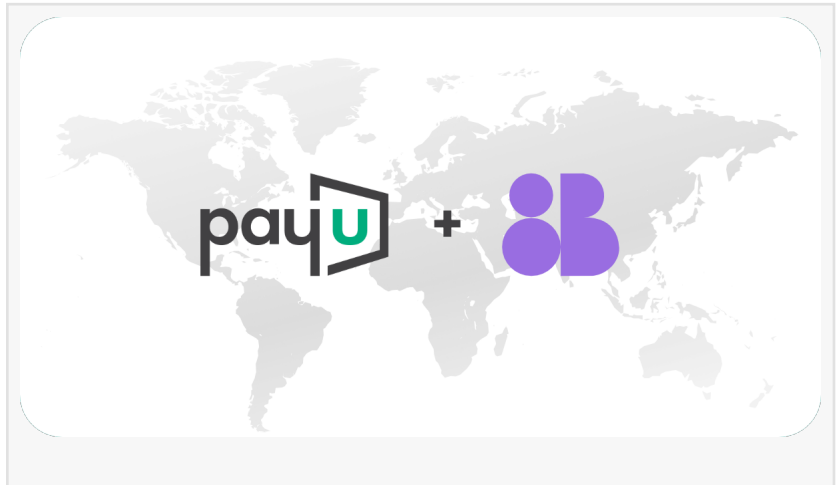


8B and PayU Partner to Bring UPI & Other Indian Payment Methods to Central Asia

SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE, April 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Indian tourists visiting Central Asia can now pay via [UPI](#), Net Banking, Indian Debit and Credit cards. Central Asian merchants gain access to India's payment infrastructure. The partnership marks the first structural yet one-way bridge between two economies whose tourism relationship is growing faster than the infrastructure to support it.



[8B](#), a Central Asian fintech infrastructure company, and [PayU](#), India's leading diversified fintech platform, have signed a strategic partnership to bring UPI, one of the world's fastest-growing digital payment systems, and other Indian payment offerings to Central Asia. The integration of PayU's APIs into 8B's merchant network across Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and the broader region offers clear benefits, enabling users in India to make payments to merchants in Central Asia via UPI, net banking, and local cards. This collaboration marks a significant milestone in strengthening the digital payment infrastructures between the two economies, laying the first structural bridge for growing trade and tourism opportunities.

What the Partnership enables for Tourists:

India's outbound tourism market reached \$18.82 billion in travel expenditure in 2024 and is forecast to grow to \$55.39 billion by 2034. Indian nationals rank among the world's highest-spending tourists. At the same time, Central Asia sustained strong tourism growth in 2025 - with India consistently appearing among the top five source markets for Kazakhstan. Almaty's tourism momentum continued in 2025, with the city welcoming 1.14 million visitors in the first half of the year, including 323,500 foreign arrivals, as India emerged as its top source market.

Indian arrivals to Uzbekistan rose 22.7% in the first five months of 2025 compared to the same period the year before. Kazakhstan received an estimated 250,000 Indian visitors in 2025, up from 146,000 in 2024, as air connectivity expanded and visa-free access for Indian travellers continued to support demand. Uzbekistan welcomed 66,100 Indian tourists in 2025 alone. The trajectory is clear. What has been missing is a payment layer that reflects it.

Through the 8B-PayU API integration, merchants across Central Asia connected to 8B's platform can accept UPI payments directly from Indian tourists - using the same apps and websites Indian consumers use for everything, from ordering street food to flight bookings at home. No new hardware. No parallel onboarding. The transaction flows through existing merchant infrastructure with UPI added as a payment rail. Beyond the UPI infrastructure, merchants in Central Asia will also be able to accept payments through Net Banking and any Indian credit or debit cards on acquiring networks including RuPay from Indian tourists. In Kazakhstan, this is made possible through Zesta LLP, a locally licensed payment organisation (licence No. 02-23-179), ensuring full regulatory compliance for every transaction processed in the country.

From Tourism to Trade

This partnership goes beyond facilitating payments for foreign tourists. India is not only a source of tourists to Central Asia - it is an economy whose merchants and businesses are increasingly active in the region. India-Kazakhstan bilateral trade reached \$923.3 million in 2025. The economic relationship between India and Central Asia is not a tourism story. It is a structural trade and investment story, with tourism as its most visible leading indicator.

The trade aspect here is primarily import-led, with Indian consumers purchasing goods and services from Central Asian merchants and funds being remitted outside India to the merchants' bank accounts abroad. From a merchant's perspective, this is not just about processing payments - it is about turning demand into revenue. Central Asian businesses selling air tickets, digital services and digital goods will no longer face issues with Indian customers since now they are able to purchase without changing payment preferences. When payment acceptance is well-aligned with how Indian consumers prefer to pay, merchants are better positioned to improve conversion and reduce friction at checkout.

"The India-Central Asia corridor is expanding faster than the existing payment infrastructure is able to support it. Indian travelers arriving in Almaty today bring payment expectations shaped by UPI and a seamless domestic digital experience. Requiring them to adapt to an unfamiliar payment journey abroad introduces avoidable friction. Enabling cross-border commerce to feel as intuitive as commerce at home not only improves the travel experience, but also creates a foundation for a broader commercial relationship in which tourism is just the starting point." - Bogdan Zadorozhny, Co-Founder & Chief Innovation Officer, 8B

"Payments should not be a barrier for international travel or trade. Through our strategic partnership with 8B, we are eliminating any payment-related friction - making it effortless for Indian travellers to pay with UPI and other local methods across Central Asia while opening new growth corridors for merchants in the region. Our collaboration represents a significant step forward in PayU's international growth strategy, through which we're not just enabling transactions, we're laying the foundation of the future of digital payments infrastructure between the two economies, one that connects India's digital-savvy consumers with Central Asia's rapidly growing travel and commerce sectors." said Nikhil Mehta, Senior Vice President

-Partnerships & Business Head – Growth Initiatives (Cross Border Payments & Affordability), PayU.

Central Asia's Moment

Kazakhstan welcomed 15.7 million foreign visitors in the first nine months of 2025, with tourism revenue from accommodation services rising to \$536.8 million, up \$88.1 million year-on-year. Uzbekistan was ranked among the seven fastest-growing tourism destinations in the world by UN Tourism for 2025. Kyrgyzstan welcomed approximately 10 million visitors in 2025, compared with 8.86 million in 2024. The region is not emerging - it has emerged. What it now requires is the payment infrastructure layer that matches the scale of the opportunity.

The 8B-PayU partnership connects two existing national-scale systems - UPI with 8B's Central Asian merchant network, enabling effortless India-Central Asia payments today.

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