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Mastercard Report Highlights Asia-Pacific's Rising Corporate Travel and AI-Driven Tourism Trends

India leads the region's corporate travel momentum with Hyderabad, Bengaluru, New Delhi and Mumbai ranking among the world's top destinations as AI adoption and currency shifts reshape travel patterns.

By **Ankit Kankar** | September 13, 2026



Picture Courtesy | Public Domain

Drawing on Mastercard's aggregated and anonymized data, the report finds that the rapid expansion of technology and artificial intelligence industries is pulling business travelers toward the region's fastest-growing hubs. At the same time, AI-powered travel planning, currency fluctuations, and shifting spending patterns are reshaping where and how people travel across the region and beyond.

India emerges as a key corporate travel hub

MEI developed a Business vs Leisure Momentum Index to track where corporate travel is gaining ground relative to leisure, based on changes in the share of business versus leisure travel rather than overall visitor volumes. The metric combines shifts in the corporate share of total international spending on hotels and restaurants at a destination from 2024 to 2025 with shifts in the corporate share of airline bookings over the same period.

Abu Dhabi topped the index globally, reflecting the UAE's push to strengthen its standing as a global business hub. The report notes, however, that the outlook for the destination has become more uncertain amid a more volatile macro and geopolitical environment.

Asia-Pacific cities account for five of the top 10 destinations on the index, reflecting some of the strongest global shifts toward corporate travel as a share of total travel activity. India placed four cities in the top 10 — Hyderabad (#3), Bengaluru (#4), New Delhi (#6), and Mumbai (#7) — serving as a clear indicator of the country's expanding technology sector. Meanwhile, Seoul rounded out the region's presence at eighth.

David Mann, chief economist, Asia Pacific, Mastercard, said: "This isn't about which cities are busiest — it's about where corporate travel is taking up a larger share of overall travel activity. What is emerging across parts of Asia-Pacific reflects deeper shifts in where companies are investing and building, particularly around technology and AI hubs. As those forces play out, the implications extend well beyond travel, shaping decisions for everyone from tourism boards and city planners to transport operators and hospitality providers."

AI is changing where travelers go — not just how they plan

The report also examines how artificial intelligence is influencing travel behavior. Analyzing anonymized and aggregated Mastercard data, MEI compared spending patterns between US cardholders who subscribe to consumer AI platforms and those who don't, matching for similar overall spending levels. The findings suggest that AI adoption is linked to meaningfully different

travel behavior.

AI subscribers allocate roughly twice the share of their wallet to accommodations compared with non-subscribers and show higher spending shares across several travel-related categories. More notably, AI appears to influence destination choice. In Leipzig, Germany — often described as a more affordable, less crowded alternative to Berlin — 31% of US visitor spending was driven by AI-subscribing travelers. Similar patterns emerged across lesser-known destinations positioned as alternatives to more established tourist hubs, suggesting AI tools may be expanding the map of desirable travel options.

Currency movements shape tourism flows across Asia-Pacific

Affordability remains a key driver of travel decisions. MEI's analysis of international tourism data over three decades finds that, on average, a 10% depreciation in a destination's currency is associated with a 2.4% increase in foreign tourism, though the effect varies widely by market.

For instance, Malaysia ranks as the third most currency-sensitive tourism market globally, behind only Türkiye and Argentina. A 10% depreciation in the ringgit is associated with an 8% increase in inbound foreign tourism — more than three times the global average. Japan registers a 2.7% increase in response to the same shift, while Taiwan sits at 3.3%. Given recent volatility in financial markets and a fluctuating US dollar, these dynamics could significantly influence inbound travel flows across the region.

“One throughline that emerges consistently from the data is that travelers adapt, shifting destinations, adjusting timing and finding new ways to get value from their trips. This report is designed to help stakeholders across the travel ecosystem understand those shifts as they happen, so businesses and policymakers can make more informed decisions in a fast-moving environment,

Read online: <https://worldbusinesswatch.com/news/13/70/mastercard-report-highlights-asia-pacifics-rising-corporate-travel-and-ai-driven-tourism-trends.html>

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