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**Reality bites,
but here is hope in the horizon**

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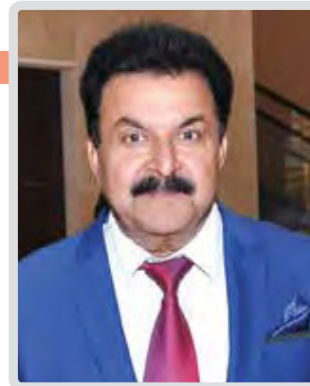
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Photographer	:	Parth Sharma
Asst. Manager Administration	:	Kuldeep Singh
Accounts Manager	:	Priyesh Ranjan

Email: info@sampanmedia.com

Editorial and Marketing Office :
Sampan Media Pvt. Ltd., B-7/114A, 3rd Floor, Safdarjung Enclave, Near Sukhmani Hospital, New Delhi – 110029 Ph: 9560264443, ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

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Dear Friends,

Without a shadow of a doubt, the year 2020 will be largely shaped by factors such as operational breakdown, socio-economical pressure, changing customer sentiments and inevitable chaos. The impact and recovery of the travel and tourism industry from the pandemic will be unparalleled. The governing authorities are also of the view that unlike the other business sectors, tourism revenue will be on a consistent low because of unsold capacity for the present year and that cannot be marketed in subsequent years. This is our stark reality!

On the other hand, despite COVID-19 continuing to claim lives, locations around the world are beginning to open again. Coming to terms with what time has served us with, the world is ready to trust the ray of hope that emerges gradually. More travellers are getting on planes and airlines are reinstating routes. Countries and states have begun to welcome visitors. Everyone is getting ready to get accustomed to the 'New Normal'. These ongoing positive changes may be seen as precursors for change on a broader level that will lead to the reorientation of the global tourism system. That is our staunch positivity and persistent hope!

The July issue of TTJ is all about evaluating reality, thinking positive, and being hopeful. Have a glance inside perusing through what a vast number of industry leaders, stalwarts, and stakeholders have to say!

Keep in your mind: People create crises and people solve the crises!

Happy Reading!

Ravi Sharma

Ravi Sharma

ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

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Jammu and Kashmir opens for tourism from July 14, but only for air travellers

In the guidelines issued by the J&K government, it has been notified, "There will be a partial opening of the tourism sector for visitors from outside J&K, limited to tourists arriving by air only." With this a protocol in place to be followed by the tourists as well the persons/authorities engaged in the hospitality sector.

Thus, the government has decided to open the UT in a phased manner and is allowing entry to only those tourists arriving by air in the first phase of reopening. All the tourists must have confirmed hotel bookings for the duration of their stay. It is mandatory to pre-book accommodation online in hotels, houseboats, or guesthouses. All tourists must have their return air tickets too. Taxis or transport services have to be pre-booked through hotels or travel agencies.

Upon arrival, all the tourists will have to undergo RT-PCR testing (mandatory) and until the test result shows a negative for COVID-19, tourists will stay put in their hotel rooms. If a tourist comes with COVID negative report, he/she will still have to take the RT-PCR test on arrival at the airport. However, they will not be required to remain isolated in hotels.

If a tourist tests positive for the virus, he/she will be immediately sent for treatment to a medical facility as per the protocol. Tourists above the age of 65 should avoid travelling. Aarogya Setu app is a must and all tourists should have it installed on their phones and shall be checked for 'safe' status at the time of arrival.



Maldives launches global advertising campaign with CNN

In a first of its kind initiative by MMPRC (Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation), a Digital Press Conference was held on July 15, with Thoyyib Mohamed, MD, MMPRC and Hon. Abdullah Ameen, Minister of Health, Maldives announcing the re-opening of Maldives for tourism with effect from July 15, 2020.

MMPRC is set to kick off the global advertising campaign with CNN to showcase the beauty of the destination, aligned with the Maldives' borders reopening for international tourists today.

The campaign spanning across three months will focus on highlighting the aspects of the destination that are unique to the Maldives and will also provide a platform for some local personalities and talents to showcase their passion and narrate their stories. With the reopening of the borders, the first part of the campaign will commence with the launch of '5 reasons to Insta love Maldives' vignette. Prominently, the destination will be featured on the CNN weather watch during the campaign period which will be viewed by a substantially large audience across the globe.

With the setbacks due to Covid-19 situation, MMPRC has been working on increasing the brand presence on digital platforms in several markets. The campaign with CNN will be the one of the first global campaigns to launch post the reopening of the borders of the destination.

Dubai receives WTTC Safe Travels stamp, opens its borders to international tourists

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has recognised Dubai as a safe destination, giving the city a Safe Travels stamp that validates the stringent hygiene and safety protocols that the city has put in place,

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing



(Dubai Tourism), said, "As we reopen Dubai's doors to tourism and welcome our international visitors back to the city, our foremost priority is their wellbeing, achieved through stringent hygiene and safety protocols that have been deployed across all tourist touch points. The WTTC's Safe Travels stamp endorses Dubai's strong global cooperation in combating the pandemic with comprehensive and effective measures to ensure guest health and safety. We trust that our efforts not only provide an optimised experience for our visitors, but also secure their health and that of their families, further cementing the confidence that our guests have had thus far in Dubai, and encouraging people from every corner of the world to visit one of the safest cities in the world this summer."

The city is ready to welcome visitors and has regained its vibrant energy following the reopening of attractions, facilities and amenities including public and hotel beaches, shopping malls, restaurants, swimming pools, water parks and golf courses, as well as the resumption of popular activities like water sports and camping.



Monaco launches Monaco Safe Certification

The Monaco Safe certification is a way of demonstrating attractiveness that can be used by all stakeholders who drive the dynamic Monegasque economy and promote the Principality's image. It is also a strong unifier, open to all, based on a desire to help the economy recover safely. A shared stamp of approval guaranteed by the State. "It is an additional selling point available to the tourism and retail sectors: the Principality of Monaco is safe and attractive, and will continue to be so," said the Government.

With this certification, the Government is also seeking to highlight the efforts of business owners and their employees to ensure that they can offer their customers the best possible welcome. The procedure for obtaining certification is voluntary and free of charge, and conducted entirely online. An online service is now available to make it easier for candidates to submit applications and for them to be processed within a very short time frame – the certification process is based on implementation of the health protocols currently in force for each sector, which are known to everyone.



Emirates announces repatriation flights to India

Emirates will be operating special repatriation flights to five Indian cities between 12 and 26 July to assist stranded Indians get home and for residents of UAE currently in India to return to the UAE. The flights will be operated to Bengaluru, Delhi, Kochi, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram between 12 and 26 July, 2020.

Passengers must meet all the entry requirements of the destination to be allowed to board the flights. Only Indian citizens stranded in the UAE will be allowed to fly from Dubai to the five Indian destinations. These flights will be available for UAE nationals and residents with prior entry approval from the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDFRA) for residents of Dubai and ICA approval for residents of other emirates of the UAE.

All passengers travelling from airports in India to Dubai are also required to carry a negative Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) certificate issued by a laboratory authorised by the government of India to be accepted on the flight. Certificates must be issued no more than 96 hours before departure.

Travelport launches free COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin

Travelport launched the Travelport COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin. The plugin provides travel agencies with the latest information on government restrictions, lockdowns and safety measures across the globe – all within the agent workflow. It is available free-of-charge to all Travelport customers globally, using Travelport Smartpoint 8.2 or above, and can be downloaded directly from Travelport Marketplace.

The new tool provides detailed information on a range of topics, including: lockdown rules, entry requirements and quarantine measures for travellers. Country-level information can be displayed at the click of a button, allowing agents to advise their customers easily and instantly.

Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer at InterGlobe Technology Quotient, said, "With the looming uncertainty across the globe, having a substantial amount of certainty through readily accessible up-to-date information including on government and airline policies shall unequivocally prove beneficial for our network of agents and serve as a ready aid for gaining momentum in operations and transactions. This free built-in plugin in the GDS is a welcome move from Travelport, one that will result in both an informed traveller and travel enabler."

The information in the Travelport COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin is provided by global travel safety intelligence provider, Safeture, and is updated daily.

Etihad Airways adds more destinations to its hand baggage only fare

Etihad Airways has expanded its hand baggage only 'Deal Fare' which allows travellers to purchase lower fares in Economy Class if no checked baggage is required, to include destinations across Europe and Asia. The 'Deal Fare' includes a complimentary carry-on baggage allowance of 7 kg and was initially only available on flights between Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Azerbaijan. Throughout July and August 2020, Etihad is introducing the 'Deal Fare' on new routes including Belarus, Greece, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Turkey. Etihad Guest members who purchase the 'Deal Fare' can continue to enjoy an additional free checked baggage allowance (Etihad Guest Silver – 10 kg, Etihad Guest Gold – 15 kg and Etihad Guest Platinum – 20 kg).

SIPPING ON SOME 'POSITIVI-TEA'

For now, let the inverse proportions of hope and reality coexist!

Rachita Sehgal & Prashant Nayak

When the news is all doom and gloom, it becomes griming even for the most optimistic to stay positive. Even though it is important to be aware of virus impacts one should not

have to delve on every bit and piece of sad COVID news from dawn to dusk. Instead, focus on the positive thoughts that are trying to make their way through the blurry clouds of negativity...sail along as we at TTJ bring you few antidotes for these grey times.



**Can our positivity and hopes go
beyond reality in this pandemic?**



Subhash Goyal
Chairman, STIC Travel Group
Hony. Secretary, FAITH

The world lives on hope, without hope and a positive attitude, we cannot survive. Therefore, I believe that yes, definitely the positive approach and hoping for the best is the only way, which will help us to survive beyond this pandemic. No one in the world could have imagined a situation like

has a silver lining'. The darker the cloud, the brighter is the silver lining. I also believe that every storm in the world has to pass and this storm of COVID-19 shall also pass. By the starting of domestic flights and re-opening of hotels and shops, some economic activity has started and I do see a light at the end of the tunnel. I hope international flights will start soon and only those passengers will be quarantined who will test COVID-19 positive. We must also focus not on the number of people who are dying, but the number of people who are recovering from this disease in India is amongst the highest in the world, because of our extensive intake of Indian spices having medicinal value in our diets as per Ayurveda.

The percentage of people, who have died, from 1.3 billion people, will be about 0.01 per cent which is much lesser than any other epidemic. It is estimated that in India, out of 1.3 billion people, there are only 0.76 deaths per million. This needs to be highlighted by the media that the figure of 0.76 deaths per million is amongst the lowest in the world as compared to 630 deaths/million in Belgium, 503 deaths/million in Spain, 446 deaths/million in Italy, 317 deaths/million in UK and 171 deaths/million in USA.

I am fully confident that only positivity and having faith & hoping for the best is the only solution to survive and if we are able to survive then we can always revive and rebuild our business. I also strongly believe that once the vaccine is discovered, Tourism will bounce back like never before.

this. I have seen the Indo-Pakistan war, Indo-Bangladesh war, SARS, Plague, 9/11- but in my lifetime, I could never imagine in my wildest dreams, where the whole world will be in a complete lockdown situation. Millions of jobs in the global tourism industry are being lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted travel like no other event in the history of our tourism and tourism industry.

In this pandemic, we have no other choice but to be positive and hope for the best. I strongly believe that 'every dark cloud

Radha Bhatia
Chairperson, Bird Group

The fact that travel, tourism and hospitality have been worst hit by the pandemic bears no repetition. However, several factors make eternal optimists like me believe that the bounce back will be soon, quick and substantial. Having, been cooped up in our houses for months together, all of us are looking for an outing and would like to take one at the first opportunity – especially children, who will compel parents to travel. Of course, it is the nearby domestic destinations that will see the initial footfalls – especially weekend destinations where one can drive down in their car, thereby minimising exposure. For this, all stakeholders have to step up and proactively make it convenient and conducive for people to travel. First is assuring them about their safety – making them aware of the well-defined precautionary SOP's undertaken by us to ensure that they remain free from any chances of infection. Second is ensuring that there are enough amenities and activities for keeping every member of the family occupied. Special tie-ups for small group guided tours to nearby attractions, cuisine focused events, organised entertainment – the industry will have to come up with innovative ideas to raise the bar of offerings to the guests and customers. The governments – both state and central – will also have to step up and play an effective role as facilitator to enable this revival in the fastest period. They can greatly contribute to the revival

by a campaign to enhance awareness about the lesser known wonders that each of our state has in plenty. We have thousands of years of our history and culture that is represented by these monuments. Also, ensuring good infrastructure and amenities at these attractions,

with all necessary precautions against the spread of disease, would be a crucial role for the government. Lastly, the central government should incentivise domestic tourism by exempting up to a certain amount spent by taxpayers on domestic travel for leisure from the taxable income.





Rajeev Kohli

Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel
President, EUROMIC

I have always been a positive person. So many of my messages, posts and articles over the past few months have expressed our collective need to remain upbeat and optimistic. However, even I have my limits. After all, I am also human and now I am on the border

of dejection. Honestly, there are far too many stories and quotes on being positive. There is a limit to putting on a happy face. Every company in our industry has taken difficult decisions. We have to keep our companies alive. In addition, the Government of India has let us down.

I am concerned that all the statements from the government are all about Domestic Tourism. This is not a new segment to India. All our hotels and airlines have been surviving on domestic travellers for years. Yes, this may be the first part of tourism to revive. The hotels, airlines, restaurants and others will start getting busy again. The

inbound travel community will be stuck in a very hard place, as foreign travellers will be the last to return to India.

You cannot expect inbound tour operators to pivot business models at a flip of a switch. A dentist cannot do heart surgery the next day. A farmer cannot grow rice one week and cotton the next. A scooter manufacturer cannot start making cars in a week. It is absurd for the government to think portability in business is so easy.

Companies have invested for years in infrastructure, training and product for the international market cannot just start all over again. The needs of the foreign traveller are different from the Indian traveller. To expect our employees to understand the needs of the domestic traveller suddenly is not possible. To expect us, to all of a sudden develop new domestic products is not easy. Domestic is a different market. Most importantly, inbound travel companies do not have the client base or the connections in India, to all of a sudden replace 10 million inbound tourists with Indian clients overnight. Marketing within India is very expensive and none of us have the reserve to be able to invest. We barely have enough money to pay our employees.

I am now very concerned about the survival of a large portion of our tourism industry. Every week the Government delays any support is a week we will never get back. Much of the damage done will be irreversible. We the owners and managers will always show a happy smile. Bit inside we are all tearing up in pain. That is the honest truth.

Sunil Gupta

Director, Travel Bureau

Yes, hope is all that we have, change is eternal hence this doom and gloom should also change, it is a matter of time and how strong we are to survive and face this storm. We all were doing well until January 2020 and then COVID changed everything. The pandemic severely affected our value system and our daily routine. The hospitality business came to a complete halt after the visas were withdrawn and the international airlines were stopped. Who could have imagined that the icon of tourism Taj Mahal shall remain close for months taking livelihood of lakhs of people dependent on tourism in Agra and beyond. It is inherent in human nature to travel and to explore so we do hope that tourism shall revive soon. As experts believe COVID is going

to stay, hence we need to learn to live with it and now wait for the vaccine to give a firm relief and confidence to travellers. The next few months shall be trying for everybody in tourism as the basic survival itself is threatened due to almost no business and it shall result in large-scale unemployment and shut down.

Unfortunately, the Government has ignored this vital sector totally hence, we shall have to find ways to generate alternate sources of income to sustain. Depending on the status and strength of each business unit or individual we will have to find a balance between reality and hope and put up a decent fight keeping faith in our sincere effort.





Prateek Hira

President & CEO, Tornos, Gastroutes, Indian Frontiers

Positivity and hope are the only weapons to deal with the challenges that the present pandemic has thrown our way. Of course, the reality is quite worrisome and I do not wish to undermine it too but at the same time we all have learned enough about this virus and we very well know it is here to stay

and that it will not just vanish and become oblivious. Tourism Industry will take quite some time to reach its pre-COVID levels, which too were not so good, yet it can now be seen as a benchmark of normalcy. Tourism is one industry that can only prosper and grow when people feel safe, secure and assured. The aftermath of COVID pandemic may be enumerated as under:

- **Limited means due to the overall economic downturn** – Tourism is directly proportional to the overall economy and prospers when people have enough left after meeting their necessary requirements.

- **COVID induced xenophobia** – We should not turn a blind eye to this. Xenophobia is already there when people are seeing outsiders with suspicion. To a great extent, our governments are responsible for this by branding it as an imported disease, imported from first other countries then from our states and even other towns. We should address all these issues with the right earnest if we have to hasten the revival of tourism. The tourism industry in India is resilient enough and I am sure we will be able to revive in spite of all these unfortunate realities. After all, to travel has become an essential part of our lifestyle and is important for our wellbeing thus to think, tourism will not revive or is a dead industry is a complete misnomer. This sure is a period of lull and quite difficult too for businesses world over that have come to a grinding halt but then, we need to realise its only a 'pause' and we ought to remain positive and hopeful, instead of sulking, we constructively should be using this period for relearning, realigning, reengineering and coming out even stronger and much firmer than we ever were. How rightly it is said, "It is only hope which is real, and reality is bitterness and a deceit" – Stay strong we will bounce back.

- **Shaken confidence of travellers** – Travellers are not feeling free and happy to travel and are not too sure about their



Rajesh Mudgill

Hony. Secretary, IATO

Staying positive and being hopeful is good and keeps one going. But positivity will not create any magic and things will not fall in place automatically just because you are positive and have high hopes.

One has to see the ground reality too. Can we be sure that the pandemic will be over by, say, October 2020? Or the flights to all the countries will be restored and operate normally? Right now, we are not sure for how long this will last, so how can we make plans to restart or reopen the business with this kind of uncertainty?

