

36th Stop TB Partnership Board Meeting and Related Events
23-26 March 2023
Varanasi, India

PRACTICAL INFORMATION NOTE

REGISTRATION

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, is hosting the 36th Stop TB Partnership Board Meeting.

If you have not done so already, please confirm your participation to the 36th Stop TB Partnership Board Meeting by sending an email to boardaffairs@stoptb.org as soon as possible.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Thursday, 23 March

08.30-13.30 (by invitation)	TB-Affected Communities and Civil Society Delegations Meeting	<i>Taj Ganges Hotel, Varanasi</i>
13.00-17.00 (optional)	Yes! We can invest in Communities to End TB! TB Champions and community led conclave	<i>led by REACH India with partners Ramada Hotel, Varanasi</i>

Friday, 24 March

09:00 – 18:00	<u>Varanasi High-Level TB Summit</u>	<i>Rudraksha International Convention Center, Varanasi</i>
19.00-22.00	Official Board and Guests' Dinner	<i>Taj Ganges Hotel, Varanasi</i>

Saturday, 25 March

08.30-17.15	36th Stop TB Board Meeting	<i>Taj Ganges Hotel, Varanasi</i>
17.30-22.00	Cruise Dinner Visit to the riverbank (ghat)	<i>(transportation will be provided) Ganga Aarti, Varanasi</i>

Sunday, 26 March

08.30-18.00	36th Stop TB Board Meeting	<i>Taj Ganges Hotel, Varanasi</i>
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MEETING VENUE

Taj Ganges Hotel: Durbar Hall

Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002

India

Tel: +91 542-6660001

Website: <https://www.tajhotels.com/en-in/taj/taj-ganges/>

VARANASI AND GETTING AROUND

Varanasi or Benaras or Banaras (also known as Kashi) is one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world. The city is a centre of learning and civilization for over 3000 years. Sarnath, the place where Buddha preached his first sermon after enlightenment, is just 10 kms away. Since the early days, Varanasi is also famous for its trade and commerce, especially for the finest silks and gold and silver brocades.

Getting there: There are daily flights between New Delhi and Varanasi, as well as Mumbai and Varanasi.

Arrival at Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

The international airport serving Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India is located at Babatpur, 26 km NW of Varanasi. International and domestic flights are in the same terminal. Participants are strongly advised to arrange their airport transport before arriving in Varanasi.

Upon arrival, please find the **Stop TB Welcome Booth at the arrival hall** of the airport, near the Exit Gate. Look out for the Stop TB Partnership logo at the booth. From the Welcome Booth, guests will be escorted to the vehicle for the transport to the hotel (available on 22 and 23 March). Meetings-and-More will be on-site to assist with arranging transfers from the airport. An email was sent to participants with the link to arrange their own transfer from the airport to hotels, based on the provision of flight details to Meetings-and-More. Each participant will pay for his/her airport transfer. **Please arrange your airport-hotel transfer by 20 March at the latest.**

Taxis

Taxi fare to the Hotel is approximately INR 800 to 1500 (rupees). There are additional service fees involved in case you book a cab at night time (11pm-5am). Tourists should always fix the price before travelling.

Trustworthy taxis are available from travel agencies and hotels. Online service is possible: www.savaari.com/delhi/delhi-to-varanasi-cabs (Uber is not the recommended option for foreigners with foreign phone number!)

Expected travel time into the city center of Varanasi is 30 minutes during normal traffic and up to one hour when traffic is heavy.

New Delhi airport

Indira Gandhi International Airport (**New Delhi**), website: www.newdelhiairport.in

Terminal 1D -- Stand-alone low-cost carrier domestic departures. (GoAir, Indigo, and Spice-Jet).

Terminal T3 – All International and domestic flights (Air India and Vistara), except for low-cost carriers listed above.

Note: Known international airlines do not fly to Varanasi, hence, **if the connecting flight to Varanasi is with another airline** than the one taking you to New Delhi (Mumbai or other connecting cities) please check that you are in the correct terminal at the airport in New Delhi for the connecting flight.

Most likely, you will need to recover your luggage in one terminal in New Delhi, and check-in with the other airline in another terminal.

Please plan at least 2-3 hours for the change of terminal and new check-in of your luggage in New Delhi (or other connecting airport).

All the terminals of the New Delhi and Mumbai airport have been experiencing very high crowds. On your way to Varanasi, you are advised to reach the airport at least 3 hours before the departure of your flight.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

The **Taj Ganges Hotel** has 130 contemporary rooms and suites on a property with landscaped gardens conveniently located, within touching distance to prominent tourist attractions in and around Varanasi. At 843 kms from Delhi, this 5-star hotel in Varanasi is also the perfect destination for a blissful getaway.

