

New Pact Targets Russian Tourists

BTEA signs MoU with Aeroklub

● MoU inked at SPIEF 2025

● Focus on Russia-bound tourism

● Supports national tourism strategy

Mahir Haneef
TDT | Manama

Bahrain has taken a fresh step in cementing its international tourism reach, signing a strategic memorandum of understanding with Russia's Aeroklub Group during the 28th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), where the Kingdom was honoured as Guest of Honour.

The agreement, signed by Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) CEO Sarah Ahmed Buhijji and Aeroklub Chairman Denis Matyukhin, is expected to boost tourism cooperation, air travel connectivity, and joint promotion campaigns between the two nations, laying the groundwork for Bahrain to attract more visitors from the growing Russian travel market.



SPIEF stage presence

The deal was formalised on the sidelines of SPIEF 2025, held from June 18 to 21. With Bahrain in the diplomatic spotlight as Guest of Honour, the MoU was one of several key agreements underscoring the Kingdom's global tourism ambitions and deepening bilateral relations with Russia.

According to BTEA, the agreement covers areas such as tourism promotion, exchange of industry expertise, development of business tourism incentives, technology collaboration, and joint activations across culture, exhibitions, and hospitality.

Tied to strategy

Buhijji said the partnership directly supports Bahrain's

Tourism Strategy 2022–2026, which aims to enhance international collaboration and raise tourism's contribution to GDP. "This agreement reflects our shared commitment to expanding business ties with Russia while offering visitors a higher quality, more connected tourism experience," she noted.

The MoU is also expected to open new channels for collabora-

tion on sustainability and investment in travel technology, aligning with both nations' goals to modernise their tourism infrastructure.

Russia focus expands

Bahrain has already begun building momentum with Russian travellers, with Gulf Air operating seasonal charter services and growing demand



Russia's outbound tourism to the Gulf grew by more than 20% in 2024, with Bahrain among the key destinations gaining traction through charter flights and emerging halal-certified travel experiences.

for halal-certified offerings in Russian cities like Sochi, Kazan, and Moscow. Tourism officials view the Aeroklub partnership as a platform to tailor Bahrain's appeal to this market and broaden its international reach.

As the global tourism landscape continues to shift, Bahrain is positioning itself not just as a destination, but as a partner in designing the next chapter of regional tourism diplomacy.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds crosses **400** showrooms

Aims to increase turnover to over USD 9 Billion

● Milestone new showroom inaugurated in Noida, India

● Charts an aggressive growth plan within India and globally to expand its presence to 15 countries

TDT | Manama

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally, proudly celebrates a major global milestone with the launch of its 400th showroom. The showroom was inaugurated by M.P. Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group, in the presence of O. Asher, Managing Director – India Operations; K.P. Veerankutty, Group Executive Director; Salish Mathew, Group Chief Marketing Officer; P.K. Siraj, Head – Retail Operations (Rest of India); N.K. Jishad, Regional Head – North; and other senior management team members, customers & well-wishers.

This landmark expansion was marked by the opening of a new



Malabar Gold & Diamonds celebrated the grand opening of its 400th global showroom at Noida, India. The showroom was inaugurated by M.P. Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, in the presence of O. Asher, Managing Director – India Operations; K.P. Veerankutty, Group Executive Director; Salish Mathew, Group Chief Marketing Officer; P.K. Siraj, Head – Retail Operations (Rest of India); N.K. Jishad, Regional Head – North; other senior management team members, customers & well-wishers.

showroom at Noida, India, reinforcing the brand's rapid global expansion.

The launch of Malabar's 400th showroom is part of a broader, ambitious growth strategy aimed at deepening Malabar's presence across India and globally. With a current turnover of USD 7.36 Billion and presence in 13 countries, the brand is target-

ing an exponential increase in revenue to USD 9 Billion and to open 60 showrooms expanding its presence to 15 countries and 22 States and 3 Union Territories India in the current FY.

As Malabar scales its retail footprint, it remains committed to generating employment, with plans to expand its global workforce to nearly 27,250 man-

agement team members: further solidifying its status as one of the world's most trusted and responsible jewellery brands.

Mr. M.P. Ahammed, Chairman of Malabar Group, stated, "This milestone is a testament to our growth ambitions and marks a significant step in our ever-expanding footprint across India and globally in the journey

to be the No. 1 global jewellery retailer."

"We have a comprehensive business strategy in place targeting expanding with 60 new showrooms and manufacturing units, aiming for a turnover of USD 9 Billion in the current financial year, and committing an investment of over USD 600 Million to drive growth."

"Our expansion will create additional 3,500 direct employment opportunities, in addition to supporting the large jewellery manufacturing ecosystem. Our operations are built on a foundation of complete transparency and strict compliance in addition to collaborating with trade bodies, financial houses, government regulators to make sure that our global operations are robust, trustworthy, and beyond reproach" commented Mr. Abdul Salam KP, Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group.

"We are the largest jewellery retailer crafting, promoting, and selling jewellery that is an intersection of Indian art, culture, heritage, and tradition to a global audience across 13 countries and an ambitious expansion plan is in place which involves strengthening our retail presence in existing regions with more showroom launches, as well as charting expansion into new countries such as New Zealand and Ireland in the current financial year, increasing our total presence into 15 countries", commented Mr. Sham Lal Ahamed, Managing Director – India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.