Can a restaurateur afford to open the restaurant with 50 per cent capacity with a fear that if any of his staff gets positive, the other staff will be quarantined for the next 7 to 14 days? Can any tour operator afford to pay his staff for the next one year without any business in hand? Can

we be sure that our foreign partners will survive the present economic crisis due to COVID-19 and will have the same strength of the business?

So, let's face the reality that till there is a vaccine in place the business of inbound and hospitality will be the most unstable business and it would not be positive to stay invested without any ray of hope. Therefore, we must face and find an answer to the question of our survival until the business starts, which according to me will not be before October 2021.

Businesses don't run on sentiments. We have to have the correct assessment of the situation and avenues available to us to survive and revive. The winner will be the one, who will plan for long term survival with the least baggage to walk freely. Depending on government help will not be ideal as they have other priorities to attend to.





Neerja Bhatia

Vice President, Indian Sub-Continent, Etihad Airways

While we are in the midst of a global health crisis, I feel it is important to remain optimistic about the future while navigating these times. We cannot anticipate what lies ahead for us, but we can maintain a positive approach and adapt it in more

ways than one. We are all on the road to recovery and we need to adopt measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 by focusing on safety and health of everyone. As we remain positive and hopeful, we can manoeuvre the optimism to further develop the reality that our imminent future holds for us.

The current situation has reinforced the importance of wellness not only amongst people but also as the core of renewed travel experiences. In fact, last month, we launched 'Etihad Wellness', an expanded and comprehensive health and hygiene programme and customer guide. This builds on the stringent measures already put in place by the airline and is championed by specially trained 'Wellness Ambassadors', a first in the industry, who will be available at every step of the journey to provide reassurance to guests and assist them. They are a dedicated team, trained at our facilities in Abu Dhabi, and will provide essential travel health information and care, so guests can fly with greater peace of mind. Currently, guests can reach out to them via e-mail and soon this service will be available as a web-chat option. In the coming weeks, they will be available at Abu Dhabi airport as well as on-board, providing added comfort and confidence.

At Etihad Airways, we are constantly innovating, assessing and adapting our procedures as the situation develops. What keeps me motivated is the fact that as an airline, we bring the world closer. In the past few years, we have revolutionised the experience of flying, helping our guests create memorable travel experiences. We most certainly look forward to gradually expanding operations across our global network, connecting the world once again.

Vinod Kannan

Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara

The world is going through one of the worst crises in the history of mankind having a disastrous impact on human life and the global economy. The travel and hospitality industry and aviation sector, in specific, has been one of the worst affected. With temporary suspension of operations, there was a long period of no revenues that led to depleting cash reserves, while some of the significant expenses/fixed costs continued. This has resulted in a severe financial impact on all the players in the sector.

In India, we are observing a gradual, but consistent improvement since the resumption of domestic air travel on May 25, 2020. The industry and the government have been very quick in adapting to the changed environment by putting together guidelines in a consultative manner and introducing several stringent measures for the safety and wellbeing of passengers. All the stakeholders in the ecosystem are working together to restore people's confidence in air travel. Travel is an innate human need and we are hopeful that with all these efforts demand will gradually return to the market.

At Vistara, a lot of our confidence comes from the findings of our recently concluded customer survey where 65 per cent of respondents have expressed willingness to travel with us

within the next six months. In fact, 57 per cent of respondents amongst the Club Vistara Elite Members (Platinum and Gold tiers) have said they would like to fly with us as early as within the next one month. Business travel emerged as the biggest reason for travel while Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) remains another significant driving factor.

No doubt, challenges will remain from the changing policies from state governments around arrival requirements, lockdown, etc.; but these aspects indicate recovery and reason to be positive about the future.





Jyoti Mayal
President, TAAI
Vice Chairperson, FAITH

Pandemic COVID-19 has come as something as a jolt of lightening which has taken the entire world as a surprise. When did we ever envisage a world like this, under total lockdown, apprehensive and scared of stepping out from home, socialising, travelling, or letting

we need to gain confidence and we need to get confidence on social distancing, hygiene and sanitisation. Yes, domestic tourism will need to start first in a structured way before anyone even contemplates international travel. This is because of feel at home factor and confidence again. Domestic tourism in all countries will help economies to revive.

I believe we Indians are strong not only emotionally but also in immunity. Our foods are all immunity boosters so we are resilient and will recover quickly. The day we see a cure we will forget all this and start leading a normal life and start travelling. The demographic of a traveller will change and the future of tourism will be based on many criteria - economics, ease, safety, hygiene, medical care, and foremost confidence.

As the President of the largest travel and tourism association and Vice Chairperson of FAITH, I am very confident travel and tourism will be back by reinventing and restructuring ourselves. We have mountains, wilderness, forests, beaches and much more. Travel will be focused initially towards these places. The Ministry of Tourism is mentoring the agents and creating this environment to travel. Technology will play a very vital role in our lives and especially in travel. Contactless travel and virtual reality will be of most importance and will boost the confidence of the traveller. Having said all the above I believe travel cannot be contained for long. No man is an island. Flying is freedom and travel is experiential. I am confident the change is for the better. Travel and Tourism will be more appreciated and meaningful and once again bring people together.

a friend inside your homes and most importantly a total rundown economically and zilch business? If someone had said this would happen six months back I would have laughed. Today witnessing huge losses of life has made us face reality and has changed our thought processes of not only travel but life too. Human beings are not robots, they need the human touch, they need to show their emotions and they need to hug and feel, so I believe if we are hoping beyond reality it is not wrong. We can and we should!

The resumption and starting of business will be slow as

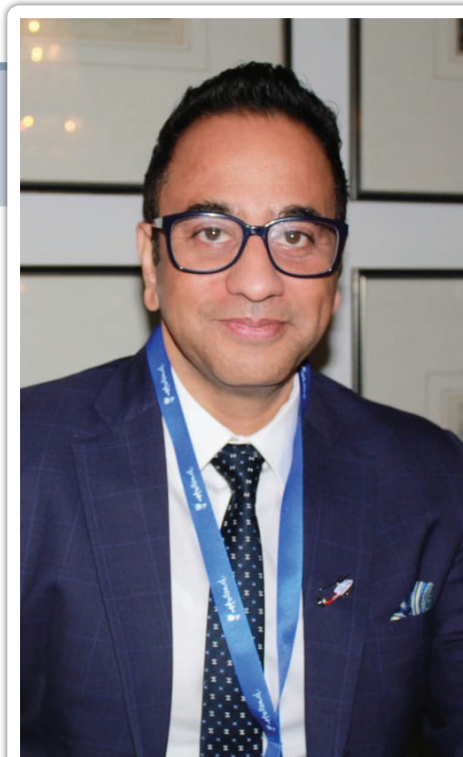
Riaz Munshi
President, OTOAI

The ongoing pandemic has taken the world by storm and in difficult times like these, I believe that positivity and hope are powerful sources of reassurance. One can perceive the current situation either as the end or as the start of something new - it all depends on perception. To think of it as the latter, we need to tune our minds to remain in a resourceful state. It is time to let go of the things we cannot control and concentrate on what we can actually do. Amidst this pandemic, there is an opportunity to plan better, strategise, and enhance our knowledge for the journey ahead. 2020 is centered on survival. My heart goes out to those who have been affected by this outbreak and those who have lost their loved ones for there is no loss greater than the loss of life. As far as financial and economic aspects are concerned, one never knows what the future holds and you might get much more than what you have lost in the pandemic.

The one trait common to all successful people is to keep pushing when the going gets tough. Amongst renowned people that got success after years of struggle are dignitaries like Amitabh Bachchan who lost almost everything at the age of 57, and I do not need to tell you about his triumphs thereafter. Similarly, after the Second World War, experts suggested that Japan could never return to normalcy, but we all know where

the country stands today. Thus, once this storm settles, it is time for us to see where we were and where we should go in a new light. As for the travel industry, I am confident that once the outbreak is over, travel will have a speedy recovery. India's story of outbound travel is still intact as travel is a way

of life. According to me, within a year post, COVID, India's outbound numbers will show visible strength and within a few years, it will be a 100 million travellers market. It is just a matter of time, so we have to hang in there with hope, positivity and confidence, and not give up.





E M Najeeb

Chairman, ATE Group of Companies

I understand that we are talking about the very thin line between our hope and reality in Tourism. We all know what's the reality. But our optimism and positive thinking is making us hold on to our hope of a bright future, though gradually. As mentioned, our

new hope is oriented around a new normal of a possible domestic tourism in the future.

The gravity of the dismaying situation of the Airline, Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality industry is discussed over and over. But there should definitely be some silver lining in the cloud. What's the hope that we could see looking from this state of reality? Experts are thinking and researching to find possible ways out. They are all hopeful of beginning slowly from a potential vertical of Tourism, that's Domestic Tourism. Experts perceive Domestic Tourism as a 'New Normal' in Tourism in India. Not only that it's a potential option but also a practical option. That's the right choice for the urgent immediate future.

India has good reasons for this strategy. India has a large travelling population and it is a vast destination too. That means we have the market and destinations well within the country. This gives a great opportunity with ease and flexibility to market the locations, products, and services. About 1855 million Domestic Tourist travel was there within India in 2018. And 26.30 million travelled to overseas destinations in 2018. These two combined could be our focus target for the new Domestic Tourism efforts. There's great potential for this too in the country.

Destinations within the country can make suitable packages to the tastes and needs of the Indian travellers. AAI operates 126 airports in India. 100 of them receive regular commercial flights. This enhances domestic tourists' connectivity. Confidence and trust builds up only when the Government flashes green signal for it. Let's be hopeful that the Government will allow tourist to travel soon. Tourist locations and services should be certified for following protective measures. Central and State Governments should have a joined plan of action for the revival of Tourism again.

Yes! Our positivity and hope definitely need to be high. It needn't surpass realities blindly. But it has potential.

We have to be hopeful of the future, and should keep our efforts going. The reality already is tough. We shouldn't be defeated by reality. We should keep our hopes and work for it. Though, we know that the hopes and dreams can happen slowly and gradually.

Rati Dhodapkar

CEO, East West Marketing India

It is too soon to know what will emerge from this, but not too soon to begin looking for opportunities to help decide it.

It is, I believe, what many of us are preparing to do. Everyone is dealing with a challenge that has not been seen before.

With the endless stream of news on the pandemic pushing the boundaries of our mental health, especially in the tourism and hospitality, I would like to say kudos to most in our industry for their optimism. Our trade has come closer to face and fight this together!

It is remarkable to witness this

unity of action that would have been unthinkable just a few months ago. The webinars on different topics, the WhatsApp groups, various trainings, the stay positive videos. I sincerely hope this is a new normal and here to stay!

There will be a lot of adapting and adjusting as we move forward, learning about what works by experimenting with different methods.

I strongly believe that it is this learning from each other and yes, our positivity and hopefulness will see us thru this pandemic and successfully at that!





Sunirmol Ghosh
Director, Indo Asia Tours

The impossible has already happened, however gloomy it is, this pandemic has taught us one thing for sure, nothing can be planned and to live one day at a time. A lot of us feel that the routine of daily life has been side-lined. The COVID-19 has shut down educational institutions,

and started their next day with the rising sun. To date, the life on Earth revolves around the day, around the sunlight. And it wouldn't be wrong to say that if only we made our routine with the sun, the basic might get back on track with more positivity and hope!

We have come so far, with our networks and communication; we support each other in driving the economy. Thanks to modern technology, even in this crisis, we are in touch and know about each other in real-time. However, we strive to keep the link alive as we need the business to survive and prosper.

We are born optimist, we know tomorrow will be better so we always start the day with a smile and renewed fresh energy in the hope that some good news will welcome us. We cheer on the news of domestic flights starting again or on the opening of the monuments. Because we deduce that now interstate travel will be allowed, it implies for us that international flights will start soon and our business will start again. We will go back to our offices and have something to do, meet our colleagues and friends! It's great news for mankind and our business that around the world, multiple organisations and pharmacy companies are very positive about bringing out the vaccine after all clinical trials.

Good days will be back soon, what we need is some patience to stay afloat in this tsunami and the will to win the battle. Together we are strongest!

entertainment venues, public events, places of business, and leisure activities for everyone, which has forced us to lose the value of routine life.

If I think that, do our positivity and hopes go beyond reality in this pandemic? I would say yes, it does. Many thousands of years back, our ancestors, the cavemen, they lived from day to day and depended on the sun and lived a non-sedentary life. Their lives revolved around the sun. They went out, hunted or gathered food, and came back to their respective caves

Vasudha Sondhi
Managing Director, Outbound Marketing

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

— Hector Garcia Puigcerver, Ikigai: The Japanese secret to a long and happy life

In the current COVID situation, nobody can say with any authority on what is the reality in the future except what is the reality today. Positivity and hope keeps us going and can be a great motivator. In the current situation where people have lost jobs, businesses have had to scale down or simply shut shop, bills are piling up, EMIs adding up, and it is not easy to not be able to see any light at the end of the tunnel. We have to somehow look and learn from history and past experiences. Starting from 1200 BC to now there have been several instances of various epidemics, pandemics that have taken place in the world and many millions have also died in such pandemics. Nevertheless, humankind has managed to overcome all of this. The reality could be that our lives change and that our goal posts change as well. I believe change is good. If the current state of the environment is anything to go by, change is definitely worth it. The positivity should be that we take each day to do our best and go one step closer to our goal and possibly the future will be good. But there is no way to predict the future. Today is what we have.

The fact that I have achieved what I set out to do today gives me hope. And the reality is that we have had time to realign and be less robotic in our approach. That could be our reality check. It is also very true that positivity enables the mind to think more creatively to be able to be a solution manager rather than a problem manager.

"I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There are many dark moments when the faith is sorely tested, but do not give up to despair." -Nelson Mandela





Ankush Nijhawan
MD, Nijhawan Group
Co Founder, TBO Group

Commencing from July 1, there have been small developments that signal positivity. The airline load factors are averaging between 55-62 per cent in the domestic skies, this itself demonstrates that it is no more desperate travel but rather travel happening for work etc. The

sentiments of many tourist destinations such as Dubai are proactive right now with regard to promoting and opening the markets. This actually shows that they are ready to welcome the guests and the Indians. However, I believe a few factors can serve as barriers for any destination that seeks to ease travel from India. Firstly, how cautiously they treat us as we arrive into their destinations will be of immense importance, keeping in mind the numbers that are scaling right now. Secondly, quarantine policies need to be very flexible which Dubai has implemented very well, the visa regime has to be in good shape.

The months of July-September for me are more about

monsoon breakaways, people driving up to 300 km from home be it Delhi- Jaipur, Delhi- Rishikesh, Mumbai-Lonavala, Mumbai- Alibaug, Bengaluru-Mysore or Bengaluru-Ooty, etc. I think, from September 1, at least 50-60 per cent of the life will be back to normal when it comes to travel. The flights will be flying overseas as well. The Diwali traffic will certainly have a lot of short-haul business be it Dubai, Sri Lanka, Maldives etc followed by Goa for instance, and other destinations in India. The air capacity should be at least 70-80 per cent of domestic skies and about 50-60 per cent of international airlines as well. Therefore, I think the months of October, November and December will bring some semblance of normalcy thus taking our lives back to where it used to be in 2019. These three months will be the time when bookings will take place due to the urge to travel or revenge travel because people are really eager to get out; this is what I gathered from my peers in the industry or my personal friends. The New Year would be a great time for other international packages. Having said that, even if we have 50 per cent of our business of what we had last year, for the first six months, I think it will be a great thing for everybody; however, 30-40 per cent can be expected to be realistic but otherwise short-haul destinations will be the big takers followed by some domestic destinations.

Certainly, I must say that life is getting better every day. People are back at work and there is a sense of excitement. However, the COVID-19 cases are increasing; I think that is something we have to live with.

Lubaina Sheerazi
CEO, BRANDit

COVID-19 has affected the tourism sector across the globe. Like many industries, tourism will also see a substantial shift in the post-pandemic era with some visible changes around us already.

Although it may seem like we are far from recovery, I feel hope is the only way to live by. There is no shying away from the reality of the situation. However, it is times that we do not find comfort is when we find a path to betterment. This holds true for the travel fraternity as well. We have effectively channelized our energies towards innovative ideas and skill upgradation. We may not see immediate results currently, but will reap the benefits in time to come.

As custodians of travel, we have to continue instilling confidence in each other; it is challenging circumstances that show us our true mettle. The changemakers of the travel industry have left no stone unturned in taking the opportunity to unlearn, create and share. Many have used their time effectively by conducting or attending destination training programmes, webinars, and online workshops to enhance knowledge and skills. This is going to play a very significant role once the market opens up, as we will be better equipped to manage bookings and queries from potential travellers than

ever before.

While it is difficult to predict if people will travel the same way as before, it will be imperative for tourism boards, hotels, destination management companies and tour operators to focus on more

sustainable, quality-driven tourism. If there was ever a time for the industry to change the future of travel, it is now. We should all take this time to reflect, refresh and restart because the best way out is always through."





Priyanka Nijhawan
Director Representations, Nijhawan Group

There has been a lot of speculation about the new challenges we are facing with the novel coronavirus. I have been questioning myself too, about the way we live, how we got here, and how this sudden impact will change our lives for good. With the entire travel industry essentially at a pause, it is difficult to anticipate the trajectory our industry is going to take. While a few countries opening up international borders for tourists seems like a beam of light, it is still unsure when would India re-commence

international travel? As professionals, we all agree that travel will return gradually over the course of months, if not years, and people will probably stick to local destinations for a while but India will definitely flourish. Looking on the brighter side now is an opportunity to discover new ways of accomplishing tasks. The old authentic ways may or may not apply right now. The need of the hour is to lead in innovation and find new approaches to situations.



