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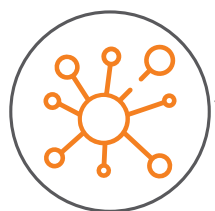
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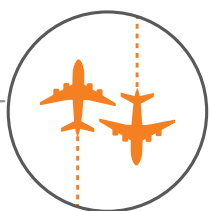
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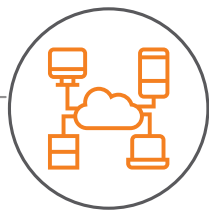
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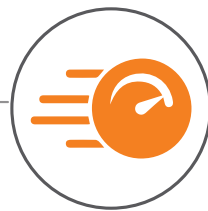
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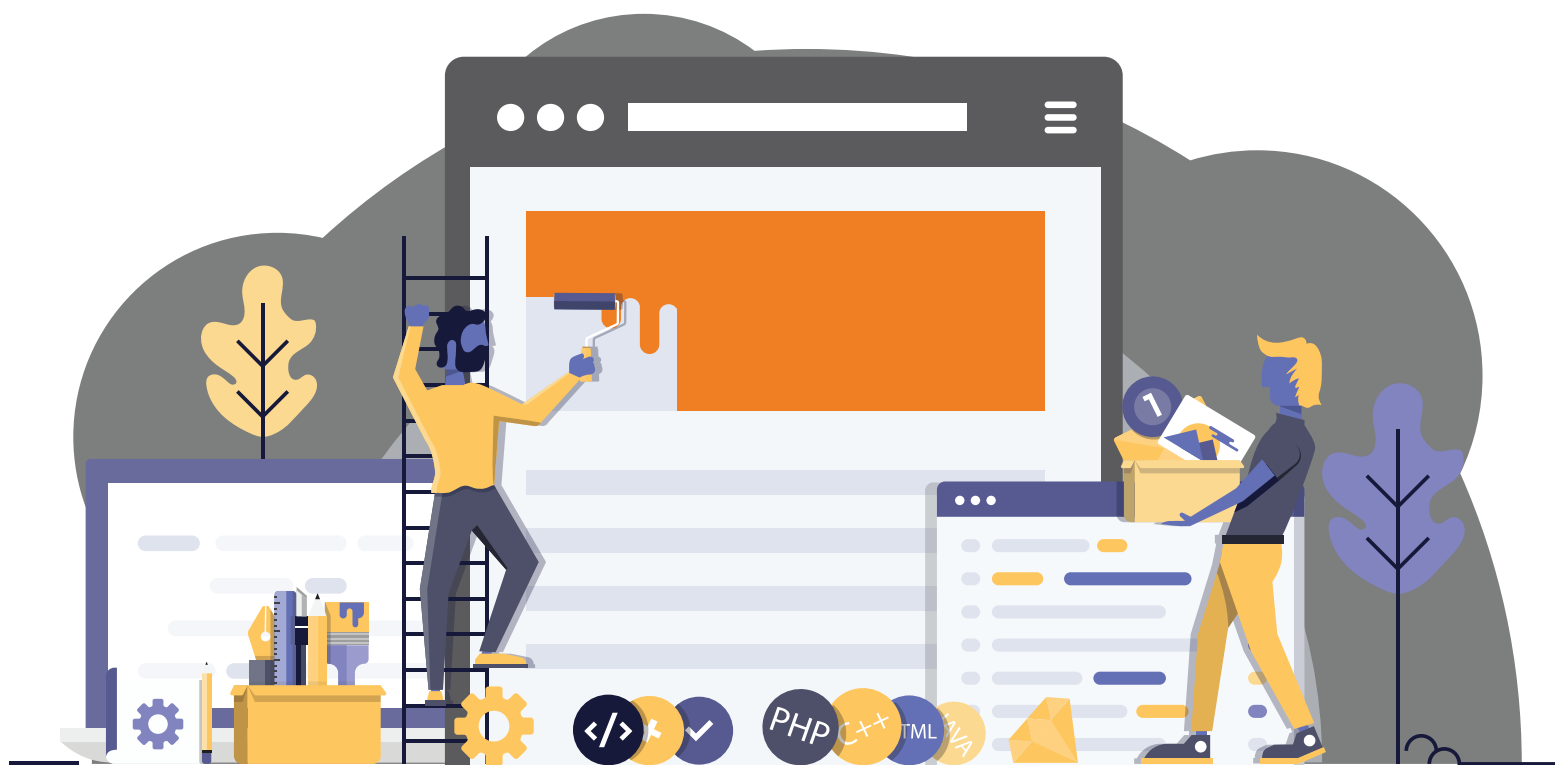
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Dear Friends,

In this COVID era, there are new trends emerging for how we will travel, with safety, privacy and seclusion all together on top of the 'want list'. Hotels teaming with guests and beaches filled with sun-seekers are likely to be things of the past (for a while, at least). Instead, destinations that offer seclusion and peace and quiet will be among the most desirable.

