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# TTJ Travel Trade Journal

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**As the world battles against these outlandish times, what binds us together as a community is 'hope'.  
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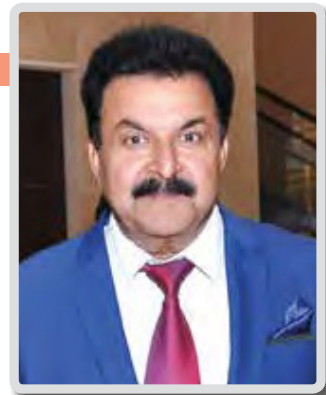
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Dear Friends,

The challenge we face today has been both unexpected and devastating in the form of a novel virus that is spreading rapidly around the globe and which is changing how we live and work now.

However, hoping that we all can be a significant positive force in the months ahead, finding solution for our drastically hampered industry, as we await for crucial research from across the sciences and social sciences to defeat the pandemic.

As our industry reels, endures, reimagines and reinvents itself, our thoughts are not only with you, our readers, and the entire travel and hospitality community (who are enduring this unprecedented professional and personal challenges) but also with people across the world who are suffering and affected in so many ways.

Until things are resolved, our first caution to you is to stay home and stay safe.

Regards,

*Ravi Sharma*

Ravi Sharma  
ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Editor's Desk

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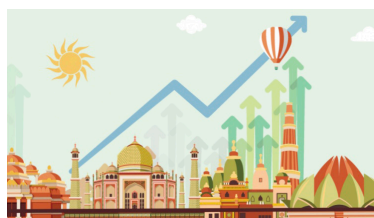
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## Tourism industry stares at 3.8 crore job losses due to Covid-19 impact

A large percentage of total tourism business activity of India, which is estimated at \$28 billion-plus in forex and upwards of Rs 2 lakh crore in domestic tourism activity will be at economic risk through the year.

Travel and tourism industry has been hit economically globally and in India due to outbreak of coronavirus with many prospective domestic and foreign tourists cancelling their travel plans. Travel and tourism industry has been hit

economically globally and in India due to outbreak of coronavirus with many prospective domestic and foreign tourists cancelling their travel plans. Indian tourism and hospitality industry is staring at a potential job loss of around 3.8 crore, which is around 70 per cent of the total workforce, due to the Covid-19 impact. Foreseeing bankruptcies, closure of businesses and mass unemployment, the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), the umbrella body of the industry, has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to highlight the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the tourism industry, seeking his intervention in terms of financial relief for the industry to tide over the crisis.



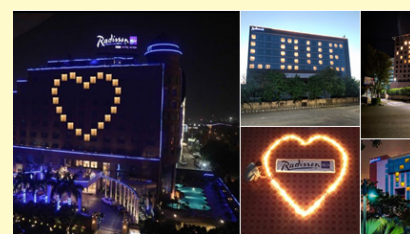
### IATA requests urgent emergency support for airlines

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is appealing to governments in Africa and the Middle East, as part of a worldwide campaign, to provide emergency support to airlines as they fight for survival due to the evaporation of air travel demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The region's carriers to mitigate the financial impact of COVID-19 are implementing extensive cost cutting measures. However, due to flight bans as well as international and regional travel restrictions, airlines' revenues are plummeting, outstripping the scope of even the most drastic cost containment measures. With average cash reserves of approximately two months in the region, airlines are facing a liquidity and existential crisis. Support measures are urgently needed. On a global basis, IATA estimates that emergency aid of up to \$200 billion is required.



### Update on ADTOI Convention 2020

As per the advisories/instructions/guidelines issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, on coronavirus, which has been declared pandemic by WHO, it has been decided to postpone ADTOI Convention 2020 scheduled to be on April 10-11 including Pre-Convention Tours for the time being. The new dates of convention shall be decided mutually by ADTOI and the MP Tourism once the situation gets back to normalcy in the near future. In the meantime, members/non-members who have done their online registration with payment can wait until the time new dates for convention are announced for adjustment. Members are requested to follow the advisories/instructions/guidelines issued from time to time in letter and spirit, since adopting the suggested measures could help in containing spread of COVID 19.



### Radisson Hotel Group lights up to spread love and hope

Radisson Hotel Group recently announced #RadissonCares to show solidarity and continuous support for its guests, employees and community. The Group's hotels across the globe were encouraged to light up the facades of their hotels as a message of hope. In India, several of the group's 94 operating hotels came together to light up their facades in creative displays such as heart shapes, letter L-O-V-E and face masks.

"The wellbeing and safety of all our guests, team members and visitors remains our top priority. The thought behind the initiative was to show our love for the guests we miss and look forward to welcoming again, all the workers supporting us during these times and our team members," said Zubin Saxena, Managing Director and Vice President Operations, South Asia at Radisson Hotel Group.

## PHD Chamber organises 9<sup>th</sup> International Heritage Tourism Conclave in Gwalior

PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) organised the 9th International Heritage Tourism Conclave with the theme 'Achieving SDG 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage'.

The programme was supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. H.E. Sakir Ozkan Torunlar, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey; H.E. Radu Octavian Dobre, Ambassador, Embassy of Romania in the Republic of India; H.E. Dato Hidayat Abdul Hamid, High Commissioner, High Commission of Malaysia were present at the programme and shared the heritage tourism potential of their respective countries. PHDCCI and its Knowledge Partner- Nielsen India jointly released a Knowledge Report titled 'Heritage Tourism in India and SDG 11.4: Stakeholders' Perspective'. The report gives a holistic view on heritage tourism across the world and in the country. The report provides ample scope and opportunities towards preservation of world's cultural and natural heritage.



## OTOAI makes a strong second representation in the TCS matter with MoT

OTOAI delegation comprising of Riaz Munshi, President, Shravan Bhalla, General Secretary, Guldeep Singh Sahni, former President and Raghuvinder Singh, Active member met with Rupinder Brar, Addl. Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. Of India, New Delhi and presented second detailed Representation on TCS. The representation was very well received by Rupinder Brar and she has assured that OTOAI's representation will be forwarded to Ministry of Finance, Govt. Of India with Tourism Ministry's recommendations.



**Outbound Tour Operators Association of India**

Strengthening the pillars of Trust



### The Embassy of Bulgaria celebrates National Day in New Delhi

The Embassy of Bulgaria in New Delhi celebrated the National Day of Bulgaria on March 5, 2020. The event was well attended by Bulgarian dignitaries, members of diplomatic community and expatriates. Her Excellency Eleonora Dimitrova addressed the audience highlighting the strong relationship between India and Bulgaria. Shri G Kishan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, Government of India was the esteemed Chief Guest. Marking the strong relationship of India and Bulgaria friendship, the Ambassador and the chief guest planted a chinara tree sapling at the Embassy. Vineet Gopal, Director, Representation World wished Her Excellency Eleonora Dimitrova and all the citizens of Bulgaria a very Happy National Day!



### #SaveTravelIndustry- FAITH, CII Tourism National Committee and ASSOCHAM raise serious concerns on the COVID – 19 issue with the Minister of Finance

Showcasing solidarity and concerns in relation to the pandemic COVID – 19, associations such as FAITH (Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality), along with CII Tourism National Committee and ASSOCHAM Tourism sub-committee have written a joint letter to Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Honourable Finance Minister, Government of India, New Delhi and thus looking forward to her urgent intervention. The letter signed by Nakul Anand, Chairman, FAITH, Subash Goyal, Chairman ASSOCHAM Tourism Committee and Deepak Haskar, Chairman CII Tourism National Committee, identified the following points of urgent concern of the tourism industry and requested her for her kind support on the coronavirus onslaught which has really hit the tourism industry of India very badly.

## Nepal India China Expo (NICE) and Himalayan Travel Mart (HTM) 2020 cancelled for this year



Owing to the evolving dynamics of the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and its growing impact in the tourism industry, and after the thorough discussions at PATA Nepal Chapter Executive Committee, the Nepal India China Expo (NICE), as well as the Himalayan Travel Mart (HTM) 2020 scheduled from June 12-15, 2020 will no longer take place this year. NICE and Himalayan Travel Mart (HTM) will be organised in the year 2021 and the new dates for next year's events will be announced in due course of time. Delegates who have paid the registration fees for NICE and HTM 2020 can avail the option of transferring the registration fee to the respective event next year or, receive a full refund.

# CONTINUE TO

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**ZINC HOTELS:** Bengaluru\*

**BEACON HOTELS:** Ajmer | Amritsar | Bhopal | Jamnagar | Jodhpur | Lonavala | Mumbai | Navi Mumbai | New Delhi | Pune\* | Rajkot | Surat | Udaipur

**INDEPENDENTLY BRANDED HOTELS:** Jaipur | Mumbai | Udupi | Seychelles (Mahe | Praslin | La Digue)

## Yatra.com extends its support to essential service workers and launches 'Yatra Service Assured' Packages for its customers

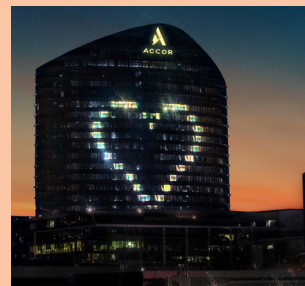
Yatra.com, one of India's leading online travel agency, extends its support to essential service workers and healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic by associating with its hotel partners and chains to offer stays at special fares for rejuvenation and a good night rest. Yatra.com stands in full solidarity with the authorities and professionals working diligently to fight COVID-19. The company is extending its support to these professionals by offering a comfortable stay with best amenities at the partner hotels. At the time of check-in, essential service workers and healthcare professionals need to provide their valid staff ID cards to avail this service. The company is also launching 'Yatra Service Assured' Packages for its customers for future travel. These packages have been designed keeping in mind

feedback received from the customers, providing them with a secure, clean and safe environment for future traveling.