Lally Mathews
Executive Director, Divine Voyages

First, we have to understand the reality of this pandemic. It has brought everything to a grinding halt. Lifestyles have changed during the pandemic and it is bound to change even after an effective vaccine is found. We will have to live with it for some time in the future.

Yes, we have to remain positive and I am sure tourism is bound to bounce back with vigour. We are hopeful that initially domestic will move and ultimately once the respective governments decide on the SOPs tourism will restart. So, let us remain positive and hopeful.



Pankaj Nagpal
Managing Director, Travstarz Global Group

COVID-19 has by far been the most devastating event witnessed by the world till now and it has especially shaken the travel industry completely grounding airlines, closing hotels and all modes of transportation and causing massive losses and forcing even well-established companies to shut their operations. However, this is still not the end of the world and just like the phoenix, the travel industry will once again rise from the ashes albeit to a new world order. It does seem very gloomy so far with most countries closing borders and people locked down at homes, but many countries cannot survive their economies without tourism, and they are eager to restart as soon as possible

with necessary precautions and hygiene standards in place. Even the people are eager to travel after being in the lockdown for months and I am sure that the sooner we have a vaccine for this, the fear psychosis that prevails, will now be corrected largely and the old order will be restored. Having said that 2020 does seem to be the pain year and I expect a partial recovery only towards the end of 2020 or early 2021 so these six months will be the most crucial to sustain for travel companies and the government will need to play a lead role in ensuring that the industry sustains and does not collapse. The need of the hour is for the trade to remain positive and in high spirits and wait for the tide to turn.



Vineet Gopal
Director, Representation World

A pandemic is experienced for the first time by this generation; COVID 19 has introduced us to unprecedented times. The reality has become so dynamic that it is changing every few minutes. Whatever we plan or predict, changes with the next update of

a better tomorrow. Hope and faith are the driving force for the travel industry to stay positive in the given scenario. Hope for survival, hope to fight, hope to bounce back.

As psychologists say, "Travel disrupts your routine and introduces novelty to your brain, which improves cognition and helps reactivate oneself." Travel helps on an interpersonal growth level as well by meeting and seeing different people and cultures. The human race's basic existence is based on travel, whether travelling for social needs, for business needs or leisure, we humans just cannot stop travelling.

I believe 'When We Can't Stop Dreaming, We Can't Also Stop Travelling'. 'COPABILITY' will be more important in the future than 'CAPABILITY'. Now as things are Unlocking and other businesses are opening up, it is the ability to COPE with change, FLEXIBILITY to adopt new norms, to come out of one's COMFORT ZONE is the only way we can fight back.

History has shown that the global tourism sector has always remained resilient. So we should remain positive and hopeful that the tourism industry will survive this. We shall overcome this and we are confident that the sun will shine on us once again.

news we receive on a daily basis.

The outbound tourism sector is worst affected by the spread of Coronavirus. With the travel restrictions imposed by the nations across the world, international borders being closed, airlines grounded hotels and businesses shutting down, and huge losses faced by the tourism industry. It is certain that the travel industry is witnessing one of the most challenging crisis of all time, yet we have our eyes towards the future and we are hopeful for

Pranav Kapadia
Founder, Global Destinations

In the past couple of months, we have seen and experienced unimaginable happenings. This surely has taught us that change is the only inevitable constant. When all of this started, none of us could have envisaged the scale and prolonged events about to unfold. It was certainly hope and positivity, which has led us and shown us light through these exceptionally inexpedient times so far. Having said that, the ultimate survivors and winners are going to be the ones who quickly learn to adapt to change. If you analyse the history of the travel industry, we are used to continuous evolvments, hence in my opinion most of us will eventually come out victorious in some-way or the other.

While the road to recovery is going to be a long drawn

one, we should never be oblivious to the reality. It is imperative to keep oneself abreast of all the continuous developments as the situation is continuously evolving and knowledge will be a very important weapon for the future.

The best and only path forward is to stimulate optimism, retain hope and positivity and continue self-development.



Ashwani Nayar
General Manager, Crowne Plaza Greater Noida

Well, a positive mind is our biggest shield against the prevailing situation. It is our only safeguard from all the negativity around. Times are indeed challenging, but it is in our best interest to utilise this time to introspect, revisit the drawing board and remain

creative. Travel cannot stop and will not stop. We will bounce back stronger in the times to come. Stay hopeful and remain positive. Let us inspire each other and come out of this pandemic as better leaders and individuals.



Joseph Fernandes
CEO, IndiJo Consulting

NO HOPE!
is how it
seems like
right now
for people
all over
the world.
Especially for
us in the travel
industry,
which has
been the
hardest hit
industry the
world over.
This has
resulted in

shift and the impact that the pandemic has caused be sustained by the industry? The reality is that today the travel industry is dependent on several factors like quarantine requirements, border entry, etc. Most of which are beyond its control, most critical of which are safety precautions, which include social distancing, a concept alien to the airline business, which is a key ingredient for travel and for the survival of the travel industry. Airlines face a catch 22 situation. On one hand, if they resort to social distancing of passengers it would mean offering lesser seats, which would make them unviable, on the other hand, if they fill up all seats, it would dissuade travellers due to safety reasons.

The new rules of travel would broadly differ in the period before a vaccine is found and post the release of a vaccine. However, what is certain is that travel and the travel industry will change

- Capacity and inventory will decrease through business failures
- Closer to home will define leisure travel for the near term
- Health and safety will become an ever-present factor
- A portion of business travel will never return

But despite what the present reality is, having hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear our hardships today.

unprecedented budget cuts and job losses. Travel is arguably viewed by many as a non-necessity, being the first thing to be dropped out when one is trying to cut costs. However, this time around travel has been hit by the more important issue of health and safety, and the travel restrictions that have led to a global economic recession. Man's instinct for centuries is to travel and explore. It is probably due to this craving for travel that there is hope and a positive certainty that the resilient travel industry, which right now is at its lowest will rise, like the proverbial phoenix, from the ashes of the COVID-19 pandemic. But will it be the same? Can the reality of the paradigm

Kunal Kothari
Founding Train Cognoscente, KKR World

The reality is that this virus is here to stay. Even if a vaccine is developed, tested, and approved by the end 2020, it will still be a lot of time before nearly 8 billion people get it administered. So clearly, we need to learn to live with the virus around us. However, if proper precautions are taken, I do not see why travel cannot bounce back to pre-2020 numbers. For example, our trains Glacier Express and Bernina Express are being cleaned and sanitised regularly while keeping social distancing norms in place when doing the seating. These kinds of precautions will have to be adopted across all modes of transportation, accommodation, places of interest,

etc. to build confidence of the travellers. Yes, we might be the last industry to recover when it does, but if we have learnt anything from previous setbacks ranging from 9/11 to financial meltdowns, it is that we will be busier than before and reach figures unheard of before. Recovery might be delayed contrary to our hopes, but there is no denying that while positivity will keep us alive, figures will go beyond the reality in double-quick time. This is not my hope or positivity but learnings from past experiences.





Jurgen Bailom

President & CEO, Jalesh Cruises

At a time like this, the mind is no doubt challenged in ways to get overwhelmed with negative thinking. But it is this time when we must stay together and step up in these trying times of adversity and build up hope with positivity. We need to stay strong and united, to weather the storm, and

also rebuild quickly later. While the challenges will persist, and easier said than done, there are some things one must remember and consider while staying positive.

To begin with, this situation is not permanent, and we will sail through this time. At his moment, we must think beyond the emotional and mental struggles that we and our mind has encountered in these past few weeks. This will be the new normal and we must handle the challenges differently and focus our thoughts in a positive direction rather than being

emotional and impulse-driven. It, therefore, becomes pertinent to not just manage stress but also add new skills during this lockdown.

I would also like to say that it is not just about managing productivity and stress during lockdown but it is a constant process. To maintain the team's productivity, it becomes important to create a positive culture in the organisation. This becomes even more significant during times like these where you have to be each other's strength.

Embrace and seize the moment. Short-term adversity can be a long-term advantage if you can meet the moment with impact. Look for ways to make your company bigger, faster and stronger than before. Handle crisis with the honesty, decisiveness, and optimism it deserves.

I would like to summarise by saying that incredible leaders emerge when the chips are down and there is seemingly no way out. The lesson that has always remained with me is the power of presence. The ability to look someone in the eye with empathy and compassion during adversity is critical. You must ensure you and your company are ready to manage the situation, no matter how uncomfortable or unpleasant. Be ready to meet the moment with vigour, transparency, and, decisiveness. Step up, during times of sensitivity and adversity. Most importantly we have to remember to keep moving forward, even if it is at a slow pace.

Naresh Rawal

Vice President – Sales (India & South Asia), Genting Cruise Lines

The COVID-19 global pandemic has had an adverse impact on businesses cutting across various sectors, including the travel, hospitality, and cruise industry. Cruise companies alike worldwide are experiencing unprecedented challenges as operations had come to a virtual standstill.

However, for every challenge there is a horizon of hope that comes with positivity and optimism and for the travel and cruise industry, it has given us the valuable opportunity to rethink, reset and enhance our operations, especially in safety and preventive measures to meet this new emerging and totally different landscape. The global pandemic has brought about a sea of change in consumers' mindsets and priorities are no longer the same, requirements and expectations have evolved when it comes to leisure and travel with the focus very much on safety, health and well-being.

This is the new reality for many of us but with positivity and the correct attitude and affirmative actions, we remain highly optimistic that the cruise industry will thrive again. At Genting Cruise lines, the safety and well-being of our guests and crew are of paramount importance to us. From the onset of the pandemic and during the hiatus period, we have taken the positive action to be at the forefront in enhancing our preventive and safety measures with the COVID-19 pandemic in mind. We were the first in the industry to introduce our enhanced measures, which

we will adopt as the new safety norm for our entire fleet and we hope for the industry too. We are also proud to announce that Explorer Dream under Dream Cruises is the first cruise ship in the industry to receive the Certification in Infection Prevention for the Maritime industry (CIP-M) from the world's leading classification society, DNV GL. Dream Cruises will also be the first cruise line in the world to begin sailing after the global cruise industry was shut down due to the pandemic as Explorer Dream recommences operations in Taiwan from July 26, 2020 onwards. The response has been overwhelming, reflecting the consumers' confidence and trust in us. We hope to continue to build the awareness and further educate consumers of our new norms to provide a safe cruising experience.





Komal Seth

Founder & Director, LINKIN Reps

Half planned is half done. If we plan better and plan apt, and have a positive mind. We will bounce back. The only thing permanent is the change. Hence, I feel this change will be well accepted by travellers and they will be willing to follow the corona norms and take precautions and travel. Marketing activities and the sentiments that will flow through tour operators/ travel agents and the tourism boards will create a great impact on traveller's minds. Communication in marketing and PR activities has to be 'what we are offering different' not 'what we are doing different'. A positive

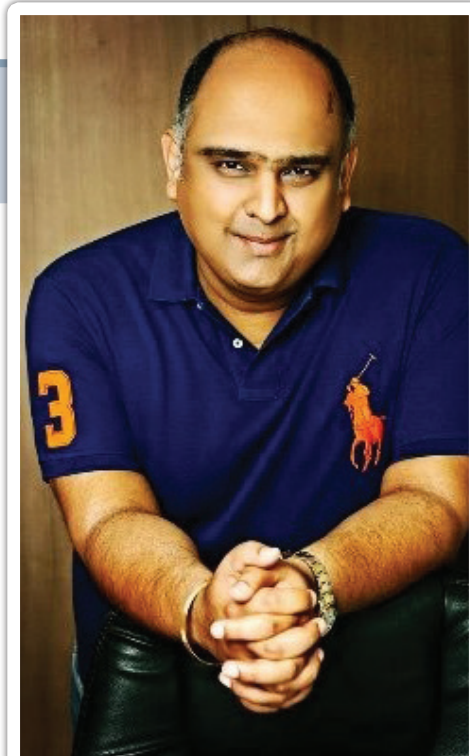
approach will kill fear and enhance hope. As an industry, we will have to learn to upsell. Stand united and support each other to bounce back with better performance. This is a phase everyone is going through, all industries have been severely affected, and everyone has to choose their battles in their verticals to come out strong. I feel there is always a reason to smile and celebrate. At work, believing in negative thoughts is the single greatest obstruction to success. This was time to unwind and reboot and now we are back with a bang.

Suneet Goenka

Group Managing Director, Red Apple Travel Group

"In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision," as rightly said by Dalai Lama, the moment you stop being positive about your goals you lose hope and the moment you lose hope you never thrive to achieve the required, so let's keep up with the positivity because that is what will help us to build the foundation for reviving tourism all over again. Travelling has been an integral part of the lives of people, and this applies to people from ancient to present. People travel for leisure as well as their need. During a tactless situation like this it will surely

not be a cakewalk for us initially but with the right ideation, skills and precautions we'll slowly but gradually pick up from where we left and can turn the adverse situation into an opportunity. We could use this time to study our old methods and come up with more efficient business plans in optimum costs. Therefore, the only way out of this catastrophic time is to bring this time to its best utilisation and stay optimistic for the outcome. All it would take is some sense of direction and consummate forethought to attain our objectives.



Rakshit Desai

Managing Director, FCM Travel Solutions



It is not a question of if but of when. Even if you discount the optimism of a travel agent, as increasingly restless travellers ourselves, we know that people are waiting to get upended travel plans back on track. It is unusual to spend an entire summer restricted to our homes and the impatience to get out is evident in the sudden spike in demand for private villas and charter flights. What the pandemic has done is to accelerate the adoption of trends that were predicted for the next five or even ten years. In a stark reversal, tourist attractions bursting at the seams will make place for contactless everything,

highest levels of sanitisation, flexible booking policies, sustainable travel, and better traveller etiquette. For the travel industry, our work has been cut out – translating guidelines and SOPs into meaningful on-ground experiences at every step of the journey without taking away from the inherent joy in travelling. For hotels and airlines, it will be a trade-off between ensuring safety and keeping the relaxed ambience that a holiday promises. For travel agents, managing expectations and rebuilding traveller confidence will be imperative, paving the way for acceptance of a new normal in travel.



Biji Eapen

President, IAAI

Chairman & CEO of Speedwings, Travel & Cargo

Coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented crisis affecting people's lives and has affected the tourism economy. This has very tangible impacts on the tourism sector, critical for many people, places and businesses, cities, and regions where tourism is a vital part of the

economy.

In reality, tourism is the first sector to be shut down to curtail spreading virus, as it necessarily involves people-to-people interactions, movement of people traveling different destinations, domestic or international. Comparing to the previous catastrophes such as SARS, H1N1, MERS, or Nipah, which were on a smaller scale and localised, the impact of COVID-19 is global and recovery will take a much longer period than any expectations or forecast. Tourism activities are the last to restart in a phased manner. And to a pre-crisis level, it may take two years or even more.

While airlines continue temperature checks, passengers to fill health and contact forms, travel with face masks, using

sanitizers, and reduced meal services onboard flights, might not be comfortable and practicable to many travelers. Large gatherings and smaller events like carnivals, festivals and conventions may not even be feasible due to safety guidelines and social distancing. Passengers will be cautious of long-distance travelling. Domestic tourism is expected to play an important role in leading the initial recovery phase

With this pandemic outrage, the travellers will be left with a shift in trust that depends on a responsible intermediary - a travel consultant, rather than depending on the online or web-based robotics systems, who will be accountable for healthcare, safety, activity services including financials and environmental atmosphere.

When we do open, it will be under new operating procedures in the absence of a vaccine. The pandemic is also likely to have an impact on tourist attitude and behavioral nature, impacting the resumption and recovery of domestic and international tourism. Sustainable and responsible tourism can slowly but surely overcome the current issues we face. But we will need to do this in partnership with the government, healthcare sector, travel and tourism trade organisations, and our local communities.

In the Indian scenario, cross border travel between States mandates 14-day quarantine. Local lockdowns and restrictions are likely to remain in place in the coming weeks, and possibly longer. Unemployment and the financial recession are likely to discourage potential travellers. However, until the pandemic subsides or the world finds a vaccine and wearing masks or social distancing becomes optional, the industry will have to face the challenges due to the prevailing uncertainties.

Mahendra Vakharia

Managing Director, Pathfinders Holidays

The beautiful Travel and Tourism Industry worldwide is the most directly impacted in this present crisis - we will be the last to recover as well from this crisis - a lot of pundits are predicting all possible negative situations for our industry and how difficult it will be for us to get back on our feet. Let me tell these pundits, Yes! The reality is we have been battered but not defeated! We haven't put in our hat in the ring! We are hanging in here and will surely bounce back. RISE WE WILL FOR SURE! Because Travel is the Fundamental habit of Human Being and great civilisations in the past developed because of this human nature to TRAVEL!

We have had many challenges in the past of similar nature - each and every challenge the Travel Industry has faced it head-on and come out victorious and

stronger than earlier. I am sure even in this crisis it will be no different - We are very strong & resilient as an Industry and we have some truly wonderful people working in this industry worldwide. The positive and collective strength of this wonderful bunch of people in the Tourism Industry will bring it back on its feet - much stronger, with a lot of energy and enthusiasm than before and a wee bit wiser as well. Post COVID, for all of us a lot of things will change including the way we did our business and lived our life. So let us be mindful of this, accept it, embrace it, and strategise, so that in the coming months when the New Normal - Life 2.0 starts we are ready to rock it! As rightly said by Robert H: Tough Times never last But Tough People Do! And there is always light at the end of the Tunnel. This is also a reality.





