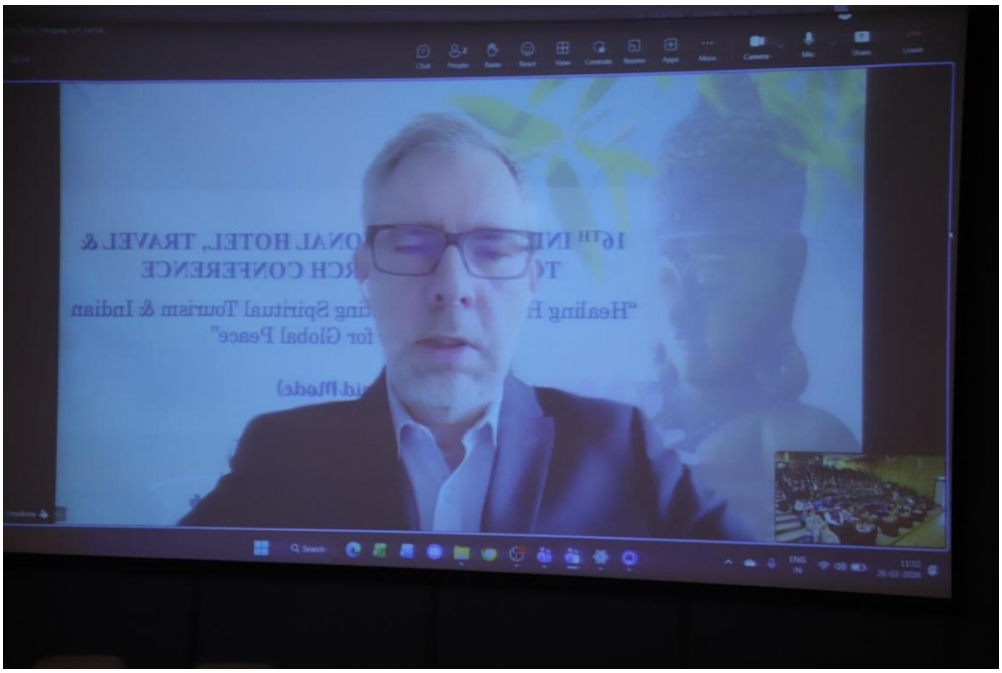
Speaker: - Prof. Piotr Zmyslony, Vice President (Europe), Euro Asia Tourism Studies Association (EATSA), Poland

Title:- ***Spiritual Tourism as a Bridge Between India and Central-Eastern***

Timing : 10.30- 12.30 Hrs



Prof. Piotr Zmyslony, Vice President (Europe), Euro Asia Tourism Studies Association (EATSA), Poland delivered an insightful address on Spiritual Tourism as a Bridge Between India and Central-Eastern Europe. He congratulated and expressed gratitude for being a partner of the 16th IIHTTRC. In his speech he highlighted the shared characteristics traits between Poland and India mentioning that both countries showed a respect towards tradition and history whilst showcasing their hospitality towards guests. He highlighted the inclination of Generation Z to individualized spirituality from institutionalized religion where travel motivations focused on bonding with family and friends, self-development and spiritual reflection, cognitive exploration and personal development. He emphasized travel trends associated with the faith-based pilgrimage, cultural-spiritual heritage, and contemporary spirituality and well-being.



In the **second session**, Prof. Yanki Hartijasti presented “From Selfie to Soul-Searching: The Generational Shift in Spiritual Tourism.” She examined the transition from social-media-driven travel experiences towards more meaningful journeys centred on self-discovery, emotional well-being and spiritual transformation. She highlighted the paradox of digital connectivity and spiritual isolation, emphasising the growing preference for individualised and experiential approaches to spirituality. Drawing comparisons between the high-stress lifestyles of East Asia and the traditional hospitality and spiritual heritage of India and Indonesia, she positioned spiritual tourism as a potential medium for global well-being and international peace. She also emphasised the importance of spiritual leadership in tourism, suggesting that Artificial Intelligence can support logistical functions while authentic human interactions and meaningful spiritual experiences remain central to the industry.