The pandemic has made travellers hyper-aware of safety measures. Health and safety precautions are now a more significant factor in where consumers choose to stay than price, and that heavily influences the type of destinations they are willing to travel to. The long-term impact on the way we travel remains uncertain to some degree, but travel perceptions from researchers and tourism stakeholders are providing new clues into how consumer comfort levels and priorities are changing.

Besides the regular features, the TTJ October issue is about 'Unmasking the new COVID-19 Travel Trends' wherein our travel and hospitality industry sheds light on how consumer behaviour in the region has shifted, and what operators need to do in response.

As an industry, we should follow the trends and embrace these changes. Our destinations and our communities will be more resilient to future challenges if we do.

Happy Reading!

Warm Regards

Ravi Sharma

Ravi Sharma

ravisharma@sampanmedia.com

Editor's Desk

Honeymoon Travel

- Beautiful Greece (8 Nights)
Greece | Athens | Mykonos | Santorini
- Exquisite Italy (9 Nights)
Rome | Naples | Amalfi Coast | Florence | Paris | Venice
- Idyllic Maldives (4 Nights)
Maldives

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- Astounding Dubai (5 Nights)
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- Singapore with Sentosa Island (4 Nights)
Singapore | Sentosa Island

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Atlantis, The Palm to offer guests credit to cover cost of departure PCR tests



Atlantis, The Palm will be offering all its global guests who stay five nights or more the opportunity to claim back the cost of their respective countries' departure PCR test from now until April 30, 2021.

With many travellers still required to conduct a PCR test before arriving into the UAE, Atlantis, The Palm is giving back the full cost of the tests for two guests per room staying five nights or more to spend as in-resort credit. This means that for a PCR test that costs up to US\$190 (AED 700) each, two guests will receive the full amount of the test back to spend on anything in-resort including food and beverage, spa or marine and waterpark experiences.

Virgin Atlantic launches flying from India to Manchester



Virgin Atlantic will be launching services from Delhi and Mumbai to Manchester as the airline ramps up flying from its home in the north of England. Flying three times a week from Mumbai to Manchester beginning in December and twice weekly from Delhi starting in January, these new services will go on sale on 20th October and will complement the airline's existing services from Mumbai and Delhi to London Heathrow.

With over 16 million Indians living outside of the country and 500,000 living across the north of England, India has the world's largest diaspora. These new services will open up over 130,000 seats between India and Manchester and aim to respond to the large, fast-growing demand to visit friends and relatives as well as capturing demand for business and leisure travel to the region as global economies gradually recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well as flying customers, Virgin Atlantic will offer a fast, efficient cargo service presenting new opportunities for companies looking to export and import goods such as fresh produce, pharmaceuticals and textiles between prime markets in the UK, US and India.

PATA announces new Chair and Executive Board

The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has announced the ratification of the new PATA Executive Board. Soon-Hwa Wong has been formally



endorsed as the Chair of the Association's Executive Board and replaces Dr. Chris Bottrill.

On his appointment, Soon-Hwa said, "It is indeed an honour to be given the privilege to serve PATA members, especially in a time like this. PATA will celebrate a significant milestone, our 70th Anniversary, next year. We are embarking on a comprehensive organisation redesign that will transform PATA into an association that will lead the tourism industry into the post-COVID future and beyond. Together with our industry partners from both the public and private sector, we will commit to sustainable tourism development to benefit the economic well-being of the community at large. Come join us in our journey to build a safer and better world."

Hai Ho was elected as the new Vice Chairman. He said, "Being one of the youngest elected Vice Chair at an important organisation with a deep history like PATA is the biggest honour I have ever received. I take on this role to contribute my part to both PATA and the global sustainable travel movement which is growing with strength and resilience around the world. I am mindful that we are still living in a COVID-19 world where our fellow tour guides, travel agents, hoteliers, etc. are fighting against all odds to keep travellers safe and sound."

"It is a great honor to have been elected as the new Secretary/Treasurer. My focus will be both on the synergetic management and continual development of the travel industry. In taking on this role, I commit to work together with the executive team, management team and all our members for the responsible growth of PATA and the whole tourism communities," Suman Pandey said on being elected as the Secretary/Treasurer.



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Kerala opens all tourism spots, except beaches



Kerala has opened its tourism destinations, barring beaches, for visitors by strictly adhering to COVID-19 protocol, signaling the revival of the revenue-generating industry that remained shut for the last seven months following the outbreak of the pandemic.

As per the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) issued by the Government in this regard, the visitors will have to follow Break the Chain norms including wearing masks, use of soap and sanitizer and social distancing.

The destinations and services that have resumed receiving guests include houseboats on backwaters, personalised boating and adventure tourism spots, which normally have controlled access where it is easy to implement the SMS (social distancing, mask and soap sanitizer) norm. Hill stations will also be made accessible to tourists, ensuring that there is no overcrowding. Destinations that have un-controlled access like beaches will be opened from November 1, where also the SOPs will be implemented strictly.

The domestic tourists planning short visits of less than seven days are exempted from quarantine but they should register at the COVID Jagratha portal. If tourists plan to extend their stay for more than seven days, they have to undergo a test at their cost on the 7th day at ICMR/ state government approved laboratories. Visitors are advised to avoid travel if they are symptomatic.