Guldeep Sahni
MD, Weldon Tours & Travels

The travel and tourism industry has been severely affected, there is a long way to go before the industry recovers and comes back to its full swing. This is an unprecedented time. None of us saw it coming. My heart goes out for those who had to bear huge losses due to this pandemic. I have always believed that to every setting sun, there is always another sun rising at the other end. This time has given us an opportunity to do things in a new and better way, not only professionally but also personally. We now have a new drawing board to start afresh and to indulge in activities that we have always longed for but never got time for it.

I strongly believe that as soon as things go back to normal, travel will be the first to pick up and people will start exploring domestic and short-haul destinations. As a part of the travel and tourism industry, this is the time for us to gear up and be ready for such good times. Before anything else, let us indulge in random acts of kindness and take advantage of this time by turning the stride to our advantage. Let us keep up our positive attitudes and march forward with determination and hope. Be deliberate to indulge in activities that are positive, heart warming, and stress-reducing.

Dev Karvat

Founder & CEO – India & Emerging Markets,
TrawellTag Cover-More

How soon the travel industry recovers may not be completely in our control, but how well we recover is in our hands. Although the last four months have tested the travel and tourism sector, it is good to see the industry gradually coming back on track with the resumption of domestic travel. I feel that challenges are nothing but disguised opportunities. For example, the international travel restrictions will potentially propel domestic tourism to new heights, as people start preplanning

holidays. Millennials will start planning trips soon to COVID-19 Free states and we foresee that in the near future staycations will be the popular trend. We will see a lot more people travelling to shorter destinations, closer home. Wellness tourism and travel concepts that hold health and safety in high regard will shine brighter in the near future. I firmly believe that staying positive in this reality and new normal is the only way to go. As we stay positive, we will keep thinking of ways to reset our aspirations and targets that will automatically help us and the industry build back to winning ways.



Naresh Arora

Managing Director, Truly India Hotels & Resorts



As travel and border restrictions are easing gradually, the hospitality industry is bracing itself to welcome visitors. With frequent hands-on sanitization processes and precautions, hotels

time to give back to our own country and people—Incredible India will bounce back and welcome its own people in different parts of the country. Indians must discover the beauty and diversity of their own land. How many of us can actually say that we have seen every single part of our country? If we do this, the economy will certainly bounce back by 2021 because travel will be the precursor for recovery. As we adopt safety measures within the country, and the travel and hospitality industry takes necessary steps to ensure distancing norms are maintained, we will see people opting to explore more of India. Self-drive and road trips and staycations being preferred holiday modes. Domestic tourism in India will see a new lease of life, especially places within 5-10 hours of driving time. Road trips, staycations, trips to lesser-known places and away from cities (to avoid crowds) will be some of the biggest winners. Wellness resorts and destinations will also attract more travellers interested in improving their mental and physical well-being.

across the globe are exercising utmost caution, now more than ever. Taking all necessary steps in accordance with the WHO and government guidelines, Truly India hotels are opening up their doors for visitors in a phased manner from July 15, 2020. This is a



Sandeep Dwivedi

COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient

As a part of our innate nature, we have a high tendency to either hold on to our hopes and faith strongly or give in to fear; both ultimately impact our actions. As a visionary falling in the former category, I choose to look at the glass as half full whilst hoping, and innovating

ways to convert it to a wholly full glass. The beauty of this attitude is that one way or another, sooner or later, simply for the strength of our faith and perseverant endeavours, the glass will become full to the brim. My appeal to the industry folks is to hold on to optimism and hope, and dare to think beyond reality in this pandemic for that is what will

lead us to the remarkable innovations of tomorrow.

We are standing on the brink of another evolution. Take an example from the past decades. In the early 1990s, web was launched and put to use. 2000s saw remarkable innovations and technological firsts like iPhone and Facebook. 2010s had 3D arriving at the screens, with the revolutionary idea of space tourism taking off. This time, the 2020s has begun on a rather stringent note, challenging us with a crisis to bring more revolutionary ideas to fruition.

For travel and tourism, this is the beginning of a neoteric industry backed by brilliant technological advancements focused on safety, simplicity of operations, minimal human touch, machine learning and intelligent forecasting, among others. It is a possibility, holograms could make a debut entrée. That is about being a hopeful visionary; that is about going beyond reality in the face of a pandemic, because adversity is the mother of all inventions. To put it in the words of famous Albert Einstein, "Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty, lies opportunity." Here's my hope that we all look at new ways and find better opportunities for reviving the travel industry.

Sanjeev Mehra

Director, Aaryan Leisure & Holidays

President, Skai International Kolkata

National Vice President 2, Skai International India

The world continues its struggle against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this grim reality, with alarming statistics and bad news dominating news networks, social media, and even advertising, many trade people might struggle to maintain a positive outlook. But yes, it is possible to cope and maintain a sense of hope. I believe when disappointment knocks, hope opens the door always. When people do not think positively, they spread unhappy vibes into society. The pandemic continues to take its toll on various fronts, from taking thousands of lives to devastating economies and the welfare of many people worldwide. How we reconstruct our new reality goes a long way in terms of whether and how we adapt to our circumstances. But we need to focus on our positivity and hopes as I have my personal experience that failure happens when one quits before making the best efforts in the right direction. Hurdles appear when one loses focus on the target. Countries including India are still actively battling the deadly virus but societies and industries are now also looking to rebuild and reemerge from the crisis. The recovery process for the travel industry will be complicated and lengthy but it's started now. As the situation started stabilising in markets across the globe and local restrictions are eased first, domestic tourism is expected to be the first to recover.

Though many governments are still advising against 'nonessential' international travel, a host of popular destinations are beginning to ease their COVID-19 lockdown measures and border restrictions and are moving toward

welcoming tourists back. For instance, the UK has formed 'travel corridors' with 59 different countries, while popular destinations like Dubai and Jamaica have already opened their doors to foreign visitors again. However, there is always light at the end of the tunnel, and we can still hope we can achieve something positive at the end of the pandemic.





Amaresh Tiwari

Vice Chairman, ICPB

As India enters into 'Unlock-1' wherein we are seeing a phased opening of few hotels, resorts and places of tourist interest, the industry is slowly limping its way into the 'new normal' phase. However, the pandemic scare is far from over as the situation continues to remain grim and

help facilitate the phased opening of the MICE Venues and events. After much research and deliberations, ICPB, with inputs from hotels and venues has submitted proposed guidelines for the approval of MOT/ Ministry of Health. In addition to this, plans are also afoot for making of a 'MICE film', which will resonate with the positive message to uplift the mood of the MICE Industry in India. Additionally, ICPB has been busy hosting a series of Webinars / Talks with industry experts ever since the lockdown has been implemented. The entire world is praying with the hope that the number of COVID cases come down in the next two months' time and we in India are no exception. As the skies open up slowly and steadily to national flights, I am sure that domestic travel will gradually pick a pace and once the international borders and skies open, people will come forward to meet and conduct business – with all necessary precautions in place.

wary. In such a scenario, we all have to be extra careful in opening up the MICE venues and events as the very premise of our industry is 'socialising and networking'. It will undoubtedly be tough to carry on conducting meetings and events the way they were, given the current challenging situation of 'social distancing', but not impossible.

India Conventions Promotion Bureau (ICPB) has been in constant touch with the Ministry of Tourism, Niti Aayog, and Ministry of Finance to help develop an 'action plan', which can

Being a thorough optimist, I am hopeful that the meeting spaces will open too for conducting conferences from September – October 2020 onwards. We may start initially with state-level meetings followed by zonal, then national meetings could open, and thereafter as borders open, then international meetings may be opened. However, conducting meetings and events under the challenges of 'new normal' will be an altogether different ball game. We would all have to be extra careful and ensure the complete safety of not just our clients but also our staff and service providers.

Chetan Gupta

Hony. General Secretary, ADTOI

Indian Tourism Industry is in a standstill mode since long and stakeholders of the industry are looking for Government support to revive and survive from the catastrophe caused by the COVID-19. The government has to work out plans to revive the economy by starting all kinds of economic activities. The first and foremost thing will be to open up all modes of transportation by road, rail, and air to connect destinations for people to travel for their immediate needs.

Govt. has to provide a boost to the economy by extending packages such as interest-free loans, GST holiday, deferring the payment of EMI on loan availed by companies etc. ADTOI has taken up directly with concerned Ministries as well as through FAITH, Nodal agency of 10 Tourism and Hospitality Association for relief to stakeholders of the industry for the revival of tourism in the country.

Among all other segments of tourism, Domestic tourism 'DEKHO APNA DESH' is the lifeline for all the industry stakeholders as such it will take the least period to revive domestic tourism. We, as an association, are keeping the morale of our members high by organizing Webinar on tourism promotion and imparting knowledge session in association with the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, State Tourism Boards, Hoteliers, and Media Partners etc. We have to live with COVID for long that is the latest buzz word from health experts; when things get normalized for travelling, domestic tourism will be on driver's seat to take the industry forward. Desire to travel will never

die from peoples minds and tourism activities are here to stay. Now the question is how to nurture the brand new child through the post COVID days. To combat the situation, and bring a healthy all-round growth of tourism in the country during post-COVID days first and the foremost thing

will be to have a dialogue between the government and the stakeholders to discuss and draw up an action plan to decide about the costing of various services like airfare, hotel tariff, transport charges and of other allied service providers. At this time of grave crisis in the industry, all service providers should work by complementing each other and not by competing. We all have severely suffered during the lockdown period with irreparable losses and now it is time for us to stand united and work jointly to promote tourism from the rock bottom position.





Manish Syngal

CMD, Dimaz Group

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hit hard and seriously damaged the travel industry everywhere, due to the prolonged lockdowns and severe travel restrictions globally. I see a good future for tourism and that

too not very far ahead. I am optimistic, things will eventually return to normal; we should encourage our clients to think about future travel plans instead of the present moment. We should turn our attention to the potential good that might arise from the current situation, rather than anything negative. Most likely, in the coming two to three months we might see some positive signs world over in containing the pandemic and if the airlines and hotels offer attractive tariffs the tourism industry will begin to revive in a phased manner and may start seeing a turnaround

by the end of this year. The domestic leisure travel is expected to pick up swiftly, maybe even increase as people would be looking for staycations in different cities after being locked up in their houses for this long, and it would help the domestic tourism sector to recover its losses after the pandemic. Airlines and hotels are adhering to all government guidelines to ensure the new normal operations in the COVID era. Traveller's safety and hygiene are of utmost importance to make the travel and stay comfortable in the new normal world. After an almost lost summer, economies around the globe are reopening their doors for tourism and leisure travel, few countries are going out of their way to woo international travellers. Travel must come back, for many livelihoods and economies depend on it. The world cannot stay in lockdown forever. The vaccine is probably six months to one year away from being distributed worldwide, which will definitely help to revive the international travel and tourism. Travel during holidays brings smiles to everyone's faces, let us hope that 2020 passes off as a bad phase, the human spirit will fly higher than ever, and it will always remain as a lesson to the mankind to keep a balance between nature and materialism.

Sanjay Sharma

Tourism Consultant

Yes! Optimistic human nature with positive thoughts will help us overcome these COVID hurdles. Like vicissitudes in life, we have to face similar situations in business too. This is not the first time such a problem has occurred or appeared, even before us there were pandemics and world war type situations that brought the entire globe to a standstill, but it is the

human instinct to keep marching forward. Many countries that are dependent on Tourism, Travel & Hospitality still have many hurdles to overcome. Every problem teaches us something. This pandemic has taught us the importance of sanitisation and hygiene. I am very hopeful that the tourism will revive back, though it will take its sweet time to go full swing but for now it is only the hope that is keeping us afloat. Apart from adapting the new normal strategies, the industry should now shift their focus on technology and digitalisation.



Jay Bhatia

Vice President, TAAI

Director, Tulsidas Khimji Holidays

We shall have to take it as it comes. To remain positive and to hope for the upcoming future

are different things in today's context. Positivity is what we all need to have as a confidence to not only revive but also to thrive. Reality, especially to travel and tourism is what we shall be experiencing on a day-to-day basis. Face today! Tomorrow shall be a new day.



Nirupa Shankar

Executive Director, Brigade Group

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference," Churchill said.

When going through tough times, we have a choice. To approach the situation with a negative frame of mind or a positive frame of mind. So, why not choose to be positive? Having gone through the Covid-19 pandemic for a few months now, there still does not seem to be a light at the end of the tunnel. However, we still have to keep our heads held high and ride out the next one-year or two; again as Churchill said, 'If you're going

through hell, keep going'. The retail and hospitality sector are two of the worst hit. Both are verticals I oversee for Brigade. Every day entails tough conversations with retailers and depressing occupancy figures at the hotels. However, we all have our own few coping mechanisms but here are my top 5.

1. Take it One day at a time.
2. Take Action. Give it your all.
3. Only the Fittest and Fairest will Survive
4. Keep Healthy
5. Be Grateful

Seema Roy

Area Managing Director, South Asia, Middle East & Africa, Preferred Hotels & Resorts



Well, they have to! There is absolutely no other way.

At Preferred Hotels & Resorts, we 'Believe in Travel' and know that even in the darkest moments, people will look to travel for inspiration. This pandemic has created the time to reflect, learn, and adapt for the greater good. While we need to remain cautiously optimistic so that we do not lose sight of reality, this crisis has made many of us recognize that community matters over individual material pursuits, and within the hospitality industry, the pandemic's effects enhance an understanding that travel helps to build communities by bringing people together and breaking barriers. Also, there is a limit to how much businesses can achieve virtually in the long term. Zoom fatigue is a reality, and it is impossible to substitute face-to-face human interaction with video conferencing calls. In this spirit, travel is bound to bounce back, albeit slowly and in a new form.

As we speak, flights are resuming, hotels are starting to reopen slowly, and some countries are even opening their borders - and that in itself is promising. Even though there are bound to be regional variations and setbacks along the recovery curve, what we are witnessing in some parts of the world gives us great confidence. Within Asia Pacific, countries like China, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia are slowly starting to see spurs of recovery. We also saw a spike in reservations in the Middle East during Eid festivities and United Arab Emirates opened up to international

visitors earlier this month. Our member hotels in drive markets across the United States and Europe have witnessed gradual increase in bookings, especially for long weekend breaks. With this cautious progress in mind, we do believe tomorrow's market will provide a greater opportunity for individualized, unique, and authentic travel experiences, which is the specialism of independent hotel brands like ours.

We are a resilient industry and I continue to remain optimistic that together we shall emerge stronger on the other side. To quote Martin Luther King Junior, "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope," and I strongly feel our collective hope, inspiration, and creativity is indeed our superpower today and will see us through this challenge.



Michael Dominic

CEO, CGH Earth- Experience Hotels

Hope today is being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. And this is the only way we can function or exist. With or without the pandemic, what is the meaning of life without hope?! Yes, we are going through unprecedented times, an occurrence that we have read in

books or watched in movies, and dismissed as something that will not happen in our lifetime. But it is here and it's not going away very soon. Let's hope that the vaccine comes or a lab finds a cure for it. I believe they will. Meanwhile, what does a situation like this mean for our economy and our respective businesses? Let me add here that, nothing is more important than human lives, and as long as the virus is out there, we must take all measures to safeguard ourselves.

Nevertheless, like safety of our lives, we must be able to safeguard our livelihood. The pandemic has caused many disruptions in our economy. Starting end March, our lives as we knew it came to a halt. Fear gripped us and we were all wary of doing many activities that we took for granted. However, I believe situations will change. People will adapt and the resilience and the ingenuity of the human race will find ways for us to move forward and solve the problems, including this pandemic. It is only a matter of time. The New Normal where we apply all safety norms in whatever we do, will stay with us for very long. And I believe and live with the hope that we will continue to go about our daily lives and run our businesses fruitfully in this New Normal. I see what we are going through as a temporary pause button. Yes, it is painful and we worry about our future and the future of our enterprises. Our endeavours to protect our environment will be stronger and our commitments in being Responsible in Tourism will be uncompromising! Let us not waste this calamity this pandemic is turning out to be. Many things we wanted to change in our lives and our work, but were unable to do so for no apparent valid reason. As we emerge from this, we will realise the role nature and our planet have in our lives and our livelihoods too. Stop exploiting, destroying and tampering with nature's complex web of LIFE.

Satyen Jain

CEO, Pride Hotels

United by a common cause, the hospitality industry has come together amidst the circumstances originated from the pandemic to create a new guest experience. The industry has successfully created a slew of incredibly personalized offers and packages to start its operations in the era of 'New Normal'. At the Pride Group we feel privileged to contribute towards the battle against COVID-19 by making our properties available for quarantine facilities, to help control the spread of COVID. Also, our food service team contributed by preparing meals for the frontline workers while putting themselves at risk to battle the crisis. These changes are also applied to employer level. This crisis has helped us to become more efficient and make our teams multi-skilled. The efficiency of current work models is reevaluated and the employee wellbeing has been put even higher in the priority list. Keeping it in mind, we at the Pride Hotels have conducted training sessions for our employees so they can adapt to the changing trends in the work practices. We have ensured that our teams are up to date with the new cleaning practices and hygiene standards as advised by the government. Due to the outbreak, our safety standards have been upgraded tremendously to control the spread of the virus, so we do our bit to protect society. To attain it we have launched 'Pride Safety Assurance'

initiative across all our hotels. The initiative is designed to tackle the realities of the pandemic at hotel level and further advance the company's efforts in this area. Also, the industry has been able to generate alternate revenue streams like home delivery services which will help them in future. Now, as the industry has started operations, recovery will be gradual because people will be cautious about the destinations they will be travelling to. We want our guests to know that we are doing everything we can, to welcome them back to a safe and clean hotel environment when they start travelling again.





