**PRESS RELEASE**:

Chief Minister Inaugurates the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB)

“RAJASTHAN TOURISM WILL BE MARKETED AGGRESSIVELY”
-- Chief Minister, Rajasthan

The Rajasthan Chief Minister, Smt. Vasundhara Raje said that the ‘Rajasthan Tourism Product’ will be marketed aggressively across the globe. She was speaking as the Chief Guest on the occasion of the inauguration of the 8th edition of the Great Indian Travel Bazaar (GITB) at Hotel The Lalit in Jaipur. A large number of foreign tour operators, travel agents and Indian sellers of tourism products were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister made a fervent appeal to the trade and industries members for taking the story of ‘Rajasthan Tourism’ to all nooks and corners of India and abroad .In this context, she informed that the State has launched amulti modal and multi lingual tourism campaign. The campaign aims in bringing increasingly more domestic and foreign tourists to Rajasthan. New circuits and new events are being added to add value to the experience of the tourists. Pilgrims, she said, is an important component of domestic travellers. The temple circuits were being further improved in terms of tourist amenities, cleanliness and connectivity.
This international mart has been organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). It is supported by leading national and regional associations like Hotel & Restaurant Association of Rajasthan (HRAR), Indian Heritage Hotels Association (IHHA) and Rajasthan Association of Tour Operators (RATO).

The Chief Minister also expressed her satisfaction and said that the ‘Tourism Unit Policy 2015’ has been received well. She said that in the build up to the Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit and thereafter the Tourism Department has signed 220 MoUs worth more than Rs.10,000 Crores for setting up new tourism units. Once they come on ground they will provide employment to 40,000 persons, she said.

During the inaugural session a Knowledge Paper entitled ‘Indian Inbound – Tapping the Power packed Growth Engine’ was also released by Chief Minister. It has been prepared by FICCI and MRSS.

The Tourism Secretary, Government of India, Mr. Vinod Zutshi in his key note address said that India has registered a growth of 13 percent in domestic tourism in 2015 and the Government aims to increase it to 15 percent by 2018. He added that the Union Ministry is promoting a number of schemes in Rajasthan -- the Desert Circuit for Rs 65 crore and Ajmer- Pushkar project for Rs 40 crore. Similarly, the State will stand to benefit by way of spiritual and pan India thematic circuits like Buddhism, Ramayana and Krishna being developed by the Union Tourism Ministry.

The Immediate Past President of FICCI and the Chairperson of the FICCI Tourism Committee, Dr. Jyotsna Suri in her welcome address said in India foreign tourists arrivals last year grew by 4.4 per cent and foreign exchange earnings grew by 2.3 %. This growth that the country witnesses goes to show that India is moving forward as an Inbound destination. She appreciated the keen interest of both the buyers and sellers in the GITB which has emerged as the leading inbound tourism mart in the country.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Mr. Shailendra Agarwal said that the Rajasthan Government is planning to organize a Domestic Travel Mart on the lines of GITB for domestic buyers, sellers and tour operators by August.

The vote of thanks was given by Co-Chairman FICCI, Tourism Committee and Managing Director, Travel Corporation (I) Ltd., Mr. Dipak Deva.

It is to be recalled that, on 18 April : the inauguration of exhibition will be done by the Tourism Secretary, Government of India, Mr. Vinod Zutshi and the Chairperson of the FICCI Tourism Committee, Dr. Jyotsna Suri at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) at Sitapura in Jaipur.