Itanagar airport likely to be constructed by November 2022

Considering the importance of air connectivity to the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh, AAI has undertaken the work of constructing a Greenfield Airport at Hollongi, 15 km from Itanagar. With an estimated cost of ₹650 crores the project includes the development work i.e. construction of airport pavements, airside work, terminal Building and city side works.

With an area of 4100 sqm, the new domestic terminal building of the Hollongi Airport will be able to handle 200 passengers during peak hours. Equipped with eight check-in counters, the terminal building will have all modern passenger facilities. The terminal will be an energy-efficient building provisioned with a Rain Water Harvesting system and sustainable landscape. The development work also includes the construction of ATC Tower cum Technical Block, Fire station, Medical Centre and other ancillary works.

At present, Soil testing and field survey works are completed and site clearing work is in progress. Substructure works have already been completed and superstructure fabrication is under progress.

World Dream, first cruise ship to restart service in Singapore



Genting Cruise Lines has announced that Dream Cruises will be the first cruise brand to restart service in Singapore with World Dream, as she makes her homeport debut from November 6, 2020, onwards. World Dream will also be the newest built cruise ship to homeport in Singapore, offering a series of brand new 2 and 3-night 'Super Seacation' experience for Singapore residents during the school and year-end holidays.

Working very closely with the Singapore government, Dream

Cruises was granted approval by the local authorities to start a pilot based on the company's stringent and enhanced health and safety protocols, complemented by its exemplary safety track record during its first two months of operations in Taiwan.

Evoking the sense of a 'vacation away' that travellers can't get with a traditional staycation in a hotel, Dream Cruises' 'Super Seacation' encompasses both a 2 and 3-Night cruises on the open seas. During these journeys, guests will have ample opportunity to explore all that World Dream has to offer, a cruise ship that is currently ranked 9th in the 'Large Resort Ship' category by the world renowned Berlitz Cruising and Cruise Ships 2020 Guide, commonly referred to as the 'bible' of the cruise industry. Guests will have the opportunity to experience the finest Asian and international dining, spacious comfort, exceptional service, enthralling entertainment and inspirational experiences that will bring favourite tourist destinations on board World Dream.

To further ensure the health and safety of our guests, a mandatory COVID-19 test will be conducted on all guests aged 13 and above before embarking on World Dream and all guests aged seven or above are also required to present their personal TraceTogether Token or registered TraceTogether App at the time of check-in.

Big blow to the travel sector as government redirects LTC funds to consumer goods

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made a slew of announcements very recently to stimulate consumer spending and capital expenditure. They included a special LTC cash voucher, a special festival advance scheme, and interest-free loans to states for capital expenditure. However, the travel fraternity is not impressed with the LTC announcement as this move will act as a deterrent for the tourism sector which was pinning its hope on the revival of business during the festival season when people look to travel to their home states.

Team TTJ

Sitharaman said that the LTC funds could be used to spend on goods and items in 12 per cent GST category i.e. the government would give cash to employees in lieu of the LTC ticket fare component for buying items attracting 12 per cent or more GST. LTC stands for leave travel concession. The announcement has come as an employee is not in a position to travel anywhere in India to avail the benefit of LTC/LTA in the current block of 2018-2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The tourism sector has termed Finance Minister's cash-for-LTC announcement a 'major blow' to the sector. The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality, the policy federation of all the national associations representing the complete tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India (ADTOI, ATOAI, FHRAI, HAI, IATO, ICPB, IHHA, ITTA, TAAI, TAFI) expressed disappointment for the Indian Travel and Tourism Industry that LTC funds of government employees are being redirected to buy consumer goods.

After almost eight months of nil to limited tourism activity, the festival season was expected to be one of the few demand drivers when people look to travel to their home state. The industry was hoping for more tax-based stimulus in the hands of all citizens to travel when spent against GST-rated travel agents, hotel tour operators, tourist transporters and restaurants. Redirecting the LTC money of government employees to buy consumer goods will dry up those funds for the travel sector.

Since this is a 4-year block scheme, it will also cut away funds for future travel demand source for the next year when the LTC block ends in 2021. This thus goes against the spirit of domestic

tourism push and the year 2021 as domestic tourism year being planned by the tourism ministry.

Additionally, the way states are being extended tax-free funds payable over 50 years, the tourism industry which is the most stressed currently and also the most employee intensive be given similar tax-free funds on a direct benefit transfer for salaries and operating costs payable over 10 years post COVID.

Expressing their disappointment, the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), said, "The LTC announcement will send a vote of no confidence to the tourism travel and hospitality industry which was looking to get back on its feet after 'Unlock'. It is requested that not only the LTC funds be restored but also an income tax benefit be introduced for all citizens to get income tax exemption while travelling within India up to Rs 1.5 lakhs against GST registered travel agents, hotels tour operators, tourist transporters and restaurants."