Rohit Vig

Vice President Development Staywell Holdings
Managing Director South Asia, Staywell Hospitality

I strongly believe in positive prospective, Never lose hope! There is always light at the end of the tunnel and nothing is permanent. We all witness, the world continues its struggle against the

and customer safety being the epitome. Government is unlocking various businesses in phase wise manner with new guidelines. The global pandemic also arguably changes many aspects of doing businesses. It is important for industry leaders to envision a brighter future and work on strategies to increase the vividness of positive prospective. As a company, we are looking out for fresh strategic decisions and are willing to contribute for earlier revival of the industry. The next 6 to 8 months are very challenging to drive business as demand has declined to an all-time low and to maintain hotels operational cost for the coming few months is also a mammoth task. Hotels are coming up with new offers with deep discounts to attract the local business. We are inclined to create distinctive experiences that will resonate with our target local audience. Being in touch with the customer on various touch points without physically being present right in their face will help us to gain loyalty and trust. We keep exploring new concepts for delivering our services and experiences to the future guests. Government is also helping by rolling out various measures towards stressed sectors. In the light to positivity, RBI may unveil more relief to service sector in the coming time, which will also help to beat the severe impact of the lockdown.

COVID-19 pandemic. The scale of pandemic has impacted all the businesses and tourism is one of hardest hit sectors. The economic downturn leads to unemployment and reduces the welfare of the people. The entire business ecosystem has been deeply shaken. At present our foremost aim is to follow the current measures imposed by the government to stop the spread of COVID-19, the situation will improve with new practices, hygiene

Param Kannampilly

CMD, Concept Hospitality, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

By nature, I am a positive and optimistic person, and I always hope for the best scenario but plan for the worst. This pandemic and global lockdown has affected the hospitality and tourism industry like no other, and all countries are reeling under its impact. In India, the hospitality industry was riding on a high till the beginning of the year, and here we are now with hotels at zero revenues since April. But the resilience and positivity of our industry leaders has permeated down to their team members, and we are all hopeful of a slow resurgence under the Unlock regime. The return to normalcy will be painfully slow. Those who have managed their teams' wellbeing and kept their expenses in check over April-July will recover and grow the fastest once their hotels progressively reopen in June-July-August. The reality is that occupancies initially will be in single and low double digits, till all States come out with some uniformity in their travel notifications. Corporate travel, MICE events, large destination weddings and inbound leisure business will all be off to a very low start and may probably tank this year. But what keeps me positive and hopeful is the domestic leisure segment and the huge, untapped (for local destinations) outbound leisure

segment which is unlikely to travel overseas this year. Indians by nature love to travel with family and friends, so I am hopeful that these two segments will be the saviours for our local hospitality industry. If Indian hotels and their travel trade partners can tap into and get these guests to stay with us domestically, then all the shortfalls in the other segments will be more than covered.





SN Srivastava

President & Co-founder, Clarks Inn Group of Hotels

What we are witnessing today is unprecedented to say the least. None of us, in India, have ever witnessed a disruption of life and economy, basic services like transportation, health care and education of this magnitude in the last 100 years, and worldwide, since the end of

World War II in 1945. We failed to foresee a situation that will bring the entire world to a screeching halt with our factories locked, hotels shut, travel stalled, shutters downed, schools closed, people locked in their houses and the vehicles, in garage. Now, how do we live through this situation where the pandemic has presented us with stark and brutal choices such as the Health or the Economy? However, howsoever unpleasant and testing this situation may be, mankind has survived worse in the timeline of history, be it in the areas affected by some of the great wars, natural calamity or some

of the infamous plagues and pandemics that has ravaged humanity over the centuries. So yes, our positivity and hopes for the normalcy to return sooner than later goes a long-long way in fighting off and overcoming the challenges of pandemic and emerging on the other side of it with as little scarred as possible. At Clarks Inn Group of Hotels, we are confident that not only we will survive this phase but also that we will come out stronger on the other side. But that said, we are also living through a period of time where the hand-holding and collaboration between the government and private sector is greater than ever for the larger good of the country and society. The government needs to safeguard employment and for that to happen it needs to help the travel, tourism and hospitality sector, one of the biggest employers in the country today. So, far that has not happened. The sector is hugely cash-strapped and redundancy is the order of the day. Small bail-outs will go a long way in the saving companies within the sector and thus saving employment. This is where we also see positivity and hopes going beyond the current reality. Another step that can give wings to our hope is better inter-departmental and private sector co-ordination in opening up the economy. Whereas, opening up and restarting cost money, shutting down again lay waste a lot of money and resource. We are facing these unsavoury situation that has only added to the sector's agony. Well thought-out plans and strategies at reopening the economy not only helps people and the country but also the businesses.

Rajnish Sabharwal

VP-Sales & Development, SUJÁN

The pandemic is changing the world as we know it. The lockdown and social distancing norms are likely to have changed customer preferences. Businesses that can come up with innovative solutions to offer the right customer experience will be able to seize the opportunity and accelerate the recovery journey. The hospitality industry will have to learn to function in a way not seen before. As the relationship between each brand and consumer starts by building trust, regaining customer confidence will be the first step in overcoming the crisis. Strict sanitary and hygiene measures will need to be applied, with new practices put in place to monitor and control the environment in which the business takes place. In the countries which have slightly recovered and opened after months of lockdown have seen a recovery in the number of bookings and people travelling for vacation. Many people are eagerly waiting to go on their next holiday with their loved ones. Travellers are already interested in browsing the internet for quick getaway trips with experienced hosts who can guarantee the safety and have stringent health checks. Domestic travel will be the major contributor to the positive impact on our future goals. Many people are keen to travel within the country as it leaves them with a sense of security and in the closer proximity to their homes in case the borders are closed or suspended for travel. Also, the pandemic has had an economic effect on a lot of avid travellers leaving them

with the thought of exploring their own country. This confidence in capabilities is bound to have a positive impact by way of increased trust in domestic travel-tourism players. Many companies that are offering wellness programs, yoga, spa, forest bathing, and experiences and are situated

away from the city centres will see the return of the business faster than the cities will see. Gaining the confidence of the guests with all COVID precautions will be the most critical. Social media will become the new go-to tour agent and people more than ever will be drawn in by authentic storytelling and experiences. It will be vital to keep communicating with the guests especially in the domestic market.





Souvagya Mohapatra
Executive Director, Mayfair Hotels & Resorts

This pandemic is testing our strength and resilience like never before and being positive when everything around us appears

disheartening is nonetheless a difficult thing to do but do we have any other choice apart from going beyond reality in this pandemic? To me, nothing is beyond reality but as far as positivity & hope is concerned, they can certainly coexist with reality in this pandemic and nothing testifies this better than the fighting spirit of Tourism and Hospitality Sector Stakeholders who notwithstanding the insurmountable challenges are coming up with really innovative solution and strategies to redefine luxury with state-of-the-art safety and hygiene measures. I have been in the Hospitality Industry for around three decades now and the reality is that this is by far the worst crisis faced by the Industry. Revenues are at an all-time low, doing business in particular for a service sector like ours is challenging than ever before as even a small mistake can land you in big trouble, uncertainty still looms at large but then should we lose hope? Should we not be optimistic? And will doing so solve our problems? Certainly not. It is only with a positive mind and the right attitude that we can come to terms with the realities of life and cope up with the challenges that it throws upon us. This is to say, positivity is not just a state of mind but a blend of action, strategies, ideas, and innovation and so far it emanates from rational assessment and a practical approach, it is good and must be welcomed.

being optimistic? If we start panicking at the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, things will only further worsen and exacerbate. Coming to the question of can positivity and hope

Arzan Khambatta

Head, Macao Government Tourism Office, India

Human nature has an inbuilt fighting spirit. Illnesses and diseases have plagued humanity since eternity; but despite the presence of deadly viruses in the past, there's one thing which is consistent and that is survival. Pandemic like COVID-19 being no exception, it has managed to threaten our reality but we have survived pandemics before and we will also survive now as a human race.

I am aware of the fact that this pandemic is taking a longer time than expected to get controlled, but let's try to focus on positives here. More than 6 million people worldwide have recovered and India's rate of recovery has also increased since the first case was detected. Many countries have got back to restarting their economy; albeit adapting to the 'new normal'. Living life like we used to before the pandemic might still take time but I'm sure we will get back to it one day.

So let's take comfort in the fact that the worst has happened and now we know what we have to do to move forward. I am very positive and hopeful that we will get back to normal as many laboratories around the world are also working day and night to find a cure for this. Not to forget our frontline doctors and nurses who are selflessly working and are fully dedicated to eradicate this illness to save as many lives as possible.

I would like to remind everyone that we are all in this together. This pandemic may have kept us apart physically, but it has got us closer to mankind and humanity. It will take time but we should remain resilient and work towards reviving the travel industry back to normalcy. This has been a huge wake-up call for all and we must all be optimistic and believe that we all can rise like a phoenix and fly high again soon. Let's all just stay balanced and focused as that is what the world needs right now - Hope and Positivity.



#RebuildingTravel



Akshar Travels: An aid in need is humanity indeed

Gujarat based Akshar Travels, recently provided honorary services and supported Gujarat State Government as a responsibility to stand with the nation in the pandemic. During the migrant evacuation crisis, they did something outstanding by helping and reaching out to about two lakh forty thousand migrant workers from Gujarat and guided them to safely travel back home by trains to their respective states. Manish Sharma, Founder Chairman & Managing Director has truly shown the way to be fully committed to work in good times as well as in bad times.

Prashant Nayak



Manish Sharma

administrators, NGOs and many other players are fulfilling their responsibility towards fighting the virus, Manish felt that it was their solemn responsibility to support the government and the migrant workers in these unprecedented times. It was purely not for any business but it was an opportunity to be a part of honorary service and stand support to the government and the people.

Manish says, "This honorary and responsible project work is self-satisfaction for me and my team to be behind the curtain for our nation, our people, and our respected government. I am always proud of my team and their dedication at work"

It was a strenuous task and during the lockdown it was even more. However, to help the migrant workers get back to their families was important for Manish and his team. They thus approached the government and told them that they would like to undertake this Herculean task on an honorary basis.

Immediately, the next day, with acceptance of their proposal, an exclusive call centre for migrant workers was set up and they started their work with manpower of 40 personnel each in day and night shifts. Toll-free numbers, Whatsappoptionsanduser-friendlyonline system in Hindi language for migrants to understand easily was established for registration. A detailed state and district wise report to understand the database of migrant workers was being carried out daily. This data was to help all the concerned teams to plan further. State-wise plan for the arrangement of trains with DRM railways was also monitored.

Manish adds, "We heartily salute to our Government of Gujarat and its administrative wings for their outstanding work and support."

"We sent out forms to the migrant workers via Whatsapp to gather their information and details. The paperwork was completed over the phone and the completed forms were further sent to the respective governments of the migrants for verification. Trains were arranged. 2-day supply of food, water, and other essentials were provided to these migrants. Ultimately, they reached home safe," tells Manish.

The whole process took about seventeen days. The appreciation goes to all those involved in the successful evacuation efforts from administrations to governments but more to the management and dedication of the Akshar Travel team.

So at a time when our industry is thinking of survival and cutting costs, Akshar Travels went the extra mile to prove that value for humanity is more important than ever now. When tourism came to a halt, Manish was firm in not letting down his team. In- fact, he did not lay off his employees or cut their salaries. He had built a strong team over the years and his team stood for courage, kindness, and excellence. When COVID-19 struck in India, Manish did not worry about losing the big money they are so used to making every year in their domestic and outbound business.

"The company can make money anytime afterward. Now, the situation is altogether different. The country is in trouble and we should personally rise to the occasion to help people. That's what I believe in, and that's what my team believes in," expressed Manish.

Akshar Travels started in 1997 with a mission to provide the ultimate customer satisfaction in the tourism industry. Their good track record for over 21 years validates their success in this mission and towards becoming a well-known name in the Tour Operations vertical. Their core vision is to focus on the growth of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry of India. They aim to build India as a global brand image which will eventually result in the country's economic growth. They strive to do this by initiating creativity and innovations in various tourism and hospitality projects and products. Also, the organisation is serving the country's social responsibility by supporting the mandate for the sustainability of tourism and its environment.

During the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, doctors, government



DREAM CRUISES

DREAM CRUISES CARES, CRUISE WITH CONFIDENCE

Dream Cruises' preventive measures
to ensure a safe voyage



Genting Dream

World Dream

Explorer Dream

Dream Cruises' Commitment

Safeguarding the **health** and **safety** of our guests
and crew is our utmost priority.

Embarkation & Disembarkation

Online check-in for guests to minimize crowd congestion; mandatory temperature screening and pre-boarding health declarations for all guests.



Guest Accommodations

Higher frequency and increased levels of sanitization and disinfection with hospital grade disinfectants; enhanced cleaning of bathrooms and drains.

Common Public Areas

All public areas on board will undergo a two-tier sanitization process through thorough cleansing, fogging and wiping using hospital grade disinfectant, with emphasis on frequent touchpoints.



Food Hygiene Practices & Standards

F&B restaurants and bar areas, including galleys, will be cleaned and sanitized 3 times daily; guest seating will ensure ample spacing.

Entertainment & Recreational Activities

All theatres, kids' clubs and entertainment venues will be sanitized frequently; tour coaches will be limited to half capacity.



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Medical Centre

Isolated wards available in the Medical Centre; cabins can be converted into quarantine rooms if required.



Crew Members Practices & Standards

Twice daily temperature checks; all crew provided with training workshops and pertinent health and hygiene information.



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Uttarakhand reopens: welcome back to Devbhoomi

Unlock 2.0 has witnessed several states and cities reopening after a long time. Uttarakhand has removed the travel restrictions and reopened the state for tourism purposes including interstate travel with certain conditions. Thus, before heading out for a short break in the mountains, or book a long stay, and work from home in the hills, one needs to know certain things about the guidelines issued by the authorities.

Prashant Nayak



Dilip Jawalkar

The government of Uttarakhand has opened borders for inter-state and inter-district tourism activities for now. So tourists visiting Uttarakhand from other states will now be able to explore the state freely without going under institutional quarantine if they carry their COVID-19 negative test result.

Uttarakhand Tourism Secretary, Dilip Jawalkar informed that all tourists coming from other states of the country will have to upload the report related to COVID-19 test on the portal of Smart City Dehradun at the time of registration and also they must necessarily do this while travelling in the state and have to take the report along with them. All district authorities will be verifying the medical reports during the time of entry at all border check posts.

Jawalkar also informed that tourists without the COVID-19 test will be able to enter the state in the event of a minimum

seven-day hotel booking and stay. However, they have to stay put in the hotel for seven days and only then they will be able to visit any place in the state. So the condition is a mandatory COVID-19 negative test result or a seven days hotel booking with quarantine.

Hotels and Homestays are also open for business, but only in those areas that are not in the state's containment zones. They will also have to ensure that guests booking less than seven days have to bring the RT-PCR test from ICMR authorised laboratory in the last 72 hours and their COVID-19 test is found to be negative. Hotel bars still have to remain closed, but guests can order drinks from the room service menu.

Mussoorie, being one the most-visited and famous hill stations in Uttarakhand, has also come up with some precautionary measures. Tourists, who wish to visit Mussoorie will get entry only after showing the proof of booking for seven days under Unlock 2.0. However, Uttarakhand residents can roam around without any restrictions. Also, no entry after 10 pm and before 7 am would be allowed in Mussoorie.

The Uttarakhand government has also commenced the Chardham Yatra 2020 from July 1. For now, the pilgrimage will be allowed only for the residents of the state. Here too, only those residents, who are neither living in containment zones nor quarantine centres, will be allowed to go on the pilgrimage. Those wishing to undertake the pilgrimage will have to apply for an e-pass on the Uttarakhand Devasthanam

Board website and which will be valid only for 'darshan' at the temple during the visit to the shrine.

Giving details about the guidelines on weddings in the state, Jawalkar said, "Guests coming from Uttarakhand and other states to attend the wedding ceremony will not have to be quarantined although it will be conditioned that apart from the place of marriage will not be able to visit places. All of them have to sign and submit a self-declaration form. The hotel or the banquet hall organising the wedding ceremony will inform the local administration in this regard and will ensure thermal screening and social distancing. Also, they have to compulsorily create a database of their employees and visitors."

Other than tourists, people travelling on business essential to the state, such as construction and other public works projects, as well as those employed by businesses based in Uttarakhand, will be allowed to travel to and from the state without the need to quarantine. Pregnant women, the seriously-ill, those above the age of 65 years and those travelling with children under the age of 10 will be exempt from institutional quarantine, even if they are coming from a part of the country with high incidences of infection. Instead, they will be required to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.



Kedarnath

Diverse travel products is Madhya Pradesh's USP for domestic tourism



Yuvraj Padole

Madhya Pradesh presently sees great potential in domestic tourism to cover some lost ground during the pandemic. The first segment of the travellers they are looking to attract are people from neighbouring states interested to visit their popular wildlife, heritage, religious and adventure tourism sites. They are surrounded by five states and it is very easy to travel by car from neighbouring states to Madhya Pradesh because of a good road network. Yuvraj Padole, Deputy Director (Event & Marketing), Madhya Pradesh Tourism talks to TTI on the latest development in tourism and other initiatives in the state.

Prashant Nayak

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board has opened up various tourist destinations pertaining to wildlife, heritage, and pilgrimage, owing to their huge potential. This will also give a sense of 'returning to normalcy' for them. They have also reopened its state-run hotels and resorts, along with several private hotels at tourist destinations. Most of the historical monuments protected by the Archaeology Survey of India (ASI), from a list of 290 have reopened for the public. With the same, authorities have sanitised and fumigated the premises of all such sites and are ensuring all hygiene and social-distancing norms and SOP issued by the Ministry of Tourism are followed.