Through Yatra Service Assured Packages, the company is planning to focus on the safety needs of its customers. This special package is designed with the best of essentials and includes hotel services with 24 x 7 emergency help line number, travel Insurance, sanitized vehicles, flexible check-in and checkout, meals prepared in hygienic conditions, and quality transport services for the convenience of the customers. The package comes with cancellation fee waiver, 100 per cent instant refund and free child travel. Yatra Service Assured Package is applicable for all future bookings till March 2021 for stays in Himachal, Andaman, North East, Ladakh, Kerala, South India and Goa.

## Accor India provides Accor Employee Wellbeing and Assistance Programme

Accor in India initiated the Accor Employee Wellbeing and Assistance Programme



to help employees remain calm under pressure, deal with difficulties and better resolve personal and professional issues. The programme gives team members 24/7 access to experienced and trained counsellors to help them achieve emotional well-being during stressful situations and support them in their quest for mindfulness.

## United Airlines plans to resume overseas flights in first week of May



United Airlines is hopeful that it will be able to resume some long-haul direct services in less than a month's time, reports Laura Ash

in Simple Flying. The airline has opened up booking for three transatlantic flights to Europe and two additional nonstop flights to South America. This is quite a development considering that at the end of March, the airline temporarily suspended all long-haul international flights. At present, United is looking to reinstate three European routes. On the May 4, United Airlines will begin to fly between its hub Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and London Heathrow (LHR) again. The route is listed on the United website as a red-eye flown by Boeing 787-10 Dreamliner, flight number UA931.

Additionally, the air carrier will also restart flights between Newark (EWR) and Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS) on the same day. The 4th of May will also see the return of flights to Frankfurt (FRA) from Washington (IAD). All of the above services will operate daily.



## Fifth OTOAI Convention postponed

In light of the recent developments regarding spread of the coronavirus outbreak all across the world, the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) has decided to postpone its Convention. The Convention was scheduled to take place in Antalya, Turkey from March 15-18, 2020.

## Government approves 100 per cent FDI by NRIs in Air India

Currently, FDI in Air India is capped at 49 per cent. A report had suggested that the civil aviation ministry has approached Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for removal of the cap. The government allows 100 per cent FDI in scheduled airlines based on certain conditions. Bids for debt-laden Air India will close on March 17. The Economic Times reported that Deloitte has begun due diligence on Tata Group-owned Vistara's proposed bid for Air India.

## Pride Hotels distribute 1000 free food parcels pan India



The Pride Group of Hotels announces the distribution of 1000 food parcels every day till April 14, 2020 in the cities of Pune, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, and Nagpur. Ever since the outbreak of the dreaded Coronavirus, our frontline work teams have been selflessly working around the clock to bring things under control. These include doctors, nurses, service experts, police officers, medical practitioners, hospital support staff, civil service personnel among others.

Prepared by in-house chefs, at each of our chosen Pride Hotel's properties, the food parcel will comprise of rice, dal, vegetable, and chapatis. Pride Hotel strictly abides by all social distancing and personal hygiene guidelines. Hence the parcels will be neatly packed and distributed under the guidance of an NGO and local police stationed in each of these cities.



## Etihad expands passenger freighter coverage as it continues to deliver essential supplies to UAE and the world



five additional routes using Etihad Airways passenger aircraft to increase the flow of essential supplies into the UAE and provide

Following its recent launch of passenger freighter flights to 10 destinations, complementing its Boeing 777 freighter operations, Etihad Cargo announces

further east-west connectivity between major markets.

Etihad Cargo is introducing services between Abu Dhabi and Melbourne, Chennai, Kerala, Karachi, and Amsterdam, in addition to passenger freighters already operating scheduled cargo-only flights to Seoul, Beijing, Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Jakarta, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Riyadh. The new routes will further ensure continuity of fresh imports to the UAE including meat, fish and seafood, fruits, and vegetables, in addition to pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, as the nation continues to take responsible measures to ensure food security and national health as part of its response to the Covid-19 pandemic.



### Emirates announces first passenger flights post suspension

Emirates has received approval to carry passengers on certain flights. Effective Monday 6 April, initial flights will commence from Dubai to London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels and Zurich, with 4 flights a week to London Heathrow, and 3 flights a week to the other cities. Operating from Dubai International airport Terminal 2 until further notice, these flights will only carry outbound passengers from the UAE. Emirates will also carry belly-hold cargo in both directions, supporting trade and communities with the transport of essential goods. Emirates will operate its Boeing 777-300ER aircraft on these routes, offering seats in Business and Economy class. Flights can be booked by eligible passengers on [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com). Travel restrictions are in place at these destinations, and travellers are urged to check entry criteria before they fly. All Emirates aircraft will go through enhanced cleaning and disinfection processes in Dubai, after each journey.



### GoAir extends 'Protect Your PNR' scheme till 30th April 2020

GoAir is extending the 'Protect Your PNR' scheme till April 30, 2020 in order to support its passengers during these trying times. "GoAir understands the hardships that our customers are going through right now and we believe that they need our immediate support to overcome the travel dilemma they might be facing. We reckon that it is possible that our customers would still need some more time to firm up their travel plans. Thus, GoAir is extending the industry's most generous 'Protect Your PNR' scheme till April 30, 2020 wherein customers are eligible to reschedule their flight for the next one year, i.e. until April 30, 2021. This is truly providing peace of mind for one full year," said GoAir Spokesperson.

Customers can reschedule their flights through self-service on GoAir website [www.goair.in](http://www.goair.in) or mobile app, under the 'Manage Booking' option and by using the booking reference (PNR) of their original booking. This includes the tickets booked through a travel agent or online travel agency (OTA). GoAir's call centres are seeing heavy call volumes and they are currently under staffed because of the lockdown and may not be able to respond to customer calls in a timely manner.

## Qatar Airways and Standard Chartered sign \$850 Million Aircraft Financing Agreement

Qatar Airways and Standard Chartered have successfully signed a US\$ 850 million financing in respect of seven Boeing 787-9 aircraft. This transaction demonstrates the confidence that the banking market has in Qatar Airways and also highlights the strong relationship between Qatar Airways and Standard Chartered.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive His Excellency Akbar Al Baker stated, "I am grateful to Standard Chartered for their continued support to Qatar Airways. The bank has been a close partner of Qatar Airways for many years and have proven their support for the airline by closing this transaction during difficult times resulting from COVID-19. Qatar Airways focus remains

on finding solutions to get as many people back to their homes to be with their families and loved ones during these difficult times and this is made possible by the support we have from so many people including our close partners such as Standard Chartered."

Standard Chartered Chief Executive Bill Winters stated, "We value our partnership with Qatar Airways and are very pleased to close this landmark deal at this difficult time. At Standard Chartered we continue to support our clients and communities despite the ongoing challenges with COVID-19 and are proud to have been able to provide Qatar Airways with this financing."

# KTO keeps a proactive approach with its webinars to educate the travel trade

Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) is aware of the business slowdown due to the ongoing corona outbreak globally but their focus is to be better prepared once the demand rises again. Their main focus lies in educating the trade and updating them to create a better and first choice product in South Korea. On the same lines, Jong Sool Kwon, Director Korea Tourism Organization, New Delhi has taken the initiative and opportunity of the lockdown period to reach as many travel agents through webinars and prepare the trade with thorough product knowledge of South Korea.

Team TTJ



Jong Sool Kwon

Covid-19 as we all know has greatly affected the tourism industry. With no international flight operations it has brought the entire travel industry to a standstill. The actual impact of Coronavirus can only be realized after a few months, once the business operations start again. It will take some time for the travellers again start making their travel plans. As if now everything is on hold so we all need to wait and watch until we get back to work again. Till then Korea Tourism Organization also expects the trade to utilize this time to enhance their product and destination knowledge.

“Safety is our first priority when it comes to travelling in Korea. South Korea has been applauded world over for its proactive approach on containing COVID-19 pandemic. We are working to achieve similar standards when we welcome the travellers’ post the coronavirus issue

is resolved,” says Jong Sool Kwon.

On the importance of educating the India market about destinations in this critical times, Jong Sool Kwon shares, “A thorough knowledge of the destination not only helps the travel agent in selling the destination but it also creates a desirable image of the destination for the travellers. Our training programmes touches the essential information like popular tourist spots, activities to do and addressing Indian specific food requirements. At the same time the specifics such as Special interest travel, MICE and Educational tours are also covered in the program along with FIT and leisure travel.”

For South Korea, webinars have worked best as it enables them to have a larger geographical and number reach with travel agents. These webinars will act as a refresher course on South Korea as an overall tourism destination. This year, they have planned seven webinars with four different online training partners. Multi city trainings with OTOAI are on the cards. Like every year, they plan to participate in major travel and tourism exhibitions to reach out to as many travel agencies as possible.

India has always been a priority for marketing South Korea as a tourist destination. There is great potential in this region with more than 65 million passport holders and millennial travellers who are willing to experience new destinations every time they plan their holiday. Thus, it is imperative for them to be present as a destination offering to the Indian travellers.



# Travel industry takes stand against implementation of TCS, hopeful after the COVID-19 onslaught

TCS (Tax Collected at Source) as proposed in Budget 2020, which would have been applicable on the sale of international tour packages and foreign exchange remittances from April 1, has now been deferred to October 2020 for the moment. International tour packages are set to get costlier by 5 per cent under the TCS regime. The new proposal on outbound tour packages will not only act as a dampener, but will impact the travel industry in many ways, say industry players as many travel associations like OTOAI and TAAI are working towards a rollback.