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, said, "The government's move is contrary to our suggestions where we demanded that LTAs be used to incentivise travel. But the government's announcement will discourage travel as even those who have savings would like to en-cash their LTAs. The Tourism industry instead of being bailed out is now deprived of the LTC fund. Our Industry is dying and our employees are losing jobs in every avenue but our own Prime Minister has forgotten our existence, the backbone of India. This LTC funds should have



been utilised in the 'Dekho Apna Desh' by which the Prime Minister Vision would have been achieved. While many countries are getting second bailouts, we are yet to get our first one."

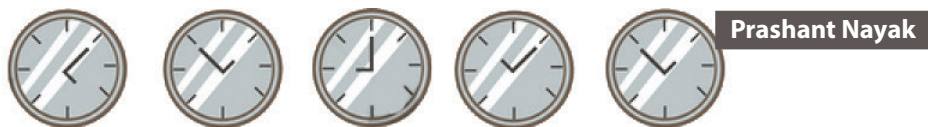
"LTC scheme should be utilised only for travel and should not be used for other consumables," said Pradip Lulla, President, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI)

Rajesh Arya, Vice President, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) said, "In the absence of a bailout package, scores of tour operators have been forced to close their operations. The present crisis is unprecedented in the history of travel, which has impacted the sentiments of people to travel. We were expecting some positive steps from the government to support the industry. However, we are once again disappointed."

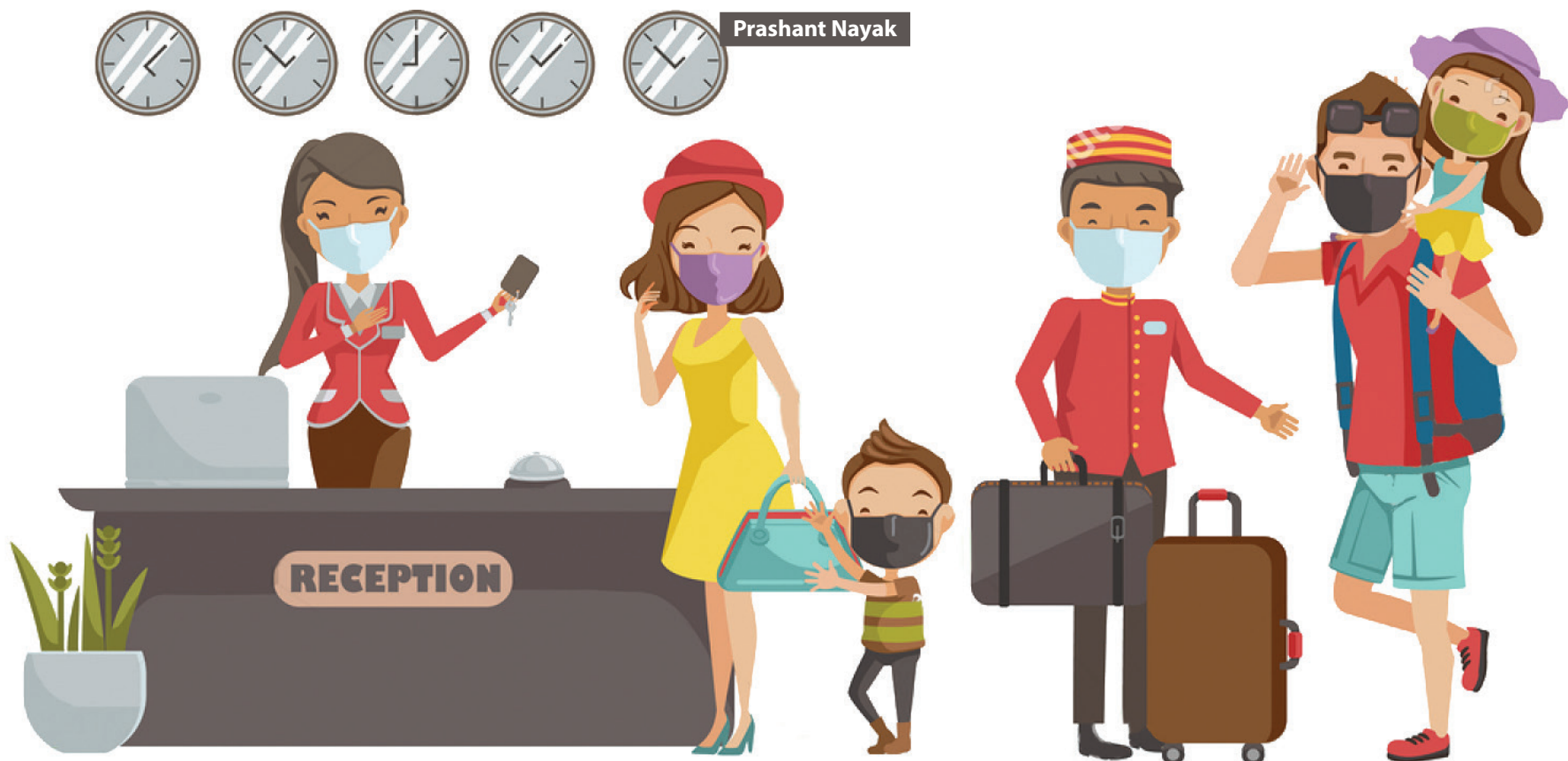
Staying tuned to the trends of the new normal

In many countries, COVID-19 lockdowns are gradually diminishing, and for the start, domestic travel is tentatively restarting. As the year 2021 approaches, tourism stakeholders and travellers are planning for the year ahead—and beyond. New patterns and travel trends are developing for which everyone has to be ready in the post COVID world. We at TTJ, look at what travel industry players have to say about current booking trends, new emerging trends, developments such as revenge travel, and if at all COVID -19 has any silver linings which can change the bitter effects of tourism.