Yuvraj says, "All tourist destinations, sites of Madhya Pradesh are fully prepared and ready to welcome domestic tourists while hotel policies (check-in, check-out, room service, room allocation, safety and hygiene), destination policies, travel policies, etc., have been prepared. SOP's have been issued and instructions to follow the safety and hygiene guidelines have been circulated. Hotel staff, travel agents, tour operators, tour guides, drivers have been intimated

accordingly. Importantly, we are following all the circulars and implementing all the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health regarding safety and hygiene and also of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India guidelines regarding re-opening of tourist destinations with the precautions to be taken from time to time."

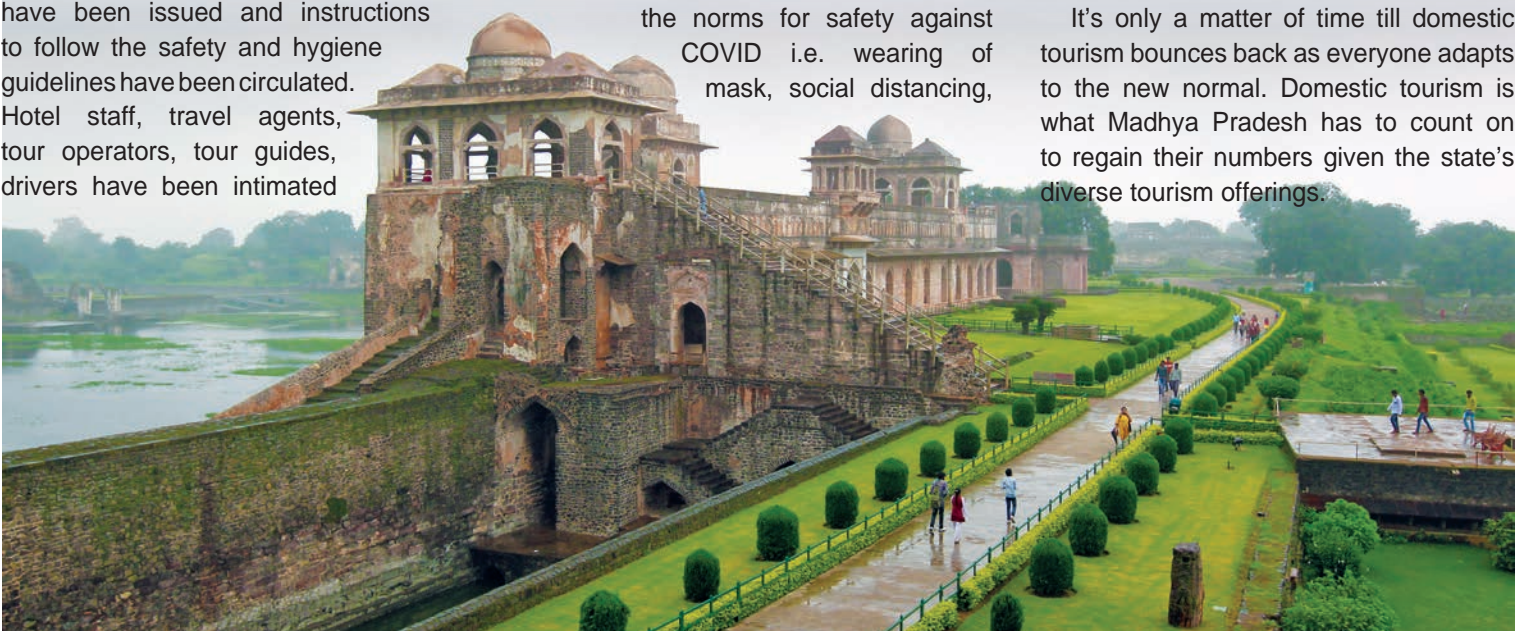
As per the combined data of various survey agencies, domestic tourist footfall in the state for April 2019 was over fifty-seven lakhs, and for May 2019, it was around fifty lakhs, while the numbers from the same months this year demonstrated a washout in the wake of COVID-19 lockdown. In April 2019, as many as 30309, while April this year recorded no new footfall.

Even as it seems premature to talk about tourism figures in the post-COVID world, the state aims to use this reset period for retrospection and to make strategy for future tourism activities when normalcy returns. Anticipating a better tomorrow, Yuvraj shares, "We are in the process to build the confidence and trust amongst the travellers through social media platforms and handles and by ensuring that all the norms for safety against COVID i.e. wearing of mask, social distancing,

hand sanitising, temperature checking and other safety measures to be followed, Hotel Rooms are allotted on even and odd basis and presently restaurants are running with 50 percent seating capacity. To inform and motivate domestic tourists of neighbouring states to visit Madhya Pradesh, small travel circuits have been designed and itineraries prepared for short and enjoyable road trips. Special weekend all-inclusive packages are also being offered to keep the momentum."

Madhya Pradesh offers an assortment of attractions to everyone who loves to travel. It is the state with the forest area cover of approximately 77,700 sq.kms filled with Sal trees and bamboos. It has numerous wildlife hotspots with 11 National parks and 24 wildlife sanctuaries such as Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary and Chambal Ghadiyal Sanctuary. The UNESCO World Heritage sites at Khajuraho, Bhimbetka, and Sanchi are the iconic sites in the state. Madhya Pradesh has re-gained the tag of being 'The Tiger State of the Country' by having maximum tiger count (526) in the state.

It's only a matter of time till domestic tourism bounces back as everyone adapts to the new normal. Domestic tourism is what Madhya Pradesh has to count on to regain their numbers given the state's diverse tourism offerings.



Feel the stress float away with CGH Earth's distinctive 'Travel Therapy'

CGH Earth has developed a tailor-made 'Travel Therapy' to present their guests with the unique holiday they deserve, the holiday they need, after the biggest lockdown in history. They want them to enjoy this holiday knowing that they are safe and that there is still so much beauty in the world waiting to be discovered and experiences to be had. They want to make sure that they get the physical, mental, and emotional reset they need, with the safety they deserve.

Prashant Nayak

CGH Earth has been a curator of transformational experiences in the Responsible Travel space for over thirty-five years. While in all this time, they have never faced a global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have adapted to meet this challenge while maintaining the same high standards they are known for in the industry. Also, they have adapted to meet this challenge, following the enhanced safety and hygiene measures as per Government regulations, WHO protocols, and keeping with industry best practices. They are ISO 22000 certified, FSSAI compliant, FoSTaC trained, and maintain international standards of safety and hygiene.

CGH Earth focused on training the employees, be it the heads of departments, General Managers, and the front office staff about how to conduct themselves in the pandemic. They were trained with the help of a doctor. They were educated on how to keep the hotel healthy and safe. The employees were given training for over two weeks. The infrastructure too had to be upgraded. They had to add to their wash areas and train the staff on disinfecting luggage, etc. CGH Earth has a protocol in place and developed a standard operating procedure to tackle the crisis.

With more than fifteen different experiential properties in South India, CGH Earth has gradually started opening their doors phase wise and have been welcoming guests from 9th June 2020. In phase one, they opened a few select hotels and resorts with limited rooms. They have carefully studied important safety information and worked with experts to plan and resume operations. This has resulted in developing their 'New Standard Operating Procedures' crafted

for the 'New Normal'. The enhanced safety and hygiene measures that they have put in place on the recommendations of WHO, the Health Ministry of the Govt. of India, and international experts to ensure that you and your loved ones can enjoy your holiday safely.

However, what the world needs now more than ever is a holiday. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that every second counts and we should live our life to the fullest. But what will a CGH Earth holiday in a COVID-19 world feel like? From the food to the service and the authentic experiences, it will be just as special for the guests to remember. The only difference is the enhanced safety measures and preventive actions that they are undertaking to keep everyone safe.

So get some much-needed 'Travel Therapy' amongst nature at selected CGH properties where the views are just as spectacular, the service just as friendly, the food just as delicious, and the experiences just as unforgettable, as you remember. After all, the world

and you could use some much-needed 'Travel Therapy' and it is important to maintain good physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing during this pandemic.

Discover, 'Travel Therapy' at Spice Village in Thekkady and feel a peace come over you like mist from the mountains. Listen to a squirrel having a conversation with a bird. Smell the fresh dew in the spice garden. See your kids play with butterflies. Let your mind drift as you float across a lake or take a cruise along serene canals and experience the backwater life at Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom, and relax in a 150-year-old mansion and see time slow down. Dine on the catch of the day amidst paddy fields in a calm lagoon and then treat your body, mind, and soul to a refreshing Ayurveda massage.

Every CGH Earth experience rests on certain fundamental principles that together define their core values. The driving elements are reflected in everything you see and experience - from their architecture and locations to their people, services and activities.



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Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat prepared for the wellness market demand

Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat provides a holistic treatment route through Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Yoga under one roof and preferred by many for the best in healing and tranquillity. Their team of Ayurvedic doctors and practitioners are capable of addressing a range of health care issues and lifestyle diseases. Sanjay Pagi, General Manager – Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat talks more about his Retreat's preparedness for the future in the COVID19 era, while he feels the situation represents a unique opportunity for them to enhance the customer experience and tune their operations for a bolder future.

Prashant Nayak



Sanjay Pagi

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 crisis continues to be challenging as the pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the hotel industry globally.

Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat was closed as per government guidelines until June. The situation was not easy, during the lockdown, everything was at standstill and almost paralyzed by the complexity coupled with the lack of predictability. "We did experience the new normal life of working from home, doing a few webinars, virtual meetings connecting with our business associates and it turned out to be interesting. We are sure it will be the winning paradigm for the new era," says Sanjay.

As the restrictions have started to ease

down, the retreat now has the right strategy in place for the recovery phase with the new normal. The pandemic and lockdown has indeed spurred fundamental changes in their social and professional lives. Sanjay tells, "As we all know, this virus affects the respiratory system causing severe infections and one of the key aspects is to improve our body immunity to fight the infection in addition to maintaining social distancing, better sanitisation practices, and to wear a mask. Hence, at Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat, our doctors have designed immunity-boosting packages. Package will consist of Ayurveda Doctor's consultation to evaluate your physical, mental and emotional health to assess your unique Prakruti of Dosha (Vata/Pita/Kapha) to understand the body type, current imbalances and to prepare personalised yogic activities with suitable diet."

As we all enter the post-pandemic world, hotels too will be entering a new business era. It will not be a new organisational design, but rather it will reshape the culture, management processes, and the overall approach while serving their guests.

"We have been closely monitoring the advisories by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and World Health Organization (WHO). Our hotel's health and safety measures have been redesigned and are regularly updated to address a broad spectrum of cautions, including those prescribed by the WHO. At Accor, we have launched the 'ALLSAFE' label, which represents our new cleanliness and prevention standards has been developed and approved by Bureau Veritas, a world

leader in hygiene and cleanliness inspection. Welcoming, protecting, and taking care of our staff and guests are at the very heart of what we do," assures Sanjay.

The Mercure Goa Devaaya Retreat teams are meticulously going through trainings on post COVID-19 SOP under the guidance of Johnson Diversey professionals to maintain the highest level of hygiene and sanitisation protocols. Their safety measure SOP starts from first impression of providing a clean sanitised car with trained driver (on COVID SOP) for guest pickup, contactless temperature mapping, disinfecting baggage, hand sanitizers, gloves, masks and face shields are mandatory. Social distancing while doing the check-in process, room cleaning procedures have been intensified as per the guidelines of the Tourism Ministry of India. Room keys are sanitized after every use and all public areas are frequently sanitised. Assurance tags of room being sanitised will be placed to indicate the room is sanitized, so that no one enters the room once cleaned and sanitised.

Adding more to this, Sanjay says, "Upon arrival, we will still offer our guests if they would like us to sanitise the room in their presence. We have also modified our restaurant layout to reinforce social distancing and have trained our team members according to the new norms. As we all know that this recovery will not be a straight path, our mission will be completely driven by the emotions of our guests and our promise of committed hospitality."



Naad Wellness: Dedicated to Indian healing traditions

Located on the outskirts of India's capital city of New Delhi (NCR), Naad Wellness with its thirty-nine rooms features a bouquet of curated experiences that aim to heal and initiate you towards holistic wellbeing. Rooted in the ancient principles of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, their therapies and services restore balance to your five senses and help you tune into a sound you. Manoj Khetan, Co-founder – Naad Wellness, tells TTJ how they are coping up amidst the pandemic and supporting the community with their health initiatives.

Prashant Nayak



Manoj Khetan

India is the birthplace of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy and recognised globally as the cradle of healing and wellness. Holistic living is a part of life here and culturally imbibed into the soul of the country and its people. At Naad, every experience has been created around this ancient ethos and overseen by their resident physicians and experts.

In the ongoing pandemic, when most businesses are disrupted but keeping

the positivity alive, Manoj says, "The pandemic made us all realise how fragile our health really is and there were a lot of queries around the right wellbeing regime to follow. We focused on engaging with our former guests, potential guests and the community in general. Some of the initiatives that were introduced during the lockdown were the complimentary twice daily yoga sessions and telephonic health consultations with one of our doctors and the introduction of 'Dinacharya by Naad' which is based on the Ayurvedic concept of having a set, regimented routine."

'Dinacharya by Naad' is a five-day program that can be followed in the comfort and convenience of your home and is designed to strengthen one's immunity and gently easing one into the normal course of life. It includes everything from what time to wake up and to go to bed, having your meals at a particular time, meal plans, fitness and mindfulness guidelines, self-care rituals that can be adopted etc. This can be downloaded by anyone from their website.

"We have introduced a new package, 'Nirāmayā by Naad' for just two-nights, keeping in perspective that most of our guests may not be able to get away for more than a couple of days. This package helps address health and lifestyle issues being faced by people at the moment – immunity boosting and recovery from the symptoms

of weeks of social distancing which are insomnia, stress, irregular eating habits etc," informs Manoj.

Presently at Naad, SOP's, safety and hygiene guidelines and other protocols are well thought of while anticipating welcoming their customers. "Being part of the healthcare industry, Naad Wellness' safety and hygiene standards are at par with the country's leading hospitals, which I believe should help us get the confidence of our guests. In the current scenario, our health contributes to the overall wellbeing of our community. Hence, we must focus on building a strong immune system for ourselves and the people around us," explains Manoj.

The current practices for safety measures at Naad Wellness

- Health screening of all employees before re-joining
- Infrared temperature screening of all guests and associates at the entrance and at regular intervals
- Mandatory installation of the Aarogya Setu app for guests, staff and service partners visiting the property
- Masks to be worn by all associates
- 100 per cent focus on the sanitisation of the rooms, public areas, therapy rooms and medical equipment.
- RFID tagging of linen at one of the finest laundry services in the world, which are also used by the leading hospitals in the country.
- Associates are not permitted to use public transport and visit hotspots. Additionally, the team lives about 200 metres from the property and they usually walk to work.
- The associates live in company-managed accommodation so the health safety of the premises is in control as well.



Our customers are at the heart of every decision that we make

‘Responsible Travel’ and ‘Sustainable Practises’ are basic SOPs that are synonymous with InterGlobe values of integrity, future-mindedness, and customer-centricity. Shwetank Singh, Vice-President — Development and Asset Management, InterGlobe Hotels shares with TTJ as to how they have taken all steps to be ready in these aspects and thereby prepared themselves to face the upcoming times.

Prashant Nayak



Shwetank Singh

The challenge for most of the hotel operators and companies are now to step up and bring in a strong focus on health and hygiene standards and compliances. There is a strong need to reconnect with segment markets and showcase their commitment to hygiene and safe travel accommodations. India has a strong latent demand, and there is a greater importance now for hotels to attract them to their destinations and properties. While responsible and sustainable tourism is going to be key benchmarks for comparisons amongst the travellers, it remains equally important for hotels to deliver on expectations.

“Hotel operators will need to be innovative and think out-of-the-box to attract guests and think of ways to induce demand in improving the travel sentiments. Special offers, packages, upgrades, improving the guest experience and loyalty programs all need to be reviewed and leveraged. Over the

last three months, all hotels would have gone back to drawing boards to plan this phase-out and see what steps they need to take. Going forward, while volumes will remain low for the short term, they should keep the think tanks going to keep the ideas flowing,” tells Shwetank.

As one of the leading hotel companies in India, at InterGlobe, they believe that they have a certain responsibility towards their guests. Hotel room pricing, service offerings, guest relations that they maintain, their commitment towards compliances, health, hygiene, safety, and security all demonstrate the InterGlobe virtues that they incorporate in their daily functioning and decision making as well. Shwetank speaks, “At InterGlobe Hotels, all our properties undergo health and safety audits twice a year so stepping up the hygiene measures during this pandemic was not a tough task. Even from a sustainability point, we have invested in solar energy, power wheeling from wind energy, RO water plants, motion and light sensors, indoor air filtration that shows our continuous commitment to the society and environment as a responsible entity. It gives us immense pride to narrate our ways of working and talk about their importance today just the way it has remained all along our growth journey.”

The recovery of the tourism sector in India will help in securing jobs besides also boosting the aviation industry, hospitality sector, and transport facilities. This is expected once the travel sentiments improve and people feel safe to travel. While the private players and operators will go all out to do their jobs in working towards this, the policy level decisions and travel incentives will still require some direction from the government.

However, the government missed out on any direct benefits for the tourism sector in the stimulus package announced recently. In this context, Shwetank is of the opinion, “We believe, the terms Responsibility and Sustainable Practice have a bigger meaning and hence are now looking at the macro economical aspect. Responsibility lies in co-creating new avenues of growth that the government has to do within the industry. They could start by looking into the existing policies involving approval and licensing bottlenecks, taxation laws, liquor permits, parking requirements, GST levies, building development norms that need to be reviewed to ensure that the development going forward is more efficient.

This is also probably the right time to fix this and restore investor confidence.”