Prashant Nayak / Sonika Bhandari

According to the new provisions of The Finance Bill 2020, an amendment to Section 206C of the IT Act with regard to Tax Collected at Source (TCS) has been proposed to levy and collect 5 per cent tax on overseas remittance and sale of outbound packages from April 1, 2020. As per the Budget proposals, TCS will be collected on:

- Remittance under Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of RBI for amount exceeding Rs 7 Lakh in a financial year;
- Sale of an overseas tour package through a tour operator.

The new provisions regarding TCS on overseas tour packages requires that a seller of overseas tour package shall collect TCS at the rate of 5 per cent or 10 per cent (if PAN/Aadhaar is not available) on total amount from the purchaser at the time of receiving the payment for the tour package and includes expenses for travel or hotel stay or boarding or lodging.

It is said that the Enforcement Directorate has come across several cases in which the liberalised remittance scheme was misused by some to carry out untoward payments. They found data revealing a large number of those remitting money abroad under this scheme were non tax payers; normally they should be. The government imposed TCS (similar to TDS on remittances) to enable better tracking and allow the department to collect tax on such transactions. If one does not file the return, the government gets to keep the 5 per cent.

Indian travel companies will now have to pay this extra tax every month. They need to file returns for the same in every quarter. In addition to the existing compliance of GST and another filing, this will also need extra time and additional money. The other thing is that a company's profit should be an internal policy. However, this tax will lead to exposure of the earnings and margin to the consumer. TCS will be applicable to the total selling price, so it will also cost to the seller of the package. This is really unfair for business as a travel company is already paying GST and Income Tax. There is no clarity for a refund of the amount to the consumer by the travel company. Credit for the same shall be available to the consumer when filing tax.

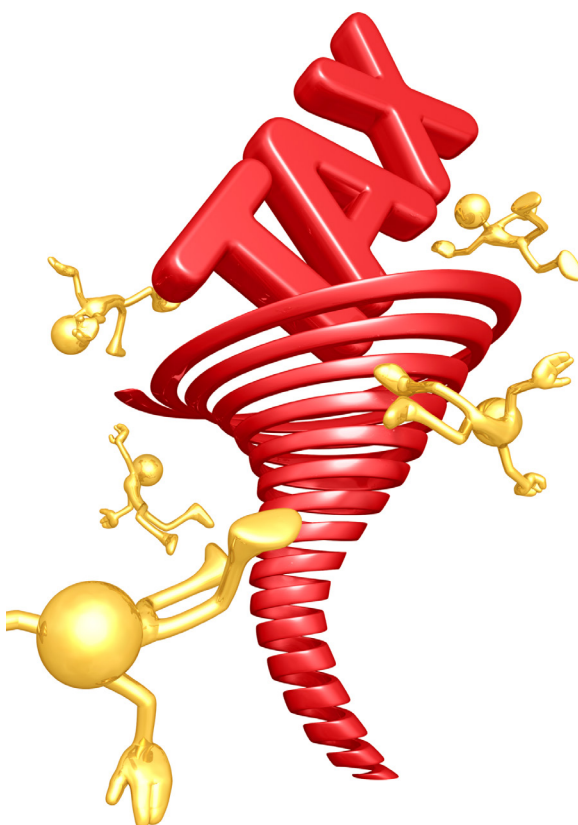
However, the industry experts are

more worried about unemployment and business closure. The impact of TCS will result in lower business volumes, marginalising expenses, scaling down or worse shutting down of businesses. Eventually, this will lead to widespread job losses in a country where the government, ironically, propagates 'Make in India'.

The move could potentially impact 100,000 plus outbound travel agencies employing over two million individuals. They also opine that the travel industry in the world is on its last legs due to the COVID-19 phenomenon. Airlines/hotels/travel agencies have seen up to 90 per cent drop in business with IATA announcing that airlines will face the worst year ever in aviation and tourism history.

TCS will make Indian travel companies expensive and non-competitive against entities registered abroad. Presently, there is no restriction for a traveller to pay through credit card or direct cash payment to a foreign hotel directly or to an OTA registered abroad. Neither are they liable to pay TCS. The important thing to note is that TCS is not applicable if a passenger books directly with a foreign travel entity.

This will also lead to many unwanted situations like massive tax loss because a travel company pays 5 per cent to 18 per cent GST. A foreign portal pays zero per cent GST and foreign hotel is exempt from GST. In Addition, Indian travel companies pay income tax, shift of bookings by Indian clients to foreign players, will lead to decrease in their incomes and consequently their tax payments. This is expected to lead



to job losses of 2-3 lakhs across India. Also, there is a good possibility that the tour operator will pass on the taxes to the customers which will discourage people from travelling abroad.

The compliance issue created will be unmanageable, since there is no way currently, to track the INR 700,000 limit if remitting via LRS, leading to impossible amounts of paper work for small companies. Not to mention increase in cost and time involved for additional compliances for return filings and payments. Tracking of aggregate limits of INR 700,000 or more poses a challenge since there is no clarity on the mechanism for either the travel companies or the government resulting in delay in closing the transactions. In addition, any dealer mark-up which agents often have to keep at the time of quoting, to hedge against FX fluctuations will also get unshielded.

Meanwhile, there are some travel associations in India such as OTOAI, TAAI, FAITH that are working towards withdrawal of provision of TCS. A representation was made by OTOAI on this aspect. Then, again on March 12, 2020, a delegation comprising Riaz Munshi, President, Shravan Bhalla, General Secretary, Guldeep Singh Sahni, former President and Raghuvinder Singh, Active member had met Rupinder Brar, Addl. Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and presented a second detailed representation on TCS. A letter regarding the same was submitted at her office. Brar has assured that OTOAI's representation will be forwarded to Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India with Ministry of Tourism's recommendations.

TAAI (Travel Agents Association of India) also had a meeting with Finance Ministry officials and continues to remain in touch with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) and Ministry of Finance (MoF) to seek assistance in deferring this TCS.

Very recently, on March 20, showcasing solidarity and raising serious concerns in relation to the pandemic COVID – 19, other associations like FAITH (Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality), along with CII Tourism National Committee and ASSOCHAM Tourism sub-committee has sent a joint letter to Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Honourable Finance Minister, Government of India, New Delhi and are looking forward to her urgent intervention. They have appealed in one of the points as to not introduce TCS as proposed in the Finance Bill. The Minister has assured to look into the points as presented.

TTJ spoke with a few industry members to gauge the scenario.



**Riaz Munshi**  
President, OTOAI

The new provisional law has put our entire industry under an onerous, cumbersome and complicated responsibility of collecting taxes by way of TCS from the overseas travellers, depositing such taxes with the government and then filing returns as laid down in the law. This is an additional burden which would impose huge costs and would require deployment of extra staff, maintenance of accounts, filing of returns, etc. All these requirements will add to capacity building and incur huge costs at a time when the industry is reeling under the crisis of COVID-19 and has come to a complete halt. This is highly unfavourable and would result in heavy slowdown of the business.

We at OTOAI, have met with Rupinder Brar, Addl. Director General Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and Kamlesh Varshney, Joint Secretary TPL, Ministry of Finance and have explained in detail, both the present situation and one that will arise after TCS implementation. Both of them have given an assurance of looking at our issues in a positive manner.

We also took to the television platform and have requested the Ministry of Finance on 'NDTV Morning News' and 'NDTV Talk Show Hum Log' that TCS should not be implemented and most-certainly be deferred in the present situation. We have been assured that our request will be positively looked into and we are hopeful that the Ministry will soon announce a favourable decision.

My only advice at this point would be to stay united and stand strong. We are all in this together, so let's think positive and be ready with new ideas to bounce back

strongly. Right now, our utmost priority has to be safe guarding from COVID-19 and then together, we will face the other critical situations like TCS.



**Jyoti Mayal**  
President, TAAI

We are still reeling under the GST clarity and implementation and for another tax to come, is really going to kill the market. TCS is going to have a very negative impact on the industry, so from the platform of TAAI, we are raising our concerns through national media besides meeting and giving representations to Ministries of Finance, Tourism, Commerce and Aviation. TCS is going to affect outbound as well as inbound traffic. Moreover, it will encourage circulation of black money, besides defeating the concept of 'Make-in-India'. It is not out of place to mention that travel agents/tour operators are not the tax collectors of Ministry of Finance. We have been taking up the issue vigorously and hope for the positive outcome.





**Monia Kapoor**  
Travel O Holidays

The travel industry is already surviving on low margins and battling huge competition. After TCS, the cost of our packages would go up and overseas registered DMCs, travel companies and hotels will be able to offer lower rates. Clients who are comfortable using their credit cards online would prefer making direct bookings instead of using the services of a travel agent based in India.

Outbound tour operators are facing too many challenges to keep their businesses afloat from competing with OTA's and now to facing the global crisis of COVID-19. We can already foresee an unprecedented slump in the next few months which unfortunately happens to be India's main holiday season. My advice to the travel fraternity would be to stay positive, together and raise their collective voice against TCS.



**Ravi Gosain**  
Managing Director, Erco Travels

TCS introduced in the recent budget is with a sole purpose to get the details

of overseas Indian travellers and include them in Tax net. However, I think tax planners in government didn't give much needed thoughts on its severe impact on tourism industry. The worst impact of TCS will be on outbound tour operators because not only their tour packages for travellers will be expensive by 5 per cent or 10 per cent but they will also have threat of losing their business to hands of overseas online travel agencies, who are not obliged to charge TCS. The tax will also be applicable for inbound tour operators who sell their packages to foreign tourist as it is not defined in law if TCS is only applicable on Indian citizens. Secondly, high chances are there that if this business goes to overseas tour operators then the Indian government stands to lose GST earnings as well. So, in my opinion, the Finance Minister and team should look in to the matter immediately and rollback the tax in the interest of tour operators in India.