A block booking for participants of the 36th Stop TB Partnership Board Meeting has been made at the Taj Ganges Hotel and additional Hotels in Varanasi that are **close to the venue** for accommodations between Tuesday, 22 March 2023 through to 28 March 2023.

Please note that the negotiated rate at the **Taj Ganges Hotel** is **USD 163** including taxes, Wi-fi fees, and breakfast. We recommend that when booking your hotel room, you ensure that you have secured **transportation to and from the airport** with the hotel.

To benefit from the negotiated rate, kindly make a room reservation before **31 January 2023** by using this link from the event management company <https://in.eregnow.com/ticketing/register/unopsacc> (please keep the confirmation email).

Please note that reservations will be on a first come, first served basis, and the hotel does not guarantee the negotiated rate after the deadline of 31 January 2023.

List of alternative hotels:

Raddison Hotel Varanasi (1.1 kms from the meeting venue) USD 110/night

The Mall Rd, Cantonment
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002, India
Phone: +91 542 250 1515

The Clarks (1.2 kms from the meeting venue)

The Mall Rd, Cantonment
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002, India
Phone: +91 542 250 1011

Rivatas by Ideal (1.4 kms from the meeting venue) USD 97/night

The Amayaa, Mall Rd, Cantonment
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002, India
Phone: +91 542 666 6100

Ramada Plaza (1.4 kms from the meeting venue)

The Mall Cantonment
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002, India
Phone: +91 542 251 0000

VISA

Visas are the responsibility of each participant.

You are encouraged to obtain a visa as soon as possible from the respective embassy/consulate of India in your country of residence. Please be aware that India has an **online visa system** and depending on your country context there are several visa options.

Visa application processes and requirements may vary by country/nationality of the applicant. Please refer to the website of the [nearest Indian Embassy or Mission in your country](#) for specific instructions on how to apply for a visa. Please also see this link for visa requests: <https://boi.gov.in/content/apply-visa-online>

Stop TB Partnership

Important: to apply for a visa you will need an invitation letter. Please, be aware that the Indian Ministry of Health will issue invitation letters upon request. Please write us to request a letter.

In many countries, Indian visa processing is outsourced to an authorized agency. For example, the Indian Embassy in the USA has outsourced the visa collection and delivery processing to Cox & Kings Global Services, in several other countries it is outsourced to VFS Global. Refer to the Embassy or High Commission website for information on authorized outsourcing agencies.

INSURANCE

Participants should make their own arrangements with respect to health and travel insurance. You may also wish to consult a travel physician to ensure that you have all recommended vaccinations and medications.

On-call doctors are available at 4-star and 5-star hotels in Varanasi.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Vishwanath Temple

The temple stands on the western bank of the holy river Ganges and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest of Shiva temples. The main deity is known by the name Vishvanatha or Vishveshvara, meaning Ruler of The Universe. The Varanasi city is also called Kashi, and hence the temple is popularly called Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

New Vishwanath Temple

Shri Vishwanath Mandir also known as Vishwanath Mandir, Vishwanath Temple, New Vishwanath Temple and Birla Temple is one of the most famous temples and biggest tourist attractions in the holy city of Varanasi. The temple is situated in Benaras Hindu University and is dedicated to the Lord Shiva. Shri Vishwanath Mandir has the tallest temple tower in the world.

Bharat Mata Mandir

Bharat Mata Mandir is located on the Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith campus in Varanasi, India. Instead of traditional statues of Gods and Goddesses, this temple has a huge map of undivided India carved in marble. This temple is dedicated to Bharat Mata and claims to be the only one of its kind in the world.

Tulasi Manas Mandir

Tulsi Manas Mandir is one of the most famous temples in the holy city of Varanasi. This temple has great historical and cultural importance in Hinduism since the ancient Hindu epic Ramcharitmanas was originally written at this place by Hindu poet-saint, reformer and philosopher Goswami Tulsidas in the 16th century (c.1532–1623).

100 Ghats of the Ganges

Ghats in Varanasi are riverfront steps leading to the banks of the River Ganges. The city has 87 ghats. Most of the ghats are bathing and puja ceremony ghats, while a few are used exclusively as cremation sites.

The Fort Museum

The Ramnagar Fort is a fortification in Ramnagar, Varanasi, India. It is located near the Ganga River on its eastern bank, opposite to the Tulsi Ghat. The sandstone structure was built in the Mughal style in 1750 by Kashi Naresh Raja Balwant Singh. At present, the fort is not in a good shape. It has been the home of Kashi Naresh since the eighteenth century. The current king and the resident of the fort is Anant Narayan Singh, who is also known as the Maharaja of Varanasi even though this royal title has been abolished since 1971.