“The same goes for Sustainable strategies as the need of the hour now is maintaining sustainability in economic practises, financing options and building norms which ensures an investor may build the right structure without any statutory delays and reducing overspending for a business, license or land usage. Going forward, the government could look at incentivising business travel by re-introduction of the Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) as domestic travel will be the key for the revival of the Indian hospitality market,” continues Shwetank.

Also, according to Shwetank, re-introduction of the LTA allowances in the new income tax slabs will benefit both the hotel & aviation industries and boost organisations to travel whilst remaining safe. The same could be done for a weighted exemption for expenses to corporates on all domestic conferences which will help reduce the tax burden for the company and promote the MICE and corporate events going forward this year.

Embracing the 'New Normal' with S.H.I.E.L.D

Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels (ASPH), has launched its hygiene, cleanliness and sanitisation program called S.H.I.E.L.D., across 22 hotels in its four brands – THE Park Hotels, THE Park Collection, Zone by THE Park and Flurys. S.H.I.E.L.D. is an all-encompassing program that brings the best of luxury, design, hygiene, safety, and service excellence all under one roof. Vijay Dewan, Managing Director, Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels, shares more on their splendid initiative.

Prashant Nayak



Vijay Dewan

program is a more stringent approach towards our existing standards of safety. From the moment you arrive, to the moment you leave and beyond, we want you to experience the 'Anything But Ordinary™' services. Our existing workforce is also undergoing mandatory online and offline training sessions to ensure hygiene, sanitisation, social distancing, and safe operations across India," tells Vijay.

Vijay continues, "Also, with the opening of the hotels and lockdown, we do anticipate a lot of intercity vacations and short-haul road trips. We have launched special staycations and daycation packages for locals across cities, so that guests can enjoy the luxuries without fear. Our upscale brand, Zone by The Park will recover faster than THE Park because of its price point. Moreover, the idea of S.H.I.E.L.D. was to bring a positive impact on both the destination and the traveller."

The Group has identified more than a hundred physical touch points in the entire stay experience and has adopted a more stringent approach towards their hygiene standards and safety, with the launch of the programmes the hotel assures you the best of safety services from the moment you arrive to the moment you leave and beyond and they want you to experience the remarkable. "Post the lockdown, travellers will become more conscious about choosing their vacation choices. People will opt for trustworthy brands that have accurate arrangements of cleanliness and hygiene. Contactless hospitality services along with organic and sustainable practices will be the top on the traveller's checklist," feels Vijay.

Sustainability has been rigorously

followed by various tourism and hospitality players across India. The need is to combine the highest standards of safety and hygiene with sustainable practices. This pandemic has brought the focus back on food and its sources. The organic movement, farm-to-fork and vegan, and conscious dining are going to be a big focus. Buffet may well be forgotten for some time. Fresh produce, freshly cooked food will be in high demand.

On this Vijay shares more, "At ASPH, we have been practising the concept of farm to fork for long now. Our restaurant FIRE at THE Park New Delhi is 80 per cent organic and other restaurants, such as Meishi at THE Park Mumbai, Zen at THE Park Kolkata have been offering organic and vegan food choices. We locally source food and few of our hotels have the concept of a kitchen garden, there is negligible usage of plastic in F&B operations, we follow proper food wastage segregation process and have tied up with various NGOs to support the farmers and encourage farmers market across many of our hotels in India."

Also, a global health crisis is not a solution for how the earth is recovering, but the fact that it is giving room to reflect and make us more aware of how we can travel and be more sustainable. Vijay shares, "People are going to be attracted to sustainable tourism and will consider a slower and more thoughtful approach to travel. Instead of ticking off five to seven places in one's itinerary at a time, travelling in a way that builds an authentic connection with a place's culture, community and environment should be considered. Countries and cities that can show how sustainable and environment-friendly they are will definitely be able to attract more visitors than others."

The government's decision to re-open the hospitality industry with limited services is definitely a positive move but there is a greater responsibility on the stakeholders to maintain everyone's health and safety. At ASPH, they have timely utilized the lockdown period to set-up a special task force that pre-emptively looks into the functioning and keeps a tab on operations. Today, due to their combined team effort for preparation on various possible scenarios in the future, they are ready to return to business.

There was also an urgent need to put the focus on adopting the highest standards of safety and hygiene. That is where S.H.I.E.L.D. comes in for the Group. It is an abbreviated form for S – Sanitisation; H – Hygiene; I – ISO Standard Equipment; E – Excellence; L – Luxury Redefined; D – Distancing.

"Since, safety and well-being of our guests and associates this sanitation

Hotel brands will evolve based on what type of customer they would like to attract

Kamat Group is a leading player in the hospitality and food service industry in India. As a Director at Kamat Group, Vishal Vithal Kamat oversees the company's operational functions, management portfolio, and overall performance at corporate and property levels. Armed with a vision, right approach and strong leadership, he has infused dynamism to enhance the group's image in the industry. As pioneers in eco-friendly concepts, Vishal talks to TTJ on how the hotel and tourism industry will be more immersed and inclined to Eco- friendly thoughts in the future.

Prashant Nayak



Vishal Vithal Kamat

For Vishal, it is not just tourism but society as a whole that has changed, and this change is more a deep-rooted scar than a skin-deep wound compared to the tragedies they have witnessed in the past.

"As such I know that people will still want to travel and environmental consciousness has grown with people seeing a cleaner earth in their lockdown and since 'The Orchid' has been a pioneer in Asia in environmentally-friendly hospitality, we feel our ethos of 'Friendly - Eco Friendly' connects even more. Travel will be more responsible and conscientious and many new opportunities will open up," says Vishal.

Vishal is of the opinion that social awareness is a continuous program. Even the best of us forget or act lazy

at times. The ban on plastic was one such crucial step in the right direction. Without much effort, cities become cleaner as indiscriminate use and easy throw attitude drastically fell. Similarly, social action and legislation needs to go hand in hand only then will be able to see a behavioural change. One without the other doesn't work. Drink and drive is another excellent successful example of this. Indians are evolving and in our society, unlike some western countries, each is at different economic stages of progress, so it's taking time but the improvement has been fairly rapid. We Indians have become more conscious and will further improve with time.

Talking further, Vishal states, "Tourism is the economy but sadly our government and society don't see it in a serious light. Even, a simple family visit to your hometown to meet your parents is tourism. It churns the wheels of fortunes for every person it encounters. Add to this religious tourism is also deeply embedded in our family cultures so this will always be on. I feel there would be two types of tourist thinkers in the future. One are those who will be very cautious and even after this pandemic is behind they will want to follow many of the current practices like social distancing, low human contact and fewer service points with more self-dependence and low touchpoints The other are those who would still like high interaction, high service, culturally experiential, following basic norms more as a societal norm but will be fairly relaxed about it. Hotel brands will evolve based on what type

of customer they would like to attract. People will come back, it may take time but they will come back in great numbers."

The Kamath Group have already been supporting the community grow wherever their hotels are situated. In rural areas, e.g. Fort JadhavGadh, Pune, they regularly engage schools to participate in clean up drives, tree plantations, save and protect nature, animal and bird campaigns. During the current cyclone, when a few trees in their properties fell, rather than chopping them or letting them perish, they invested in re-planting the trees. Now every fallen tree is standing tall again. In Odisha, they do a lot of social activities on the Konark and Puri beaches and actively participate with guests for 'Save the Turtle' initiative and other nature campaigns.

"The work is endless but the real satisfaction is when we compare old photos with current and see the stark contrast of value-added to the local ecology and our community," shares Vishal. He believes that if we people have good civic sense, respect each other and we all follow the law, then things will be certainly better. "We complain of infrastructures but we are the ones first to destroy it also. It is a bad sight at many of our monuments and religious places. How are we keeping and maintaining them? If our mindset improves then definitely, we can expect great results in tourism. We generally are good people and our country is safer than many others considering the population. Some media blow up things out of proportion and of course, there will be always some bad and negative elements in the society which need to be weeded out from the start," concludes Vishal.

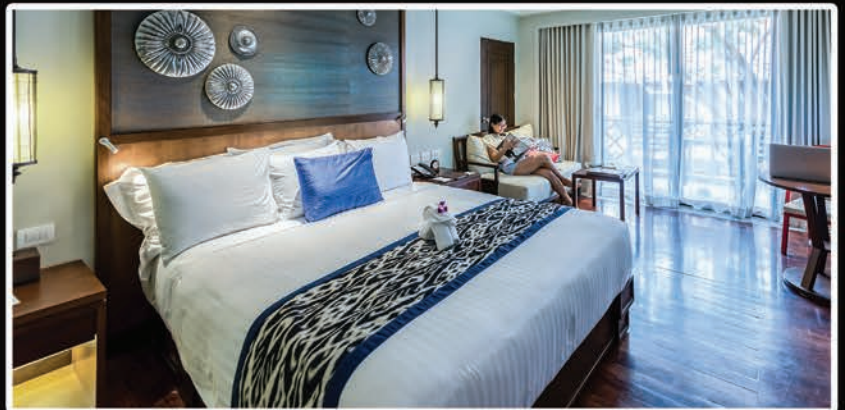
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Kunal Katoch

Tourism is home away from home and that will never change

As the Indian Hospitality industry gears up to reopen, at Sayaji they are reimagining ways to serve customers, giving utmost priority to their health, safety, and security. They are excited and ready to reopen their doors to a new era of travel and welcoming the guests with the 'new normal' stay experience. Kunal Katoch, Vice President - Operations, Sayaji Hotels, believes that with the ongoing phase of pandemic each of us has turned more responsible and will continue to sustain the practices implemented today, even in the near future.

Prashant Nayak

comfortable but also safe. Sustainable practices also existed as standard practices and here again today the new meaning is following COVID 19 guidelines with consistency."

Tourism has been the backbone to showcase culture, values, and hospitality in India which has not only attracted guests across the world but showcased diversity that as a country we can offer. "Surely due to lockdown, we have prevented a very large catastrophe. On the other hand, responsible and sustainable tourism will help in avoiding any future catastrophe post lockdown and this is building confidence in revival of tourism," admits Kunal.

At Sayaji, they have been preparing internally during the lockdown on sustainable practices that

they have continued during the lockdown and will continue post as well. As with employees, they are practicing and training their employees as and when they are resuming back. For the guest, they have responsible and sustainable practices in place which they are communicating to them and also creating snippets to post on social media.

Kunal mentions, "I truly believe with the ongoing phase of pandemic each of us has turned more responsible and will continue to sustain the practices implemented today and even in the near future. Hygiene was always a part of us; however, it was mostly in our subconscious minds but what I see today is a very serious conscious effort and I truly believe this will sustain even post-pandemic."

Sayaji Hotel's recent 'Care Beyond Compare' is a curated initiative is to ensure guests safety from check-in to check-out. The hotel group has strived to achieve and maintain the highest level of safety and hygiene measures for the well-being of its employees and guest. Through the programme, the patrons will be informed and updated about the change in service designs and standards of operations that will be congruent to the norms of social distancing, safety and hygiene of the staff and cleanliness of the hotel.

While speaking on Responsible travel and Sustainable practises, Kunal says, "These concepts have always existed, however, today responsible travel is no longer making others feel

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The Travel Corporation to have 'Wellbeing Directors' on guided vacations

The Travel Corporation (TTC) has announced an industry first with a new innovative initiative, adding to its comprehensive, new wellbeing and hygiene measures for every guest and team member. Fully appreciating clients' understandable concerns in this new post COVID-19 world of travelling, TTC is investing in a newly conceived, dedicated Wellbeing Director (WD) position who will be present on every guided holiday beginning with the launch of its immersive domestic trips this year.

Team TTJ

The dedicated wellbeing director will be present on every Trafalgar, Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold guided vacation (excluding Australia and New Zealand), starting with the launch of its domestic trips this year. This new initiative accompanies the company's new enhanced hygiene measures and physical distancing standards.

"As we shift to this new normal and as part of TTC's commitment to provide each guest a greater sense of comfort and care when they travel with us, we have added the support of a specially trained Wellbeing Director on every guided holiday," said Brett Tollman, Chief Executive of The Travel Corporation.

Brett continues, "As we shift to this new normal and as part of TTC's commitment to provide each guest a greater sense of comfort and care when they travel with us, we have added the support of a specially trained Wellbeing Director on every guided holiday," said Brett Tollman, Chief Executive of The Travel Corporation.

WD's will ensure adherence to guidelines and help guests stay up-to-date with the latest guidelines and recommendations. The wellness director will be with clients throughout the entire journey to ensure all hygiene and physical distancing measures are implemented every step of the way. Working alongside the expert WD will be professionally trained driver, who will also be aligned with all new protocols, thus travellers will have the added reassurance and confidence to explore amazing destinations again.

"During our first 100th anniversary, the inception of our Wellbeing Directors is a reflection of our family legacy and company ethos, 'Driven by Service' and is an initiative that came directly from our Chairman. We remain passionately dedicated to provide our valued guests peace of mind with our unrelenting efforts to create a relaxing, enjoyable and nurturing journey," he



concluded.

TTC has already been an industry leader in establishing enhanced hygiene measures and physical distancing standards. The innovative company has been collaborating closely with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) to help guide and co-create its 'Safe Travels and Seamless Traveller Journey' global protocols. These protocols will evolve and be adapted as further government regulations are implemented.



Dhruv Chauhan

Travelexic launches COVID-19 focused technology

As the travel and tourism industry reels from COVID-19, it's critical for travel service providers that customer experience is improved significantly.

The pandemic has created a necessity that is forcing radical changes in the travel arena and there's a need for travel agents and tour operators to adapt to the changing environment quickly especially in technology. Thus, Travelexic launched its line of COVID focused features that would let Tour and MICE operators increase the productivity of their teams.

Team TTJ

automation tools and mobile-based contactless technology for travellers. These features would let tour and MICE operators increase the productivity of their teams by removing process redundancies and offering actionable data, providing collaborative tools to manage work from home (WFH) teams. Keeping with the new normal of contactless travel, the end traveller can use the Travelexic mobile app for express hotel check-in, airline web check-in, and receive real-time flight status notifications. Moreover, to facilitate group travel, Travelexic is introducing a Bluetooth enabled social distancing alert and a completely paperless travel experience.

Talking about the application, Dhruv Singh Chauhan, Co-founder, Travelexic said, "Technology is a great enabler and Travelexic

is one of the most comprehensive automation solutions in the market covering both pre and post-sale operations. As tour and MICE operators prepare to enable travel, we feel technology would have to lead the way in terms of managing the challenges that follow and our suite of COVID focused features do just that."

Travelexic was launched in early 2018 by Dhruv Chauhan, Neehar Ranjan, and Virakt Chauhan. The team comes with an experience of over 15 years in travel and hospitality, and 20 years in enterprise IT. Despite being a young company, the company has over 60 partners and is powering some of the largest players in the industry in India and abroad. They recently signed a contract with SOTC and will be developing their MICE APP on its proprietary framework.

ASaaS based travel and customer experience management solution, Travelexic recently announced its stack of COVID-19 focused features with a prime objective of helping tour and MICE operators navigate through the challenges of the COVID era.

With industry rising best technology trends to recover and thrive post pandemic, Travelexic launches its line of COVID focused features; that include remote web-based mid/back-office

AAI signs an MoU with BEL for Co-operation in the field of Civil Aviation

In what can be termed as a landmark event, Airports Authority of India (AAI) entered into an MoU with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) that will provide a platform for collaborative development and support for both the organizations to address the emerging airport business globally, including that of Asia Pacific region.

In furtherance of such cooperation, AAI, in the role of development partner, will render assistance to BEL in its domain of expertise to enable execution of the prestigious MEA projects outside India by BEL. Both the organisations will work in close cooperation with each other in the field of civil aviation in present and in future projects being handled by BEL.

The MoU was signed by Sh. Sanjai Kumar Singhal, General Manager (Business Development), AAI and Sh. Manoj Kumar, Executive Director (National Marketing), RO Delhi, Bharat Electronics Limited at AAI Corporate Headquarters on July 14, 2020 in the presence of Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI, M V Gowtama, CMD, BEL and senior management of both the organisations through video conferencing.

Chairman AAI, addressing the experts from both sides exuded optimism that the partnership between the two organisations will be a game-changer in Indian aviation sector in the years to come. He also said that the manufacturing of Communication, Navigation & Surveillance (CNS) Equipment in India will reduce the cost substantially and will save foreign exchange outflow, making India Self-Reliant.

CMD, BEL affirmed that the MoU would provide for synergy of capabilities of both the organisations in their respective domains leading to mutually beneficial and lasting solutions in the ever-growing field of aviation. He also said that with the skills and expertise of AAI, BEL would enter in the domestic civil aviation market as well as in South-East Asian, African and Latin American civil aviation market.

Signing of this MoU is a huge step forward for both the organisations to embark on joint cooperation and support in the field of civil aviation.



Virgin Atlantic positions itself for post COVID-19

Virgin Atlantic takes a big step forward in securing its future, by launching a court backed process as part of a solvent recapitalisation of the airline and holiday business, with a Restructuring Plan that once approved and implemented, will keep Virgin Atlantic flying. The Restructuring Plan is based on a five year business plan, and with the support of shareholders Virgin Group and Delta, new private investors and existing creditors, it paves the way for the airline to rebuild its balance sheet and return to profitability from 2022.

The recapitalisation will deliver a refinancing package worth c.£1.2bn over the next 18 months in addition to the self-help measures already taken. To secure approval from all relevant creditors before implementation, the Restructuring Plan will go through a court-sanctioned process under Part 26A of the Companies Act 2006 (the 'Restructuring Plan'). With support already secured from the majority of stakeholders, it's expected that the Restructuring Plan and recapitalisation will come into effect late summer 2020.