It was interesting to note these responses from the below industry stalwarts.



Prashant Nayak



Mahendra Vakharia

Director,
Pathfinders Holidays

As expected, local and regional tourism has started and we are seeing bookings from clients for short breaks of 3-4 days to Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Mt. Abu since August. This will be the trend for the next couple of months and with more relaxation

coming through lockdown 5.0 and more domestic flights operating in destinations such as Himachal, Uttarakhand, Goa and Kerala, the speed will also pick up. As far as the International sector is concerned, we are seeing enquiries and interest from clients wanting to visit the Maldives as it is one of the top leisure destinations that has opened up for Indian travellers. With more countries being included in the

air bubble agreement such as Kenya, Japan, etc, we are expecting enquiries for holiday travel to these countries to start as well.

People are willing to travel and ready to travel surely. Whether you call it 'Revenge Tourism' or 'Regular Tourism', once the international flights are permitted to fly in and out from India, travel will start for sure. The new evolving travel trend is where the traveller is very keen to visit a less crowded place, stay at small boutique properties with a lesser inventory of rooms and employees, visit a place surrounded by nature, wildlife, etc. So we are constantly updating such data at our end and keeping it ready to offer to our clients.

One thing about COVID-19 is everyone including the traveller has become more mindful and aware of the necessity of SMS (Social distancing, Mask and Sanitisation.) This will help travellers opting to visit lesser-known but equally very beautiful destinations for holiday and indirectly helping over-tourism in popular destinations. It will bring many boutique small hotels at the forefront of choice of stay (of course, the ones following strict hygiene protocols) and traveller will prefer to stay at one place for a longer duration and enjoy the destination much more.



Sabina Chopra
Co-Founder and COO,
Corporate Travel & Head Industry Relations, Yatra.com

In the unlock phase, many travel trends have gained popularity as customers slowly shift from essential to leisure travel. A few trends that are gaining momentum are demand for hospitality options closer to home, less crowded destinations,

Alibagh, Coorg, Auroville, are picking up in demand. These locations offer a serene break from the otherwise hectic life as individuals want to venture out to break their monotonous lifestyle.

There has been a pent-up demand created for travel during the lockdown. As we move into the 'new normal', travellers are looking at ways to relax and rejuvenate themselves, while giving utmost importance to safety and hygiene at any particular destination. The trend of 'revenge tourism' is expected to pick up in demand as people move out of their houses after months of isolation. Several destinations such as Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, etc have already opened their borders for tourists and witnessed an increase in booking enquires. This desire to 'take a break' will spike in India, as people step out from the comfort of their homes.

We are amidst a global pandemic, where new trends, technologies and concepts have caused a major shift in the industry. It is important to pick-up on these evolving trends and responds to consumer expectations. In this new era of tourism, health and hygiene will indeed play a critical role.

wellness retreats, offbeat or experiential trips, solo adventure trips, among others. While professionals are working from home, they are opting for beautiful locales for workcations or staycations. Destinations such as Dharamshala, Bir, Goa, Darjeeling, Udaipur, Lonavala,



Manoj Saraf
MD, Gainwell Travels

The current booking trend is showing marginal improvement since July and August. However, it will still take a long time before a full recovery can be seen. September has shown an improvement in bookings ahead of the festive season.

with the term Revenge Tourism. The recovery for travel, tourism and hospitality is going to be very gradual. It may take another 2-3 years before we can achieve the pre COVID-19 level of business seen by us. The emerging trends in the travel industry which are here to stay include technological up-gradation and automation, more online bookings, and more emphasis on safety & hygiene. There will also be a massive cost reduction on account of manpower, rent, interest, etc. We at Gainwell, have adopted many such practices in order to survive this massive crisis.

We were definitely experiencing over-tourism in terms of the massive crowds at the airports, flights, hotels, monuments, amusement parks, and sightseeing attractions. In a certain way, it is a blessing in disguise that these numbers will come down post-COVID, leading to an overall improvement in the environment. I think the right balance will be struck between over-tourism and sustainability.

I do not agree



Rajeev Kale
President & Country Head – Holidays, MICE, Visa, Thomas
Cook (India)

Our 'Holiday Readiness Travel Report - Future of Travel post COVID-19', revealed to us that a domestic holiday was the first choice of 64 per cent of respondents. 36

per cent of respondents showed a preference for an international holiday. Short-haul destinations saw strong interest (41 per cent) and with the reopening of India's borders, closer to home international getaways are now possible with two delightful destinations, Dubai and Maldives welcoming Indian tourists. We have witnessed bookings from around the country, with a healthy pipeline of enquiries.