Bhata Kala Bhawan

Bharat Kala Bhavan is an art and archaeological museum located in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. It has been instrumental in collecting art and is one of the important touristic attractions in the Banaras Hindu University and in Varanasi city.

SAFETY

Varanasi is a fairly safe place. It is a mega city with a population of over 1.5 million. Petty theft does occur, and people should practice caution.

It would be advised that you dress up appropriately and keep your hands and legs covered to avoid any unwanted gaze and protect yourself from Malaria and Chikungunya mosquitoes as March is the season when cases are on the rise.

Do not keep anything in the back pockets of your trousers or dresses. Varanasi is a very crowded city therefore when you are touring the city, hang your bags in the front instead of hanging them on your back.

Avoid wearing expensive jewellery and/or carrying large amounts of cash. Do not leave valuables unattended. Women should keep purses or bags close to their sides and men should store wallets in front instead of rear pockets. Read [here](#) for more Varanasi warnings.

Participants should take certain precautions.

- Avoid carrying a lot of cash in crowded areas and placing wallets in rear pockets; consider carrying cash and valuables in a concealed belt pouch
- Refrain from conversations and being overly friendly with strangers who may approach you
- Visit only recommended and well-known places, and avoid going out alone
- Only open your hotel door to staff or people you know

The Indian bureaucracy is very particular about documents. It is a good idea to have photocopies, as well as scanned copies online, of all the important documents such as your passport, visa, travel insurance, and driver's license, in case you lose any of these documents.

Demonstrations, protests and mass gatherings occur in major public areas. Avoid these situations as they can be dangerous. Avoid traveling at night.

Food poisoning is common for travellers to India. Some recommend avoiding eating meat altogether. These and many other issues are discussed at [India Food Safety](#).

It is always safer to drink bottled water than that running from a tap.

Emergency numbers:

Police: +91 100

Fire and ambulance: +91 101

CURRENCY

Rupee (Rs /INR) is the currency used in India. 1 US dollar is approximately 82 rupees (as of November 2022). Credit cards are accepted in many parts and most banks have ATMs. Currency exchange counters are available in the airport arrivals area, and hotels. Exchange currency only at authorized currency changers or banks and be sure to obtain a receipt. A receipt may be required to reconvert rupees to other currencies if needed upon departure.

COMMUNICATION

The telephone country code for India is +91. The area code for Varanasi is (0)542.

POWER



India uses 230V/60HZ. The typical outlet is a Type D 5 amp BS-546 socket. A two-pin plug works fine. Participants are encouraged to bring an adaptor for personal use. Be sure to confirm that your devices are compatible with this voltage and that your adapter will work in these outlets.

LANGUAGE

The primary language spoken in Varanasi is Hindi. English is the official language of the Stop TB Board. All presentations will be in English.

WEATHER AND TIME

Spring in Varanasi, which starts in mid-February and ends in late March, is one of the best seasons to visit the city. The weather is hot, cool nights, almost no rainfalls. The temperatures can vary considerably in the day and evening, jackets or layers are recommended. In March, the temperature in Varanasi normally ranges from +16°C to +33°C. March is a dry month and one can usually enjoy a blue sky and sunshine.

Standard time in Varanasi is UTC/GMT+5:30 hours.

VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT)

VAT is levied on most goods and services at a standard rate of 18% and is included in the retail price. VAT refund is not available in the Republic of India.

TIPPING

Tipping is not mandatory in India. Gratuities may be offered at your discretion based on your satisfaction with the service provided. If you do wish to tip for a service, some general guidelines are:

- Hotel, airport and train station porters can be tipped approximately INR 50/bag.
- If a service charge is not included, tour guides can be tipped INR 200 and drivers approximately INR 350 per day or 10 percent of the tour where appropriate.
- In restaurants, if the service was good, you can tip between 5-10% of the bill depending on the category of the hotel, and the bill amount.

SMOKING & ALCOHOL

All conference rooms and public areas in the venue are strict no-smoking zones. Smoking in public areas (eg. hotels, airports, restaurants) and during transportation (eg. airlines, railways, cars & coaches) is a punishable offense in India. However, airports major hotels etc. are equipped with dedicated smoking areas. You may request a smoking room when booking your accommodations.

Please note that the legal drinking age in Varanasi is 25.

HOW TO REACH US

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DOCUMENTS

The 36th Stop TB Partnership Board will be a **paperless meeting**. All documents will be made available online.