**Vishal Mittal**  
Partner, V2 Corp. Travels

As the global economy is opening and expanding, the travel industry will not go down except when it's in a pandemic situation like now. There is only going to be a shift in the way transactions will be conducted. OTA's are already offering the options of guaranteed booking and payment on checkout. They are also offering no charges on cancellation of bookings. So, how will the government handle or track such kind of bookings? If the government cannot give security to its own economy, how do they expect increase in tax collection? So instead of taxing only the local operator, they must try and recognise this industry and formulate policies to curb unfair trade practices like undercutting and

overselling. Either, the government must withdraw this tax or track and tax the OTA's too.

So, my advice on this subject is to unite like you do for networking and dinner parties. We need to stop services for a week for the customer and the principal to realise our importance. Make minimum retention a rule. Boycott those who are underselling or offering bank interest to provide online cash backs. Make consortiums to identify and boycott those who are planning or committing frauds. There is scope to earn but the industry needs regulation.



**Pankaj Nagpal**  
Managing Director, Travstarz

The proposed TCS is one of the most draconian measures to be implemented by the Government and is totally against the travel industry and could be the last nail in the coffin, resulting in total collapse of the industry affecting millions of jobs directly and indirectly. The Government has shown scant regard to the thriving but troubled tourism industry and has totally ignored the drastic implications of such a step.

The industry is absolutely alarmed and shocked with such illogical decisions of the Government and like I said before, the step is extremely negative and draconian in nature where the government is trying to over regulate the industry which will have wide spread ramifications. If implemented, this will be the end of the travel industry in India as we will not be able to sustain one blow after another that we have been receiving for the past few years, since this government took office. By taking such decisions, the government has shown least regard for the travel industry, which is one of the highest job generators in the country.

This time the industry has to unite

as a whole and most associations have already taken this up with relevant ministries. However, I feel a much more aggressive approach is needed to shake this Government and stop it from taking anti-people and anti-business decisions, one after the other.



**Rajeev Kohli**  
CIS, CITP, DMCP, Joint Managing  
Director, Creative Travel

The Government says they have introduced the 5 per cent TCS on overseas tour packages with an aim to plug revenue leakage and to enable better tracking and allow the department to collect tax on such transactions. This will probably be the straw that breaks the camel's back. If the government has a specific reason to plug revenue leakage, that can be better addressed by regulation, additional paperwork and checking source of the payments. But, to simply tax outbound remittances is insane. There are many travellers who are senior citizens or don't pay taxes for other reasons. They will have little chance of getting the tax back at the end of the year. It will unfairly affect the cash flow of travellers as well. The whole industry is alarmed and this will completely change the buyer's behaviour.

Today, with the world of internet, there is nothing the Indian consumer cannot buy directly through online travel portals or other suppliers. What will happen is that, we will once again go back to the old system of 'hawala' transactions on paying on foreign exchange and black money will be used a lot more effectively. At the end of the day, the Indian economy will lose business for sure. I know, all the associations and our nodal body, FAITH is working overtime on this. It is a very unfair law for sure. But, all I know is, if everyone works together, we will win.

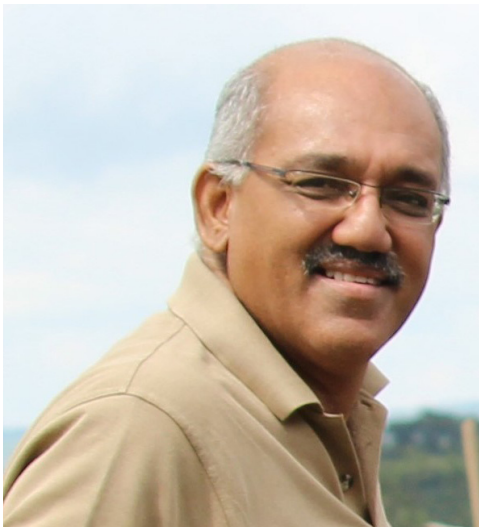


**Arjun Mukundd,**  
Senior Engagement Manager, T&A  
Consulting

It has to be noted that travel is no longer a discretionary spend and is certainly not meant for the rich. People are saving up their salaries to travel.

We are indeed alarmed with this matter; this is going to disrupt the business of travel agents in India. It is a chain reaction. Travel agencies' losing out business is going to damage our business as well. It has to be noted that 70 percent bookings in India are done through the travel agencies and the rest 30 per cent is accounted for online business. If travel agents don't win, companies like us don't win either. The travel trade is the most important and crucial aspect for our line of business.

As a member of the industry, I feel we should seek support from other members and have to do everything to support the travel fraternity in India. The government should defer this rule. We are amidst the ever growing bad situation of COVID-19 and we really can't afford to take another blow.



**Jayesh Ashar**  
Managing Director, Pearl Tourism &  
Leisure Group

At the outset it is an unfair burden on

the travel and tourism trade. Apart from TDS, I-T, Corporate Tax and GST, the government is using the businesses as their unpaid agents to collect information on errant citizens (tax avoiders). The main unfair point is that it is biased against Indian registered businesses. Travellers are free to make reservations directly with businesses based abroad, (hotels, DMCs, online portals, etc) and avoid GST plus TCS. I am surprised at the blind spot of the government on this point.

It seems obvious that the government's reporting systems have failed to notify it of tax avoiders travelling abroad. Isn't the passport linked to the Adhaar and PAN card? Why can't the immigration system on scanning the passport generate a report without exception to the tax authorities of tax avoiders/non payers travelling abroad? In my opinion that is what excellent governance is all about.

The government has said that a very small percentage of the population pays income tax. The scope of increasing this group is limited. Why then create a huge missile to kill a mosquito? TCS will encourage 'hawala' transactions, pushing a substantial amount of tourism business to offshore companies and devoid the government of GST, income tax and corporation tax. Not to mention job losses, business closure and civil and psychological unrest among the citizens. All travel professionals, including us, will suffer drop in business. Already thin margins, owing to competition, will be further eroded due to the cost of compliance.

The matter is already in discussion among the trade members to unite all trade associations and bodies to advise the government on its tourism policy. Making a joint professional representation to the government, ensuring the trade recognised as an industry, requesting the trade help the government in its fight against black money and urging the government to simplify the tax regime, so that tax avoidance is drastically reduced.

In my opinion, the TCS will not go away; it may be reviewed in respect of the percentage and implementation date. Lastly, there needs to be a complete overhaul of the whole system. Ideally, the government should encourage job creation at all levels, simplifying the tax regime, perhaps abolishing some taxes (prime example is I-T, as such a small percentage of the population is paying it), making GST simpler and increase the speed of development of infrastructure (roads, airports, railways). The whole world is looking at India to become an economic super power but we many a times falter near the finishing line.



if the online booking hotel portals are left out of the cover of this law or act, the tour operator will bear the brunt as people will book online where revenue will not be under scrutiny and full advantage of it will be taken by foreign companies, leaving the travel trade in India in shatters. This announcement is not only a dampener but a death knell for the Indian travel trade and agents owing to lack of clarity.

Only, if we get to the level of online portals and hotel-booking websites, can our business be saved.

from various countries so it'll certainly have a negative impact on us as well as our b2c partners in India will be affected. As part of the tourism industry, we are actively promoting and creating awareness among travel fraternity for campaigns such as #SaveTravelIndustry and #NOTCSTAX on social media and through our regular e-mailers to our b2b network pan India, so that it is being noticed by the government and more and more travel companies can come in active support of this campaign. These campaigns are among top trending topics on social media with efforts of the travel fraternity. Also, I have personally contacted more than 25 mainstream media friends seeking their support on this issue by giving wide coverage on this matter. My only advice to travel fraternity is to strongly support such campaigns in big numbers and to come together against this tax.



**Sanjay Shah**  
CEO, Flamingo Transworld

It was an eye-opener when our Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi announced that out of 3 crore Indian travellers internationally, only 1.5 lakhs are taxpayers, but the TCS implications has a lot of grey areas. Is it for only tour packages or is it for all outbound hotel as well as all services in foreign exchange? If applicable only to tour operators then it will not serve its purpose as only about 2.5 lakhs or so would be affected under the net. All other, IT or online driven bookings would be out of it. Also, if all transactions are taxable, too many transactions would be under it with minimal revenue, affecting huge infrastructure.

TCS will definitely have a very far reaching effect for two reasons. One, that the timing of the implementation is when the whole industry is reeling under the COVID-19 effect which is a big blow to the industry and secondly,



**Anuj Singhal**  
Founder, Travel Representation House

As we know COVID-19 has broken the spine of the tourism industry and a lot of airlines, hotels and travel companies are on the verge of bankruptcy, but on the other side, the government is ready to put the last nail in the coffin for outbound tour operators with its plan to implement TCS. The government, at this time, should support and give bailout package to tourism industry especially to SMEs, however, the government seems to be working in the direction to kill the small outbound tour operators.

We are into representation business and we represent DMCs

TTJ's view: Every single outbound travel agent is demanding the rollback of this tax. However, if implemented, this tax will promote foreign companies in India and over the time, guests will start booking their overseas tour packages with them only. The government is forcing travel agents to close down their business and open a company abroad or invite foreign entities to do business in India. Our country is passing through tough time in terms of the economy slow down and the ongoing COVID-19 disaster. On top of that, if this tax is implemented, it will lead to more unemployment and shut down of small travel companies.

Worldwide, already, massive job losses are taking place in many countries and some are even preparing special emergency rescue package for the travel industry. Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong have already announced tax exemption or financial aid to agents/operators. Hoping, our government too understands and listens to the travel industry's grievance and restores faith of the stakeholders, to some extent.

# Break free with roadtrips in the post Covid-19 era

While fear and panic has gripped the country, roadtrips may turn out to be a saviour to the travel enthusiasts. While people across the world have put a pause to their travel plans for the next few months, the urge to travel will be stronger than ever before – especially after being in lockdown for such a long period. Let's take a look at how roadtrips may change the way we look at travel in the near future.