Given the pent-up demand for travel, we have witnessed encouraging demand and we are seeing a healthy increase in both queries and bookings. We are seeing growing demand for bookings

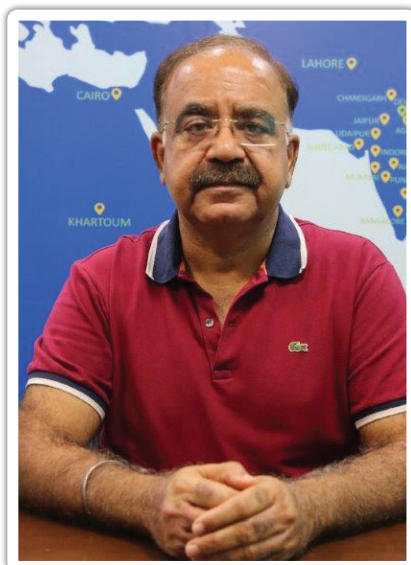
that are at short notice - between 5-10 days among those planning a holiday. With the combined burden of official/business work and home-work/chores, India's travellers especially the young working professionals and millennials are increasingly seeking to break away from the routine and avail of a quick break that does not require much planning and offers an opportunity to rest, relax and rejuvenate. Workations, Staycations, renewed interest in domestic travel, preference for outdoor/adventure activities – away from the crowds are some of the popular travel trends that have emerged in light of the current situation.

The downtime has given us time to re-imagine and re-engineer every business and process through integration and the enhanced use of technology. Besides, it has also given us the time to upskill our teams through engaging webinars conducted by experts from destinations, hotels, airlines and key partners.

Given that the customer's number #1 priority is health and safety,

there have been significant changes to build consumer confidence in travel. There is a significant opportunity for domestic tourism to take centre stage and give a boost to the economy. Recent initiatives undertaken by the Ministry such as the 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign have also helped promote domestic tourism – including the lesser-known destinations.

India's lockdown and restrictions also led to many honeymoon plans being postponed or smaller wedding functions. The highly reduced expenses, however, allow couples to indulge in exclusive honeymoon travel experiences in India and abroad and also avail of the best rates at Dubai's Atlantis, The Palm, or at Maldives' luxury and super-luxury resorts. We are also witnessing the rise of the sensitive traveller, who respects his eco-system and seeks deeper enriching travel experiences. Trends such as slow travel-allowing one to experience a destination at a leisurely pace while appreciating the local heritage are becoming the new norm.



Deepak Narula
Managing Director, GRNconnect.com

The booking numbers are certainly improving each day, though we still have a long way to go to achieve pre-COVID levels, I feel we should be able to achieve those numbers within the next six months. Given that, I also believe that there is going to be revenge tourism as people are desperate to travel and

tourism is going to see a boom never seen before.

The biggest change presently is that people are undertaking short-haul trips and that too mostly domestic due to flight restrictions or due to safety issues. Looking at this trend, we reworked our strategy and appointed exclusive partners in different countries and now a lot of European agents are buying European destinations from us, and similarly, agents in the US are buying destinations in the US from us.

We were certainly preoccupied with issues like over-tourism and sustainability during pre-COVID days that hampered tourism, but there is no silver lining as COVID has brought in more dark clouds. The entire industry is going through its worst crisis ever.



Vivek Pandey
President, TTAUP and Associate Director, Ebix Travels

The new booking trend witnessed is the short-haul domestic road travel (within 800 km from the base station) with an average length of stay between 3 to 5 days, preferably at one place or maximum at two places split stay to minimize a repeated check-in / check-out.

Boutique or small luxury hotel or independent villa stays are in demand. Interest in nature holidays, village tourism, pilgrimage and religious tourism, bird watching tourism, community-based tourism is also observed. Last but not least all travellers are now specifically concerned to ensure about COVID-19 safety and regulation protocols while selecting any destination or stay option. Charter plane requirements are also in demand now. From October 2020, queries regarding Goa, Dubai, Maldives, Mauritius, and Singapore are also observed for November and

December 2020 travelling.

In light of COVID-19, many people had to cancel travel plans as far as revenge tourism phase one is concerned. Travellers are opting for short-haul trips and this may lead to the second wave of 'revenge travel' but in my personal opinion, the bounce back purely depends upon the new way of people travelling, and how hotels, airlines, etc. are prepared to welcome Leisure & MICE travellers. Thus, revenge tourism as of now may be treated as a ray of hope for the industry but will not provide support for revenue associated bounce back.

We also need to target a new segment of Generation Z travellers who are more racially and ethnically diverse than the previous generation, and they are on track to be the most well-educated generation yet. Online booking through third-party OTAs will be now avoided by all travellers especially by those who had faced a no revert or unsatisfactory clarification.

Lack of updates and blocked refund trauma during cancellation of trips due to COVID-19 of travellers may be an opportunity for offline travel agents and direct online booking sources as a business growth antidote for post COVID-19 era.