Speaker: - Prof. Yanki Hartijasti, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Indonesia

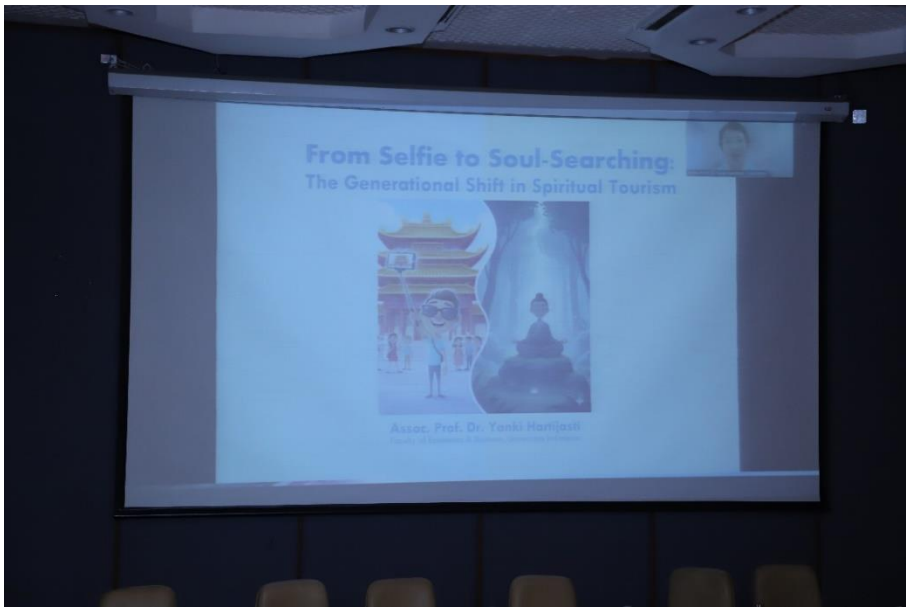
Title:- ***From Selfie to Soul-Searching: The Generational Shift in Spiritual Tourism***

Timing : 14.30- 16.30 Hrs



In her online keynote address on topic "From Selfie to Soul-Searching: The Generational Shift in Spiritual Tourism," Prof. Yanki Hartijasti, Associate Professor, Department of Management, Faculty of Economics & Business, University of Indonesia, explored the evolving landscape of travel from performative social media moments to deep, internal transformations. She identified a paradox of connection where digital connectivity often leads to spiritual isolation, prompting a shift from rigid, institutionalized religious dogma to a liquid religion focused on individualized, experiential healing. By contrasting the high-stress, burnout economies of East Asia with the ancient, hospitality-driven traditions of India and Indonesia, Dr. Hartijasti highlighted how spiritual tourism serves as a vital "global therapy" and a bridge for international peace. She concluded by advocating for spiritual leadership in the tourism

industry, integrating AI as a logistical companion while preserving the authentic, high-touch human connections and sacred silence necessary for true soul-searching.



The webinar brought together international perspectives on the emerging role of spiritual tourism in shaping contemporary travel experiences and strengthening global relationships. The webinar provided valuable insights into the evolving dimensions of spiritual tourism and its growing relevance in the global tourism industry. The deliberations highlighted that spiritual tourism extends beyond conventional religious pilgrimages, encompassing personal transformation, cultural exploration, emotional well-being and meaningful human connections. The international perspectives shared by the speakers reinforced India's potential to emerge as a significant destination for spiritual and experiential tourism, drawing upon its rich cultural traditions, spiritual heritage and hospitality ethos. The discussions also underscored the importance of understanding changing generational preferences, embracing technological advancements responsibly and preserving the human essence of tourism experiences. Overall, the webinar successfully highlighted spiritual tourism as a promising avenue for strengthening India's tourism economy, promoting cross-cultural dialogue and fostering international collaboration. It also provided students, faculty members and tourism professionals with an opportunity to appreciate the emerging trends and broader socio-economic significance of spiritual tourism in a rapidly evolving global environment.