Shai Weiss, CEO, Virgin Atlantic commented, "The last six months have been the toughest we have faced in our 36-year history. We have taken painful measures, but we have accomplished what many thought impossible. The solvent recapitalisation of Virgin Atlantic will ensure that we can continue to provide vital connectivity and competition to consumers and businesses in Britain and beyond. We greatly appreciate the support of our shareholders, creditors and new private investors and together, we will ensure that Virgin Atlantic can emerge a sustainably profitable airline, with a healthy balance sheet. Once our plan is approved, we will continue to focus on providing our customers with the service they have come to expect. Despite the incredible efforts of our teams, through cancelled flights and delayed refunds we have not lived up to the high standards we set ourselves, but we will do everything in our power to earn back their trust."

UNESCO World Heritage Site Hagia Sophia turned into mosque

Turkish government announced that Istanbul's world-famous tourist attraction will be turned into a mosque, citing court decision. Turkish court ruled that the 1934 decree converting Istanbul's ancient Byzantine cathedral Hagia Sophia into a museum was not lawful. Immediately after the ruling, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a decree opening the Hagia Sophia as a mosque.

UNESCO has expressed concern over Erdogan's vision for the historic structure, noting that the building has a 'strong symbolic and universal value' and has called on Turkey to engage in a dialogue. Erdogan's spokesperson Ibrahim Kalin said that opening the Hagia Sophia for worship will not prevent local or foreign tourists from visiting the iconic site and that a loss of the structure as a world heritage site is not in question.





Palazzo Versace Dubai announces AED 1 million summer giveaway

With the launch of its first E-Gift Platform, Palazzo Versace Dubai engages discerning travellers to 'gift an experience' to remember – whether as a treat for oneself, or the perfect surprise to show appreciation to a loved one, or an immersive escape for a special occasion. This platform is designed to offer a distinct selection of indulgent stay, spa, dining experiences and more at the hotel. One can also add a personalised message while e-gifting the voucher experience, to say 'Thank You', 'I love you' or just 'I'm thinking of you during these difficult times'.

When guests purchase vouchers worth AED 1000 from now until July 31, 2020, they will stand a chance to win a night's stay in the highest room category at Palazzo Versace Dubai – Imperial Suite, worth AED 100,000.

10 winners that will get stays worth a total of AED 1 Million from Palazzo Versace Dubai – will be announced on August 5, 2020 on the hotels's Instagram page.

CzechTourism brings Czech E-Classrooms to train Indian travel trade

CzechTourism India office has been organising Czech E-Classrooms, wherein it trains the Indian Travel Trade on the various regions and experiences in the Czech Republic, emphasising those beyond Prague. CzechTourism India is educating and informing the travel trade about the various facets of the destination, which are still new to India market. This is being done via Czech E-Classrooms, which include the update on the destination's COVID situation, destination videos, presentation, questions and answers round, and ends with a short quiz. This online training platform also informs on the places with natural surroundings and are less crowded, as this is expected to be one of the priorities in the post-COVID-era.

The Czech E-Classrooms not only help the tourism board to stay connected with the travel trade partners but on top is keeping them equipped with updated information about the Czech Republic for the time when the travel bans will be lifted and agents can promote the delightful and scenic country to the discerning Indian travellers.

CzechTourism is also set to roll out an E-Learning module for travel trade partners in India. Through completing and passing the e-module successfully, agents in India can be certified as the Czech Republic Specialist.



Explorer Dream, the first cruise ship to receive the CIP-M certification by global healthcare and classification body DNV GL

Dream Cruises' Explorer Dream is the first cruise ship in the industry to receive the Certification in Infection Prevention for the Maritime industry (CIP-M) from the world's leading classification society, DNV GL. The CIP-M certification of Explorer Dream is timely and in conjunction with Dream Cruises' recent announcement that Explorer Dream will recommence operations in Taiwan from July 26, 2020 onwards, offering 'Taiwan Island-Hopping' itineraries. Dream Cruises will be the first cruise line in the world to begin sailing after the global cruise industry was shut down due to the pandemic.

With the CIP-M certification program for Explorer Dream, Genting Cruise Lines together with DNV GL are paving the way in introducing new safety standards, customised specifically for the maritime industry, that include enhanced infection prevention control procedures and systems for the safety and well-being of guests and crew members.

The CIP-M is based on DNV GL's stringent healthcare foundation and expertise in infection risk management, used in the accreditation and certification of more than 630 hospitals worldwide. The CIP-M certified Explorer Dream will soon resume sailing and homeport in Keelung to operate a series of round-trip cruises, including a two, three and four-night itinerary to Penghu, Matsu and Kinmen islands, as well as Hualien in Taiwan.

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts unveils plans to enter Nepal and Bhutan, introduces Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham Brand in India



Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, the world's largest hotel franchising company with approximately 9,300 hotels across 90 countries, unveiled plans to open its first hotels in Nepal and Bhutan with plans to open a new build hotel in the capital of Bangladesh by the end of the year, while also announcing the opening of the Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham Dwarka—the first Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham hotel in India.

All three hotels are part of larger efforts by the company to significantly expand its footprint across the Indian subcontinent and are complemented by four additional properties in the region that either recently opened or are slated to open over the next nine months. Wyndham is currently one of the largest international hotel companies in India and plans to have 47 hotels open across the country by the end of this year.

Nikhil Sharma, Area Director, Eurasia, Wyndham Hotels and Resorts said, "Over the last few years Bhutan and Nepal have seen a steady increase in tourism, making them ideal destinations for us to expand into. What's more, they perfectly complement the opportunity and uptick of the midscale market in India, which we've strengthened today with the introduction of our Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham brand. As the Indian subcontinent continues making waves in the hospitality industry, Wyndham remains laser focused on tapping into its key markets and fulfilling our mission of making hotel travel possible for all."

Preferred Hotels & Resorts launches Loving Local: The Open Road Series



Preferred Hotels & Resorts launches Loving Local, a global travel series designed to facilitate highly localized, luxury hotel experiences across 21 compelling regional markets including India – as consumers prepare to hit the open road once again for exploration and rediscovery of destinations close to home. This limited-time global campaign – valid for bookings made by July 31, 2020 for stays of two nights or more through December 31, 2020 – entices eager travellers to staycation within their hometown or venture further into their surrounding region for the opportunity to enjoy authentic, memorable hospitality along with value-rich amenities at more than 200 participating hotels and resorts worldwide.

Travellers who book Loving Local will receive the best available rate, daily breakfast options for two, and a stay credit ranging from US\$25-\$70 that can be used toward on-property expenditures, along with immediate fast track to Elite status in the brand's I Prefer Hotel Rewards program, which features a VIP amenity, next category room upgrade, 2,500 bonus points, and complimentary internet. Upon confirmation, all Loving Local bookings will also unlock access to special benefits from partner brands including Sixt (for car rentals in Europe), Avis (for car rentals in the Americas and Asia), and Travel Curious (for those who want curated tours of their chosen destination).

Understanding the inherent value of the travel agent community in supporting the return to travel, Preferred Hotels & Resorts is also offering a 3 per cent bonus on top of the standard 10 per cent agency commission for Loving Local bookings made through the GDS or direct channels with a qualifying IATA/TIDS number.

Crystal River Cruises voted No. 1 River Cruise Line in Travel + Leisure's 2020 World's Best Awards

Crystal River Cruises has once again won top honors in Travel + Leisure's World's Best Awards. Crystal River Cruises has been earning the acclaim of the world's most discerning travellers since the line first launched in 2016 and, in fact, was named #1 River Cruise Line in its first year of service by Travel & Leisure readers. Crystal's oceangoing brands – Crystal Cruises and Crystal Yacht Cruises – both placed in the Top Two of their respective categories, underscoring the consistent standard of luxury and excellence found across Crystal's varied experiences.

Crystal River Cruises' score of 97.14 includes #1 scores for guest suites, food, service, itineraries/destinations and value. All three Crystal brand experiences placed number one in the culinary category, highlighting the superlative, globally inspired culinary experience for which Crystal has long been known.

Crystal Cruises placed number one in the service, romance and nightlife categories, while Crystal Yacht Cruises placed #1 for romance.





Abu Dhabi sees promising signs of progress in tourism as domestic restrictions ease

The Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi has revealed signs of progress within the tourism sector as the emirate prepares to gradually open up to international travel. Hotels in Abu Dhabi have started opening after adhering to guidelines set out earlier this month following an extensive period of sterilisation. Hotel occupancy rates in Abu Dhabi have risen by 3 per cent year-on-year since July 1 and are expected to rise further with the launch of a number of initiatives within the emirate aimed at boosting the sector.

The UAE government has received global praise for its response in confronting the pandemic, as well as for how it has proactively managed its social and economic impact. The local government in Abu Dhabi in turn has relentlessly increased testing for COVID-19, and implemented strict measures, which has been reflected in cases dipping to less than 1 per cent in Abu Dhabi City as a result of the government's efforts.

DCT Abu Dhabi has also been working closely over the past period with industry partners and stakeholders to introduce a number of initiatives to aid hotels and cultural attractions in reopening. UFC Fight Island, which is taking place on Abu Dhabi's Yas Island from July 11 to 25, is another major step towards rebooting tourism in the capital of the UAE. Abu Dhabi is hosting over 1,632 local crew members, as well as 609 international delegates flying in as part of 63 commercial flights. All attendees will be staying within a safe zone of 11 square kilometres on Yas Island, comprising seven hotels and several dedicated facilities.

As Abu Dhabi cautiously moves towards opening its borders to visitors, the tourism sector is witnessing strong collaborations across both public and private sectors to prepare for the reopening of popular attractions and museums in the emirate, such as Louvre Abu Dhabi, and plans hosting more global events in the near future.



Club Med launches 'Safe Together' hygiene and safety assurance program and 'Club Med Cocoon'

Club Med announces the launch of the Safe Together guest assurance program developed with the support of Ecolab, a global leader in water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services. Through a series of heightened hygiene and safety protocols implemented across all of Club Med's resorts in Asia, Safe Together provides guests with the reassurance of a clean and safe environment when experiencing the resort and all its amenities.

Surrounded by nature across beachfronts, forests and mountains, Club Med's low-density resorts in idyllic destinations provide a safe haven for families looking to jump back to happiness, with plenty of space to practice social distancing. With the built-up surfaces of the resorts covering less than 10 per cent of the total site surface, guests can enjoy a safe and relaxing holiday with plenty of spacious outdoor areas for an immersive experience. With self-sufficient resort facilities and in-resort activities within the 'Club Med Cocoon', Club Med vacations let you relax within the highly clean compounds, giving you that added reassurance. In addition, minimising access from the public allows guests and staff to remain traceable and contactable should the need arise.

World Travel & Tourism Council declares Jordan a safe destination

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities recently announced that the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has awarded Jordan the 'Safe Travels Stamp' thanks to Jordan's health safety protocols that were deemed to be in line with the Council's standards, which makes Jordan a safe destination for Travel and Tourism.

The Ministry stated in a statement that WTTC approved the Ministry's health safety measures, which were also documented and distributed to all tourism sectors and facilities. The Ministry also ensured the proper application of these measures, in addition to training the sectors' employees on how to abide by them through inspection visits by the Ministry's monitoring and inspection teams along with other concerned entities. 'Safe Travels Stamp' reflects Jordan's commitment to safely resume safe travel and tourism that is supported by a comprehensive set of health safety measures.



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts appoints Anjali Mehra as Vice President Marketing



The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts is further strengthening its leadership team with the appointment of Anjali Mehra as Vice President Marketing. A passionate storyteller and a brand evangelist, Anjali brings with her over two decades of rich and varied experience in hospitality Brand Marketing and Communications.

"I am delighted to welcome Anjali as a key member of my leadership team," said Anuraag Bhatnagar Chief Operating Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts. "Anjali brings with her exceptional domain expertise as well as regional insights that will enable us to create and implement innovative strategies that will further elevate and enhance the positioning of the brand, steering us into the next phase of our growth and success."

In her role, Anjali will provide strategic counsel to the company's senior executive leadership team and be responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive and integrated Marketing and Communication roadmap and an ongoing strategy to strengthen the positioning of The Leela brand as an embodiment of true Indian luxury.

Stricter measures for tourist entry in Himachal Pradesh

The Himachal Pradesh Government has taken stringent steps to check entry of tourists by asking for address proof, place of arrival and destination. Reason behind such border checks are the false reasons given by people and wrong COVID-19 medical reports /documents submitted by them. Also, people have entered the state discreetly through forests.

According to reports, after the government of Himachal Pradesh relaxed its inter-state movement laws, about 1.10 lakh people have arrived into the state and about a lakh more are waiting to enter the state after registering. There is also news about surge in COVID-19 cases after relaxation of norms which has forced the state government to reconsider their decision.

Hotel Association of India pledges support to revive J&K Tourism



Hotel Association of India (HAI), the apex body of the hotel industry in India and an integrated hospitality industry platform has expressed steadfast support to the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the revival of tourism. Speaking at the recently concluded India Global Week, KB Kachru, Vice President, Hotel Association of India and Chairman Emeritus and Principal Advisor South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group called on investors to consider J&K for their new ventures citing quick developments and assuring good returns based on promising infrastructure and tools in the Union Territory.

Focusing on Tourism in these unsettling and unpredictable times, Hotel Association of India Vice President KB Kachru said, "Tourism is a real springboard for giving a major thrust to the overall economy particularly in J&K. There is a need to think of some quick wins for survival and revival. Fact remains that J&K and Tourism are inseparable. It has established & known multiple destinations for leisure, adventure and religious places. Hospitality is in Kashmiri blood; Kashmir has the capability of becoming a challenge to established world known destinations in the world. As Prime Minister Modi said in his inaugural address, we need to kill the existing anxiety and use this adversity as an opportunity."

HAI member hotels such as Radisson Group, Taj Hotels, ITC, The LaLiT, Lemon Tree et al have already moved into Jammu & Kashmir and committed themselves to the growth of the sector in the region.

Calling for support from the Central and State Government, Kachru said, "Given that investment friendly policies are being set, key players need to have a steady hand on the wheel. Infrastructure development is the need. We need to identify new destinations and create easy accessibility. Moreover, the Government needs to continue to listen and handhold stakeholders at this time of crisis starting with those operating businesses, hotels, houseboats, and transporters. The government must take care of the workforce. In the long run, policy reforms will be needed."

Kachru, on behalf the Hotel Association of India made some sharp suggestions to attract investments and for the revival of the sector including: Long-term Tourism development plan; Declare Tourism as an industry and accord all infrastructure benefits; Creating Tourism Zones, clusters and new destinations with incentives; Recognise and support existing stakeholders; Special incentives and approvals.

Leisure Hotels Group announces the opening of all hotels and resorts across all states

The resort chain with the largest number of boutique Hotels, Resorts and Bungalows in the lap of nature in Uttarakhand including in Nainital, Corbett National Park, Ramgarh, Kausani, Rishikesh, Haridwar among others and in Dharamsala and Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh has announced Special Worry-Free Staycation for 5,7,15 and 30 consecutive days.

These special stays also offer flexi modification and with free cancellation policies allowing a one-time change with no charges if a cancellation is made upto 48 hours (2 Days) before the date of arrival. The packages are in line with Uttarakhand Government Guidelines for guests who hold a mandatory COVID-19 negative test result or seven days' hotel confinement or COVID e-pass.

Along with the basics such as Contactless check-ins and check-outs, thermal screenings, offering intuitive dining experiences, altered arrangements at lobbies, restaurants, banquet halls etc., as part of their #LeisureCares Program the hospitality group has put in place exhaustive sanitisation and hygiene protocols for their guests to feel safe and comfortable at each and every one of their twenty seven properties.

Inclusive of the Staycation package, valid from July 15 through September 30, for a minimum of 3 nights with flexi amendment and cancellation policies, Leisure Hotels Group will extend basic services including sumptuous meals, welcome refreshment on arrival, tea/coffee maker in the room, fruit baskets and cookies on arrival, complimentary and hi speed wi-fi etc.

APTDC set to reopen Vishakhapatnam for tourism from August 1



APTDC is gearing up for a cautious restart with tourist activities set to resume in Visakhapatnam district from August 1. However, all APTDC hotels and restaurants have been opened to the public following instructions from the Central government from June 8. After, Tourism Minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao's fresh announcement, officials are now chalking out plans to ensure stringent social distancing at all tourist places in the district. SOP issued by the government is already being implemented at the hotels and restaurants. While wearing a face mask will be mandatory, sanitisers, disposable gloves, temperature checks, cashless transactions at the tourist spots are thought of.

All tourist places under APTDC, including Borra Caves, parks, and waterfalls, will be opened along with all beaches including Rushikonda. Apart from the tourist destinations that come under APTDC, other tourist attractions like Kailasagiri, Visakha Museum, Thotlakonda, VMRDA Central Park, Tenneti Park and others, which are under the purview of VMRDA. They will reopen after receiving guidelines from the State Government.

ITDC signs MOU with AIIMS New Delhi to strengthen health protocol

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector undertaking (PSU), under the aegis of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has signed an MOU with AIIMS, New Delhi to come together and monitor the situation to prevent COVID-19 infection and implement preventive measures that can be taken up by ITDC across its hotels and offices to provide a safe, hygienic and healthy environment to guests and staff.

To take this forward an advisory board will be formed consisting of representatives from AIIMS, ITDC and/or representative from any other organisation to provide inputs on designing and developing the safety Protocols with respect to COVID-19 infection, based on existing and ongoing situation as well as on real time basis. This would help in instilling trust and confidence in domestic tourism and also help in image building of the nation for international tourists and travellers.

These measures are in addition to following guidelines issued by Govt of India as well as extensive training provided to more than 1000 employees of hotel in areas of Front Office, Guest Relation, House Keeping, F&B etc. to effectively handle the situation.

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