Sejo Jose
Director, Marvel Tours

The current booking trends are positive, though cannot be compared to the trends pre-COVID times. The only way more positive trends might follow if the government acts on the below two points:-

Indians should be allowed to travel freely within India, thus

encouraging domestic tourism and giving hope to the millions of people depending on tourism. Secondly, the government should announce a date in advance, even if it is in Dec 2020 or Jan 2021 to open international borders, thus helping the FTO to start promoting India from that date. Though, I am not stating we will reach pre-COVID days but we will start rolling the trend on a more positive note.

Revenge Tourism is done by the vivid experimental traveller and they in

turn start posting photos of their trip on social media. This will give a very positive image for India and its states. This will definitely help and has the potential to boost tourism initially.

The new trends and strategy in tourism due to the pandemic is that we are creating equal opportunity for old and new operators as Tourism is going to start fresh. At Marvel Tours, we are planning an online system which is meant for B2B (as I see, many new operators opening new shops) which will help these operators to get all data required so they do not have to do the full exercise again of contracting, etc.

During this period of lockdown, Mother Nature rebooted to an extent that it has reduced pollution level and the environment looks refreshed. The silver lining from the pandemic is we have to learn to maintain less pollution and reduce waste and implement it as a critical criterion for tourism infrastructures operated by hotels/tour operators and all in the industry. The government should be stricter on factories and all individuals to ensure keep our nature clean. This will help tourists and more important locals to live healthily and avoid these pandemics again.



PP Khanna
President, ADTOI

The ADTOI Managing Committee's initiative is to bring confidence among the public to travel and to get a feel of that confidence, we have undertaken trips to nearby places in Rajasthan from Jaipur to experience the SOP followed by hotels and at the heritage sites. We wanted to see whether

they are adhering to the guidelines of WHO, ICMR, and State authorities. We were happy to see the places were kept as per the guidelines and one can safely visit these places. A similar exercise was undertaken by the ADTOI Gujarat Chapter for tour operators where they were showcased tourist places and guidelines drawn by concerned authorities.

Travelling mainly depends on the restrictions imposed by State Governments which varies from state to state and some states are openly welcoming the tourists to their destinations. Also, people have started coming out of their homes to visit nearby places on weekends/festivities.

As an association, we are all thinking positively about the concept of

'Revenge Tourism' which could generate some form of business for our trade partners. However, it has to be seen how far this can be practical. Air and rail traffic has not attained its full potential as before and as per affordability, the majority of travellers are undertaking rail/road journeys to travel. How many will venture out for trips with family or at least some individuals within a family has to be seen to be believed. Children are deprived of their schooling which is the first and foremost concern of every parent before they can think of travelling. However, confidence-building will play a vital role in deciding Revenge Tourism. It may or may not happen and we all have to wait and watch. The flattening of curve and availability of early vaccines for COVID are the only aspects to bring positivity to the tourism industry.

One of the new travel trends is people venturing on cycling trips. Also, with one's own transport, people are driving to nearby places and spending nights for a change. People have now learnt the importance of Sustainable and Responsible tourism and they will try to get close to nature as many times as possible as a way of spending vacation/holidays in the future. COVID-19 has brought some awareness to people as to how to live hygienically in such a crisis. Cleanliness and Hygiene are indeed playing a major role in everybody's life. Masks, washing hands, social distancing, etc, are here to stay and people will be cautious in their endeavours to be healthy by adopting SOPs taught during the lockdown period.



BA Rahim
Founder, One Above

As a global DMC operating in international locations, I can share outbound trends. As the country is still locked for leisure travel, it is good to know that so far two

destinations have restarted for the India market, ie. Dubai and Maldives and I would say the Maldives has been doing interestingly well. For Dubai, business travel has started and leisure is slowly restarting. I am not sure about revenge travel, but it is seen that not all destinations are going to start at once given the current situation in our country. Countries are going to gradually start one by one, and when they open up for the India market, there is going to be a rush to explore or re-explore the destination.



Dubai keen to accelerate tourism momentum and position itself as a safe global destination

Dubai Tourism's Department of Tourism Commerce Marketing (DTCM), recently held a two-day virtual FAM for the Indian travel media which showcased some of its tourism pillars along with the unique experiences offered by the stakeholders. The main purpose was to highlight major attractions and give a brief about the safety and hygiene measures and preparedness taken up by the Emirate. Dubai had opened the destination in July and the authorities are very cautious that the safety and hygiene protocols are being followed effectively across the city, in its hotels, attractions, dining outlets, etc.

Prashant Nayak

Present at the two-day virtual FAM were representatives of DTCM from Dubai and India, IMG Worlds of Adventure, Atlantis - The Palm, Meraas Entertainment, Emaar Hospitality Group and Emaar Entertainment. While each of them presented the safety and security measures in the COVID era for the tourists planning to visit Dubai, most were supported by video footage of the attractions which added new dimensions to the knowledge experience.