Craig Fonseca

The dreaded Coronavirus has brought the world to a standstill since March. Certain parts of India have been under official lockdown since mid-March. Apart from being a major health risk to yourself, your family and everyone you may have contact with, if you travel during this lockdown, it's against the law! Passenger trains, buses, flights are shut and most highways are under high surveillance. It left most people at home scratching their travel itch by dreaming of their last trip during con-calls, staring at their desktop wallpapers and turning to content on Instagram and YouTube to take inspiration for their next trip.

The world is hopeful that we'll come out of this situation quickly with as little loss as possible, but experts say that it will take a while for life to get back to the normal after the pandemic ends. Studies suggest that travel will continue to see a downturn even after the lockdowns and quarantine periods. This is mainly due to the fear of travelling in enclosed vehicles with hundreds in close proximity with little or no control of our surroundings.

However, we're expecting an increased number of people to turn to their humble private vehicle to fulfill their desire to travel. A personal vehicle is more than just a means of transport within the city. With a number of roads leading out of the urban landscape in various directions, your options are only limited by your imagination. Soon after lockdown, with the urgency to get work, social obligations and personal matters on track, roadtrips provide the optimal solution for a short break from the city without being very time or budget intensive.

One can understand why travelling in your own vehicle seems safest, especially after witnessing the spreading power of Coronavirus. In

your car, you're assured of a safe environment as well as your co-passengers, leaving you free to enjoy your trip without having the fear of what you're touching or who you're sharing the seat with. Couple that with ample of nearby destinations with avenues to explore interests and passions that you may have discovered or rediscovered at home during the lockdown period, and you have a combination that few can beat.

However, if we look closer to home, the lockdown would have been financially hard on local travel vendors as well. Local tourism depends primarily on people staying in smaller towns and villages outside the city, artisans, home stays, restaurants and experience providers, some of which may usually live hand to mouth and would have an extremely difficult lockdown period. Roadtrips allow travellers to feed this local economy first-hand and provide a livelihood while doing their bit towards sustainable travel.

While roadtrips may not be everyone's cup of tea, it shows signs of being the most easily accessible means to fulfill the desire to travel once the situation improves all over the country and the world. One could reach out to local communities or gather a group of friends and drive out of the city over the weekend. A number of communities organise roadtrips to nearby destinations and take care of all the planning and logistics leaving you free to enjoy the drive for that much needed break.

We at The Roadtrips Co, enable more than just exploration of a destination or route in your vehicle, but also curate a hassle-free experience where you can explore, discover and share your passion with other like-minded members from the community.

**Craig Fonseca is a Core Team Member of The Roadtrips Co.**



# 'Namaste Orchha', celebrates the richness of an era

Madhya Pradesh, a state of eloquent culture, historical places, hill stations and rich wildlife is among the most thought-provoking tourist destinations in the country, holding immense potential for the growth of inbound tourism, while also creating new opportunities by employing initiatives to promote the state in a larger context. Not much explored, town of Orchha is under the lens of Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board's latest endeavour, that is in sync with the event, 'Namaste Orchha'. Here's a glimpse of this spectacular three day festival.

Sonika Bhandari

Madhya Pradesh has immensely grown as one of the most preferred tourist destinations in India. From beautiful temples to intricate art and craft, sprawling landscapes to varied wildlife, the state has everything that a tourist craves for. The architecture illustrates the rich past, often thronged by wanderers in the era gone by. The natural heritage of the state with rich settings and green meadows, flourishing with uncountable species of flora and fauna, is something a wildlife lover can't ignore. In short, the state provides the travellers, with different mind-sets, a



unique travel list.

Orchha is one such hidden gem in Madhya Pradesh, thriving on its celebrated heritage, natural beauty, culture and creativity. Madhya Pradesh government organised 'Namaste Orchha' event that opened on March 6, to draw the attention of tourists to the state of MP in general and Orchha in particular, by exhibiting in the backdrop of the majestic Orchha fort, showcasing the state handicraft, heritage and legacies, sustainable fashion and design presentations in association with master-craftsmen and well known global-local brands.

Founded in the 16th Century by Rudra Pratap Singh, Orchha became the capital of the Bundela Rajput dynasty. Planned along the Betwa river, the complex of forts, palaces and cenotaphs take the visitors by surprise. Orchha is the only place in India where Lord Ram is worshipped as a King. The grand temples stand enigmatically in the landscape, merging the stories of valour of the Rajput Kings with those of the gods. This historical town is seeped in Rajput lore. The fort palace complex still echoes the battles fought centuries ago.

With a vision to preserve the heritage, culture and to help in the economic progress of the people of Orchha, it celebrates the cultural landscape of the central state. The Madhya Pradesh government plans to develop the ancient Ram Raja Temple in Orchha into a major pilgrimage and tourist attraction on the lines of Somnath Temple, Tirumala Tirupati and Golden Temple.

In the course of the three days, the festival saw an inaugural cultural performance at the 16th century Orchha Fort, an immersive visual spectacle of the 'maha aarti' on the banks of river Betwa and a 'farm-to-table' experience showcasing products of organic farming.

The festival also featured a food and crafts bazaar which had the local cuisine and traditional handicrafts on offer. This event brought together the several experiences that are quintessentially Orchha. A trip to Orchha is perfect for travelling back in time, a lesson from the forgotten pages of history.

The debut edition of the festival also brings forth a unique set of dance performances that narrate the hidden history of the town. Musical performance



by Sadhya Group and Clinton Cerejo music band during the inaugural session beguiled the guests on the first edition of the three-day extravaganza. The festival also featured diverse forms of music, art, wellness, travel, nature, adventure, history and culture on the remaining two days of the programme.

Remarkably, Orchha won the Best Heritage City at the National Tourism Awards event 2017-18 and is shortlisted for UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Bestowed with diverse culture, wildlife and fascinating history, Madhya Pradesh is a true visual treat to the travellers that will surely fill you with so many incredible memories. So, plan your trip to the 'The Heart of Incredible India' and discover local heritage, food, culture, and adventure at its very best.



Incredible India

# Amid the pandemic, time for individuals, industries and the government to contribute and support each other

The Covid-19 pandemic is putting more than 50 million jobs in the global travel and tourism sector at risk, with travel likely to slump by a quarter this year. However, as we are all navigating uncertain times, remember that this phase too shall pass. The main thing to remember during this difficult time is that you are not alone. Now is the time to pull together as an industry.

Team TTJ

With the number of COVID-19 affected cases leaning

dangerously more than 360,000 and the worldwide death toll crossing more than 75,000, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared the virus outbreak a pandemic in the second week of March 2020, four months after the novel virus first made headlines.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC) have warned that once the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak is over, it could take up to 10 months for the tourism industry to recover. The industry currently accounts for 10 per cent of global GDP. This impact would depend on how long the epidemic lasts and could still be exacerbated by recent restrictive measures, such as those taken by different countries.

In an example, referring to the U.S. decision on restriction of travel to Europe, WTTTC's Managing Director, Virginia Messina says, "Certain measures are not helping and they can prompt the economic impact to be way more significant.

She argued that such policies are too generic and not proven to be effective to contain the virus. She also said that such restrictions could complicate travel by medical experts and delivery of medical supplies.

"Around 850,000 people travel each month from Europe to the United States, equivalent to a \$3.4 billion monthly contribution to the U.S. economy", Messina said. Of the 50 million jobs that could be lost, around 30 million would be in Asia, seven million in Europe, five million in the Americas and the rest in other continents, she projected.

The equivalent to a loss of three months of global travel in 2020 could lead to a corresponding reduction in jobs of between 12 per cent and 14 per cent, also calling on governments to remove or simplify visas wherever possible, cut travel taxes and introduce incentives once the pandemic is under control. Messina also encouraged flexibility in the sector, so that travellers can postpone and not cancel their plans. By sector, airlines and cruise ships were currently being more impacted than hotels.

On the other side, the World

Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has strengthened its collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The two UN agencies met in Geneva to further advance a coordinated response to COVID-19 as the outbreak of Coronavirus COVID-19 presents the tourism sector with a major and evolving challenge. UNWTO calls for solid international leadership and for tourism to be included as a priority in future recovery efforts.

UNWTO also calls upon the sector and travellers to address this challenge with sound judgment and proportionate measures. Tourism is currently one of the most affected sectors and UNWTO has revised its 2020 forecast for international arrivals and receipts, though emphasizes that such any predictions are likely to be further revised.

Against a backdrop of travel restrictions being introduced, UNWTO underscores the importance of international dialogue and cooperation and emphasizes the COVID-19 challenge also represents an opportunity to show how solidarity can go beyond borders.

The tourism sector, like no other economic activity with social impact, is based on interaction amongst people. UNWTO has been guiding the tourism sector's response on several levels:

- a) By cooperating closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), the lead UN agency for the management of this outbreak;
- b) By ensuring with WHO that health measures are implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary impact on international travel and trade;
- c) By standing in solidarity with affected countries; and
- d) By emphasizing tourism's proven resilience and by standing ready to support recovery.

UNWTO has released its updated assessment of the likely impact of the COVID-19 on international tourism. Taking into account the unparalleled introduction of travel restrictions across the world, the United Nations specialised agency for tourism expects that international tourist arrivals will be down by 20 per cent to 30 per cent in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures. However, UNWTO

stresses that these numbers are based on the latest developments as the global community faces up to an unprecedented social and economic challenge and should be interpreted with caution in view of the extreme uncertain nature of the current crisis.

An expected fall of between 20-30 per cent could translate into a decline in international tourism receipts (exports) of between US\$ 300-450 billion, almost one third of the US\$ 1.5 trillion generated in 2019. Taking into account past market trends, this would mean that between five and seven years' worth of growth will be lost to COVID-19. Putting this into context, UNWTO notes that in 2009, on the back of the global economic crisis, international tourist arrivals declined by 4 per cent, while the SARS outbreak led to a decline of just 0.4 per cent in 2003.

UNWTO continues to coordinate closely with WHO and other United Nations agencies, and UNWTO's Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili maintains regular contact with governments and tourism sector leaders.

Zurab Pololikashvili says, "Tourism is among the hardest hit of all economic sectors. However, tourism is also united in helping to address this immense health emergency – our first and utmost priority – while working together to mitigate the impact of the crisis, particularly on employment, and to support the wider recovery efforts through providing jobs and driving economic welfare worldwide."

Pololikashvili further adds, "While it is too early to make a full assessment of the likely impact of COVID-19 on tourism, it is clear that millions of jobs within the sector are at risk of being lost. Around 80 per cent of all tourism businesses are small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs),

and the sector has been leading the way in providing employment and other opportunities for women, youth and rural communities."

Alongside this new assessment, UNWTO underlines tourism's historic resilience and capacity to create jobs after crisis situations, while also emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and of ensuring the sector is made a central part of recovery efforts.

Since the start of the current crisis, UNWTO has been working closely with the wider United Nations system, including directly alongside the World Health Organization

(WHO) to guide the sector, issuing key recommendations for both high-level leaders and individual tourists. To better consolidate and strengthen the response, the Organization has established the Global Tourism Crisis Committee.

By staying home today, we can travel tomorrow; the hashtag #TravelTomorrow encapsulates this message of solidarity and hope, through which the UNWTO calls for shared responsibility among travellers and the tourism sector around the world to deal with the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. #TravelTomorrow has become the common thread that runs through the World Tourism





Organization's response to the current crisis, highlighting the enduring values of tourism.

Now, with nearly 165 countries are steadily going into lockdown, and businesses across the globe are operating in fear of an impending collapse of global financial markets. This situation, clubbed with sluggish economic growth in the previous year, especially in a developing country like India, is leading to extremely volatile market conditions.

The coronavirus pandemic would have a debilitating impact on India's tourism sector with the industry estimating an overall loss of ₹5 lakh crore and job cuts for 4-5 crore people. Of the total losses, the organised sector in the industry -- branded hotels, tour operators, travel agencies which are the mainstay of the sector -- may be hit the hardest with an estimated loss of around ₹1.58 lakh crore, according to Confederation of Indian Industry estimates.

The industry body has said that branded hotel groups are set to lose as much as ₹1.10 lakh crore, online travel agencies ₹4,312 crore, tour operators (inbound and domestic) ₹25,000 crore, adventure tour operators ₹nearly 19,000 crore and cruise tourism ₹419 crore.

Sources in the Union Ministry of Tourism said the government is considering helping the sector with soft loans, working capital and deferment on loan repayments. The ministry itself, in a presentation to a parliamentary panel on transport and tourism last month, had pegged the losses at ₹5 lakh crore, quoting industry estimates. Other than the organised sector, the tourism industry also gives employment to small homestays, bread and breakfasts and small hotel operators and their services will also take a major hit.

The national federation of 10 tourism, travel and hospitality organisations of India, FAITH, said it was safe to say that the overall value of the losses could be in the range at ₹5 lakh crore,

covering all aspects of the business.

"The problem is that we have tourists who come into the country from October to March and there are people who travel within the country during summer holidays, pujas or in December and then there are people who go abroad. There is no one coming from outside. Our key source markets are heavily impacted due to coronavirus. We don't anticipate the market to come back to India in the next 12-18 months, announced FAITH. FAITH CEO Ashish Gupta recommended a salary corpus for the sector from the government.

Last year, 10.89 million foreign tourists arrived in India, while the number was 10.56 million the year before and 10.04 million in 2017. With travel restrictions in place and the fear of the pandemic spreading, in February 2020, 1.01 million foreign tourists arrived in India compared to 1.08 million in February 2019, registering a year-on-year decrease of 6.6 per cent already. This was the sharpest decline since 2015 and also the first in the month of February.

By the end of March 2020, around 4000 foreign tourists were stuck in India following visa suspension while regional tourism ministry offices in 20 locations in India are working together with state governments and MEA to address concerns of overseas tourists. Extending support to foreign tourists stranded in India, the Ministry of Tourism has launched a portal to disseminate information regarding services that can be availed by them in the country. The portal titled 'Stranded in India' aims to act as a support network for foreign tourists stuck in various parts of the country.

So while the fight is on, the entire world is facing a truly unprecedented situation arising out of coronavirus. The global outbreak of the novel coronavirus has halted the world on a big scale as we understand it now. It has affected various sectors of the economy. However, one industry that the pandemic has had a drastic impact on is the 'travel and tourism'. Visa restrictions, grounded flights as well as prevailing lockdowns across most international borders have impacted the industry not just in the present scenario, but also in the future. Travellers cancelling their current as well as future plans have impacted both the service providers as well as consumers.

So let us also understand as to what

our industry stakeholders have to say about the effects of the pandemic on travel and tourism-



**Ankush Nijhawan**  
Managing Director, Nijhawan Group

I haven't witnessed this in my career of 20 years and this is one of the worst hit in the last 70 years after the World War 2. We have seen many challenges, but that did not affect the whole world like this pandemic where it has come to a standstill. Every border is controlled at the moment and technically there is no inbound and outbound business literally happening in most of the countries at the moment. This will further affect the industry in a very big way. I am very concerned for our players, be it a travel company or a DMC or an airline or a hotel which will have severe effect on their cash flow and profitability. Sustainability and survival is the better option right now.

The pandemic will put off and discourage people while there will be cost cuts in the various companies not only in India as well as overseas. Therefore, the cash flow will be definitely and severely affected. In other circumstance, India would have witnessed, the peak season of the year in April, May and June which in my opinion would have been almost 20 percent over 2019 but is witnessing cancellations of almost 70-75 per cent. Presently, companies which will manage cash flow will survive this crucial time. Measures to be taken are to watch your cost, cutting salaries of your team and hoping that the market will bounce back very soon. However, I do expect normalcy to return by the early fortnight of April.



**Vineet Verma**  
Executive Director & CEO, Brigade  
Hospitality Services Limited

COVID 19 has literally crippled economies worldwide and there are no signs of an early recovery. The hospitality sector has been the worst hit, with occupancies since March having crashed to near Zero in many cases. Several hotels have been compelled to shut down and we fear many more will follow if the situation is not brought under control soon. Even the hotels that are open, with single digit occupancies and almost nil F&B revenues, are bleeding. For the owners, the situation is even worse. There are bank loans to discharge, statutory payments to make whereas our revenues are literally non-existent. We are anxiously waiting for some relief packages to be announced by the Government that can help the hospitality sector to somehow tide over the crisis.

There has been a considerable impact across industries following the Coronavirus catastrophe. The travel and hospitality sector too has seen an impact of 80-90 per cent fall already and companies and start-ups across sectors are restricting the business travels for their executives as much as possible to avert any adverse circumstances. We don't know what to do, as the hotel industry is a high fixed cost industry with manpower, rent, and interest as fixed expenses. We have operated hotels at minimum capacity just to service guests who are already staying over. All employees are working from home leading to a loss of 30 per cent of the productivity. Our clients are requesting for reduction of fees, but we cannot reduce any expenses at our end. As a leader, it is my sole responsibility and we have been constantly keeping a track of the food habits that can make one's immune system even stronger.



**Divyn Singh**  
Co-Founder, Salve & Singh

Needless to say, the impact of the COVID-19 on travel and tourism is devastating the depth of which we are only beginning to fathom. We believe that to understand the effect of COVID-19, we need to break it up into 3 categories- Immediate Effect, Medium run Effect and the Long-term effect.

The immediate effect finds several reservations that stand cancelled due to uncertainty have already led to losses as the airlines, hotels and restaurants have not yet adjusted their labour, material and capital costs. So basically, you have the same expenditure but air traffic is low, hotel occupancy is negligible and restaurants are empty. As we enter into the second phase of the COVID-19 from 2 month to 6th

month, most airlines have grounded flights, hotels and restaurants are closed so the labour, material and utility which constitute the variable cost are adjusted for but cost of capital (i.e., LOANS) still remaining an elephant in the room. In the long run, once threat of COVID-19 has been mitigated the travel industry may see a shift in people focusing on domestic travel and more value for money travel as alongside the travel industry there is an overall economic meltdown which will result in lower spending power for the years to come.

From an industry point of view, a line in the sand needs to be drawn and all the variable costs need to be minimized. Perhaps measures can be taken in cooperation with the hired staff that they utilize some of their leave days and or agree to deferred or a reduced salary so reducing staff can be minimized. Although, given the gravity of the situation there is no other option than to downsize if businesses in the industry are to stay afloat.

In the medium run, I would recommend that businesses in the industry rely upon offering discounted tickets, coupons for hotel nights and meals and incentives to generate cash flow. This is lucrative for the consumer and hugely beneficial to a cash strapped business. For example, one can sell business class ticket coupon to be redeemed before July 2021 at half the price this will incentivise the consumers to come forward and avail of the discount enabling a cash flow for the airline industry businesses.

As far as stage 1 of the COVID-19 which led to immediate effects, I believe last 2 months and we are at the end of this stage. As we enter the second stage, we expect this to last till the end of the year or beginning 2021. Then, we should return to what we are calling the new normal with lower and less exuberant consumption pattern for several years. It will be a while before we things return to the pre- COVID-19 days as far as the travel and tourism industry is concerned.



**Siddharth Goenka**  
Founder, Aiosell Technologies &  
MD, Octave Hotels, Bangalore





### Amit Kishore

Co-founder & Director, Eastbound Group

The travel industry has taken a massive blow and we're all feeling the heat. It's challenging times for everyone. Not only the inbound segment but also outbound and domestic tourism has been adversely impacted, so the crisis is across the board. Our inbound destination management companies Eastbound, Distinct Destinations and Eastbound Discoveries saw a substantial drop in numbers due to cancellations starting from November, first owing to anti-CAA riots and then by dint of the spread of coronavirus. Similarly, our outbound and finally, our domestic businesses have borne the brunt of the pandemic. Having said that, we're hoping that the situation will improve in due course and the next season should help the industry cover some lost ground. It's now just a matter of who has the wherewithal and reserves to ride out the storm.

I think the best thing we can do right now is to not do anything at all. Our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi has outlined strong contingency measures and instructed us to batten down the hatches. It's heartening that the Indian government is taking timely and responsible steps keeping the larger interest of humanity at heart. Over here at Eastbound Group we have handed a detailed advisory to our employees to remain safe during the coronavirus outbreak. We've asked them to install certain communication tools on their systems for uninterrupted internal and external meetings while they're working from home. Above all, our leadership has been given the responsibility to keep team spirits high during these times to maintain a positive attitude among employees.

The government of India along with its medical research team have been trying their best to impede the virus from spreading through various measures, a nationwide lockdown for 21 days being one such example. However, nothing can be said with utmost certainty at the moment. Since the crisis is of a global scale, the resolution will have to be at a global level too. Hopefully, the situation will be better in the next few months. Keeping an ear to the ground and fingers crossed.



### Arjun Mukundd

Senior Engagement Manager, T&A Consulting

The tourism industry currently accounts for 10 percent GDP and about 50 million jobs. Covid-19 has taken the centre stage and we have already lost the first half of 2020. The world was facing the looming existential threat of climate crisis and this has added fuel to the fire. The hotel industry predicts the impact to be worse than post Great

Recession of 2008.

A health advisory has been issued to all our team members to work from home, restrict all non-essential business travel and switch to virtual meeting platforms to enable smooth business transactions. Team T&A remains committed to ensure communication with clients remains uninterrupted and all contingency plans with regards to the safety of colleagues and client data have been put in place.

We are grappling with the escalating situation. Things are fast developing and it's difficult to keep pace. So let us take one day at a time and hopeful that we come out of this the soonest. I am very optimistic that this unprecedented shutdown has already resulted in boredom.

As much as technology is a bane how long can one sit inside the four walls and flip movies on netflix and order from Big Basket or Zomato? We all are waiting for that day to get back to our normal fast paced lives. Let us take a moment and look at it in a positive light, this is certainly making people realize the importance of socializing and of course the need to travel and we are certain that we can see a considerable pent up in the demand shortly.

**TTJ's view:** This year, all tourism businesses are going to have to fight just to survive. It is hard to imagine people travelling abroad for the next six months even after the lockdown due to the extremely fearful environment. Further, economic conditions are likely to leave less disposable income in the hands of the people and restrict spends to only essential purchases. Government intervention is desperately needed to bring relief to this sector in the near future. As the entire travel industry has been pushed to the verge of collapse, the government must come out with a set of measures to aid and revive the sector. These are testing times and we all have to be resilient in this period of great stress and uncertainty.

"The corona virus has forced us to pause and figure out how we run businesses, how we travel and how we treat each other, and most important of all how we treat the world and the species present in this world." - Shoba Narayan.



# Travel Agents shall only refund once the airlines pay them: TAAI

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), the nodal and premier travel and tourism association in India is well known for the leadership they offer to the industry in different tourism verticals. On the aviation front, TAAI is actively associated with the airlines and IATA. As members of IATA's APJC (Agency Program Joint Council), they debate on matters on Airline practices regularly. Airline refunds are a drastic problem which has cropped up with the Covid-19 pandemic, which the association wants the airlines to look into and resolve.

Team TTJ



Jay Bhatia



Jyoti Mayal

**D**ue to the travel restrictions placed by governments across the world, customers/travellers want to cancel their bookings and claim back refunds for tickets booked by them. The global crisis is scary and to remain healthy and safe, people want to ensure they have adequate money to survive as recession has set in. Hence, travellers want their blocked monies back for the unutilised services of travel, which shall not be undertaken by them.

Jyoti Mayal, President of TAAI states, "Due to the ongoing global pandemic, Covid-19, airlines have stopped operations. Globally, commercial passenger aviation business has come to a standstill. The worst affected are our members, who are engaged in the business of airline ticketing, package tours, hotel reservations, sightseeing bookings, etc, being the travel and tourism sector."

She further adds that, "The Travel Agents/Tour Operators have paid 100 per cent to the airlines, for all tickets that have been issued, till date. Our member agents want to process the refunds, for the tickets issued by them for their customers, but majority of IATA member airlines have disabled the refunding mechanism on the GDS systems for agents. Agents are now required to manually process refunds through Refund Authority with IATA, whereby the airlines are being non-committal on the date and amount of repayment of airfare."

Most low-cost carriers too are not refunding the afares and are creating a credit-shell favouring the passenger, to be used for future dates. TAAI has raised strong objections on the same with all airlines, as well as with IATA. They have asked the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to direct the airlines

to refund all monies. Most airlines are offering credit vouchers in the name of the passengers which are valid for 365 days and a couple of them are offering credit vouchers for up to 760 days.

"Further, additional funds of the agents are blocked with the airlines which have been paid by way of advances in float accounts of low-cost carriers operating in India. Therefore, all refunds / credits / vouchers shall be given to the customers/ travellers, by TAAI member agencies, only after the same is received from the Airlines/ IATA," Mayal adds.

TAAI, Vice President, Jay Bhatia, informed that, "Post April 15, 2020, if things come to normalcy, the refund process, if authorised by the airlines, may take from 15 days to 3 months, depending on the airline and how the situation across the globe remains. Currently, most of the airlines are not giving waivers on the cancellation charges. They are not refunding the amounts in cash. They are only giving credit vouchers favouring the passenger, whereby name change shall not be permitted."

During this time difficult time of survival, TAAI is working closely with MoCA and IATA daily, to find a suitable solution, to resolve the refund issue, in the interest of the passenger, along with support from Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH).

"Our members have been told to inform their customers/travellers, who desire to refund their tickets, that they shall be updated as soon as cash refunds/credits/vouchers are received from the respective Airlines/ IATA, for the tickets issued and also assure them that the same shall be given. Until then, all are required to remain patient and understand the issues of financial crunch faced by the industry," further stated Bhatia.

# Heart warming video campaigns from National Tourist Offices for better times ahead

South African Tourism, DCT Abu Dhabi, Turismo de Portugal and Tourism Australia have come up with new, wonderful and inspirational video campaigns reassuring travellers of better times ahead after the pandemic and they will come out stronger and ready to once again intermingle and welcome tourists to their beautiful shores, parks and cities.

Team TTJ

## South African tourism's heartfelt inspirational campaign for citizens: DON'T TRAVEL NOW SO THAT YOU CAN TRAVEL LATER.

"DON'T TRAVEL NOW SO THAT YOU CAN TRAVEL LATER" is part of South African Tourism's call for citizens to not travel now, so that they can all travel later. The two inspirational TVCs have been launched giving further hope to South Africans during the 21-day lockdown and reinforcing the message that South Africa and its people will travel and welcome the world again after COVID-19.

The two 90 second videos are an emphasis on the importance of heeding to the President's call to stay home in a bid to flatten the curve and curb the spread of the virus. The videos flaunt picturesque shots of many much-loved South African tourist attractions but with nobody in sight, further highlighting the

importance of everyone to be responsible and stay safe. Both the videos showcase the country in a hibernation type state with the echoing message being that if we can stay home today, we'll be able to travel again soon.

The official hashtag for the campaign is #SAWillTravelAgain.



## Abu Dhabi reassures travellers of better times ahead with its Stay Home, Stay Safe, Stay Curious video campaign.

The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi has come up with a video campaign through which it seeks to reassure travelers to have an optimistic outlook, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. The video instils hope that everything eventually will return to normalcy. This is Abu Dhabi reassuring travellers of better times ahead with its Stay Home, Stay Safe, Stay Curious video campaign.

Pursuing an inspirational approach,

DCT Abu Dhabi has come up with a feel-good video campaign full of striking images of the emirate, hoping to inspire people to consider their newfound downtime in a positive light, Abu Dhabi encourages travellers across the globe to contemplate as the coronavirus pandemic forces people to shutter businesses and spend more time indoors.

As the planet is resting and restoring now, the video comforts travellers to



think of better times ahead and use this pausing period as an opportunity for reflection and a chance to remember the wisdom of the forefathers and all they have done and sacrificed.

The wheels of life will turn again and Abu Dhabi's gates will open once more, welcoming the world. The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi

conserves and promotes the heritage and culture of Abu Dhabi emirate and leverages them in the development of a world-class, sustainable destination of distinction that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.

The Department manages the Emirate's tourism sector and markets the destination internationally through

a wide range of activities aimed at attracting visitors and investment. Its policies, plans and programmes relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Zayed National Museum and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

Turismo de Portugal launches #CantSkipHope

The Portuguese Tourism Board has transformed the communication of the tourism destination from #CantSkipPortugal into #CantSkipHope, a message of hope for all, adjusted to the moment of uncertainty that we are living right now.

With this initiative, the Portuguese Tourism board wants to make everyone (tourists, tourism professionals and the Portuguese people) understand that this is the time to pause, refocus and join efforts so that we can move forward.

This is a message to the world, through a film with images that reflect the best of Portugal, the landscapes, the moments, the people and the monuments reminding people what awaits us if we all know to wait.

The video was conceived and produced by all teams working from home, therefore making good use of recent archive footage from the Portuguese Tourism Board and voiceover using a smartphone. The producers, Blanche films, Bombom, Bro and Show Off gave them the rights to the footage that was used to make this film.

It will never be too much to share this message of hope in this video, "It is time to reflect. It is time to take a break, for the good of the world. For now, we can dream

of those incredible days to come. We are in this together."

Luís Araújo, President of the Portuguese Tourism Board, highlights the message of the film, "Above all, we would like for this film to serve as an inspiration for a broader reflection and that it would also be an example of a country's effort to raise awareness and unite everyone to overcome this difficult moment in human history."



Tourism Australia sends love to the world amid pandemic

Tourism Australia is sending an uplifting message to Australians and the world - keep dreaming about the beautiful places, people and experiences waiting for you on the other side of this 'With love from Aus'

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, 'With Love from Aus', created by M&C Saatchi,

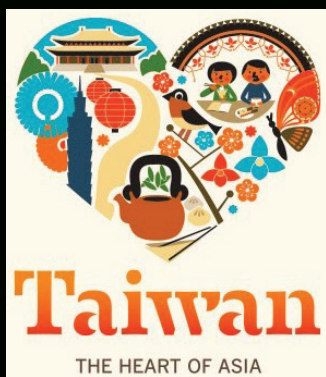
was inspired by the tourism body's previous Matesong campaign that was paused during the Australian bushfire crisis. The advertisement combines webcam shots of people staying connected with images of Australian landscapes and native animals like the Kokkaborra, Koala and Kangaroos.

While the work hopes to inspire people during this time of crisis, Tourism Australia's Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison said that through these times of global uncertainty, everyone could all do with a bit of positivity and something to look forward to: 'With Love From Aus' is a heartfelt message to all Australians and the rest of the world that our beautiful country and its people will be ready to welcome visitors with open arms when the time is right.

"While there are many restrictions on travel and tourism right now, people's appetite for travel hasn't disappeared. We want everyone to keep dreaming about the unique experiences and beautiful places across Australia that will be waiting for them on the other side of this. More time at home gives us more time to think about the things that really matter – so we want to give people something to look forward to by sharing places they'll be able to explore in the future."



# In solidarity with the world, Taiwan prepares 'Holiday for Healing', to focus on more enriching experiences



We are globally in a difficult situation. All of India is in a lockdown till many days after Easter. Typically spring and summers are when Taiwan gets ready to host its maximum visitors from India.

Taiwan Tourism Bureau is in close contact with all stakeholders within Taiwan, and in India, keeping a close eye on the situation and exploring ways to recover from the situation, once the Virus is a thing of the past. TTB understands that the extent of damage caused by the virus – to lives, businesses and our own stress levels – will not be overcome quickly. TTB also understands that when travel resumes, the safety and health of all travellers will be paramount. During this road to recovery, TTB's communication will embark on a new campaign focusing on 'Holiday for Healing'.

## Holiday for Healing will include:

- Focusing on enriching holidays which emphasise on quality time being spent together by families, friends
- Rejuvenating experiences, rather than commercialised options. These will include greater focus on our mountains (which was already our main focus for 2020), natural hot springs, trekking, bird watching and similar experiences
- Greater interaction and experience with the culture of Taiwan and its people instead of large, crowded festivals
- And finally, continued transparency on the health situation, and prioritizing the wellbeing of all visitors

In the meantime, share your experiences and expectations from a holiday in Taiwan on Instagram using the hashtag **#holidayforhealing**

# Soon, 'Work on the Go' will be an ideal solution for the workaholic travel enthusiasts

Pune-based young entrepreneur, Vandita Purohit's unique travel start-up is all about combining travel around the world with work, finding interesting opportunities on the go and a lot more. Bitten by the travel bug at the age of 27, Vandita set sail to a shore that held her passion for work and travel strong. With the clock ticking and ideas growing larger than life, it was time TraWork came into being – her brand-new venture. TTJ, in this difficult time, when work and travel is on a standstill, tries to learn more about this young travel start-up company.

Prashant Nayak

**T**raWork is curated especially for those working professionals who have great passion for travel. These are the folks who are looking for opportunities to blend both work and travel without having to hamper their schedule - an idea that typically defines 'work on the go'. This unique idea is now made possible by Vandita - a 'workaholic travel junkie' as her peers call her.



Vandita Purohit

Happiness ambassador, workaholic traveller, community builder and a colossal creative think tank – these are just a handful of adjectives that define this young and vibrant entrepreneur.

TraWork trips allow you to explore the world and work at the same time. This unique travel start-up is all about travelling to your favourite destinations, working remotely, networking, finding interesting opportunities on the go and a lot more. They call it a 'workation' with TraWork. You embark on a beautiful journey of becoming an explorer from a tourist. The idea is to get intimate with the places and traversing them like a local.

Vandita says, "TraWork is curated especially for those travel enthusiasts, who have a passion for travel and their work. TraWork has had many successful international travel diaries filled with great experiences on its pages with 'TraWorkers' working from Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Amsterdam, Berlin, Helsinki, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and many more. They successfully curated their first India trip to Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar for a three night work plus travel trip, where people could work out of a cool hostel called Zostel, followed by local excursion, stargazing at night from the hilltops, concluding with work, play and campfire scene at a jungle campsite."

Explaining further, the idea in her own words, Vandita tells, "Whatever we do in our daily lives be it exercising, going to work, hanging out with friends, chilling on weekends – everything remains the same. All we do is take you to an entirely different location to

experience your work and life in a more vibrant, completely informal light. Work fills a major part of our lives. When you can't just take a break, TraWorks allows you to take your work on a holiday. This way you can be away for a longer time with nothing holding you back."

Breaking stereotypes around working and travelling, TraWork gives its members a unique opportunity to work while witnessing some of the most fascinating locations around the world. Once signed up, every Traworker is entitled to complete assistance with logistics that comprise essential elements such as accommodation, local experiences, inter and intra-city transport and city exploration.

For those with a focused domain, the start-up gives its members some of the best collaboration and network opportunities abroad, making them a part of a much larger professional community world over. The only thing one has to do is to bear his/her respective visa costs.

Another TraWorker, Ajinkya Ranade shares, "When I first heard the idea of carrying your work and travelling outside your monotonous cabin, I was totally sold and flipped. I immediately wanted to try it out. The cities chosen by the TraWork team were mesmerizing. My work includes sending long quotations and replying to millions of angry customer query mails daily. When I opened my laptop in beautiful co-working spaces of Chiang Mai, Thailand and Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, I started enjoying my monotonous work. TraWork grows on you like a slow and sweet addiction. The part I loved the most about this trip was the culture of TraWork. It is flexible enough to let you party, enjoy your alone time, explore surrounding attractions and satiate your taste buds. My recommendation would be simple; Grab your passport, backpack, laptop and hop on a plane to the next trip which will happen sooner or later."

So think of a destination you've been yearning to explore for a long time and go on a workation with this uber-cool travel startup. Now, imagine exploring it, spending quality time and having the time of your life while you work. Indeed, TraWork lets you take a break without actually taking a work break.

# Time to be ready until travel returns to normal

Although inbound tourism for every country has been affected across the globe, it remains important for them to connect with potential travellers and assure and thank their travel partners for their association and support.

It is also the time to offer light, positive content in their communications to help take people's minds off the panic and give them something to look forward to remembering that, there will be a time that travel will once again flourish.

Team TTJ

## Glamour of Monaco virtually at your home

The Visit Monaco team has put together an extensive online travel experience called Monaco 360, through which you can virtually visit the Principality from the safety of your home and experience it in 360 degrees while learning more about the destination. For a small city-state – it measures 202 hectares (or 0.78 square miles of land) – Monaco sure packs in a lot of attractions (many of which are currently closed due to the coronavirus pandemic).

As travellers across the world are practicing staying at home and social distancing,

Monaco has launched an upgraded virtual tour of the entire principality that will keep them engaged. With so much to explore, now is the best time to immerse yourselves in a virtual tour of the renowned city and start planning a future trip. The tour allows viewers to get a panoramic view of Monaco's stunning French Riviera coastline and skyline

while zooming in to see the city's main destinations in spectacular detail.

From the glistening yacht-lined shores of the Port Hercule to the soothing tree-lined walkways of the Jardin of Saint-Martin, and the storied marine-inspired hallways of Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, viewers can take a deep dive into Monaco's greatest attractions and learn about the principality's rich history and culture. The virtual tour also includes some of Monaco's well-known hotels like the iconic Hotel de Paris and the five-star Metropole Monte-Carlo.



## Mauritius Tourism reiterates its support and solidarity with the Tourism partners

As Mauritius is going through its national lock down, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) wanted to reassure its partners in the Tourism sector of its total support in this period of crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. In his message, MTPA Director Arvind Bundhun recalls about the importance of the sector in

the Mauritian economy and the role played by the stakeholders of the industry in its development. Tourism is a provider of about 100 000 direct and indirect jobs, yielding around 64 billion Rupees and contributing to 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Mauritius.

He also wanted to acknowledge the operators who made courageous

decisions and responded to the appeal of the country and has thanked the hotels that accepted to host people in quarantine as well as the operators who transported them. This includes the air sector as a whole and Air Mauritius in particular which continues to ensure the operations so that the visitors can go back to their respective country.

Arvind also talked about the solidarity that is prevailing among all the players of the industry and the central government. He highlighted that the "Minister of Finance has come with a series of support measures with the main objective to preserve jobs because the backbone of the Mauritius tourism sector is its human resources".

The Director is confident that the destination will come out of this crisis stronger and announced that his team is already working with partners for joint aggressive campaigns to increase the visibility of the destination, to remind that we are still a dream destination.



Arvind Bundhun