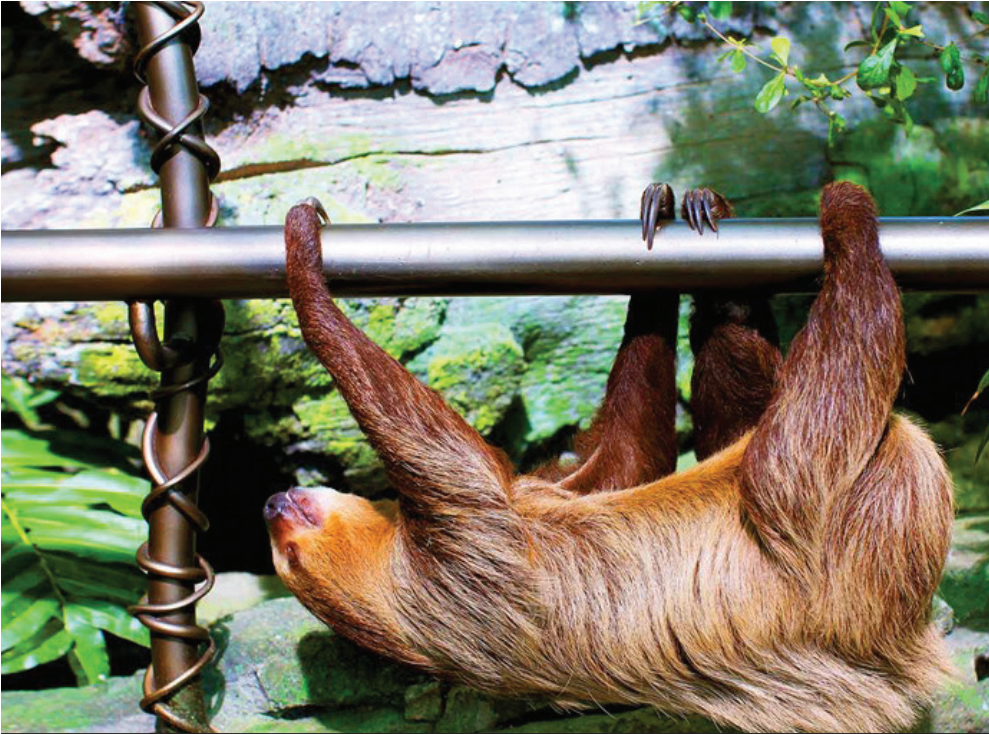
IMG Worlds of Adventure

IMG Worlds of Adventure, the world's largest indoor theme park, wholly owned by the Ilyas and Mustafa Galadari Group (IMG) and managed by IMG Worlds has reopened to the public amid strict coronavirus safety measures in place. Srushti Hatwar, Sales Manager, Travel Trade, IMG Worlds of Adventure, gave a brief on how IMG has intensified the cleaning protocol, enforced many

extensive deep cleaning and sanitising procedures in the operations SOPs of the park service. Employees at IMG Worlds of Adventure also have to wear face masks and shields for added protection.



Forbidden Territory, IMG Worlds of Adventure



The Green Planet

marine habitats in the world, with over 65,000 marine animals in lagoons.

Meraas Entertainment

Hitendra Nagwani, Director- Sales, L&E Sales, Meraas Entertainment, briefed on the Laguna Waterpark which is located in Dubai's coolest beachfront destination of La Mer in between panoramic views of the ocean and Dubai's skyline. Their other attraction, The Green Planet is home to over 3,000 exotic plants and animals, where one can see the region's first Tamandua Ant Eater as well as Green Planet superstars, Liam and Lola, the resident sloths, often found wandering the depths of the forest floor. Comprehensive precautionary measures have been implemented in each of the attraction facilities to ensure a safe environment for visitors. Meraas Entertainment has many more attractions on their list. Presently, people over the age of 60, and children under 12, can now visit any of the outdoor stores at their destinations.

Atlantis-The Palm

Neil Shah and Linda Abdul Hay who represented Atlantis-The Palm, covered some new developments at Dubai's landmark hotel. The amazing property has completed a US\$100 million refurbishment programme that has updated the entire property and when guests come back to visit them, it will be to a refreshed Atlantis. The hotel is presently offering international guests who stay five nights or more in resort free COVID-19 PCR tests for all international bookings. Additionally, the all-encompassing resort has partnered with one of the emirate's leading hospitals in order to be able to conduct the tests from the comfort of their own hotel room. This means that guests can maximise their leisure time without the need to disrupt their vacation with a visit to a hospital or clinic. Among the new highlights out of the many at the property is the Aquaventure Waterpark, which is home to one of the largest open-air



Aquaventure Waterpark



Address Boulevard

Emaar Hospitality

Sharing more on the premium luxury Address Hotels + Resorts, the upscale lifestyle Vida Hotels and Resorts, and the contemporary midscale Rove Hotels was Chris Newman, Chief Operations Officer, Emaar Hospitality Group. He assured that their commitment to their guests' health and well-being remains their number one priority. More than ever, their focus is on delivering intuitive guest experiences and they work tirelessly to go above and beyond the international standards to guarantee a safe stay in any of their hotels. Chris also updated on the upcoming new hotel projects which is a part of their regional and international expansion plans.

Observation Decks

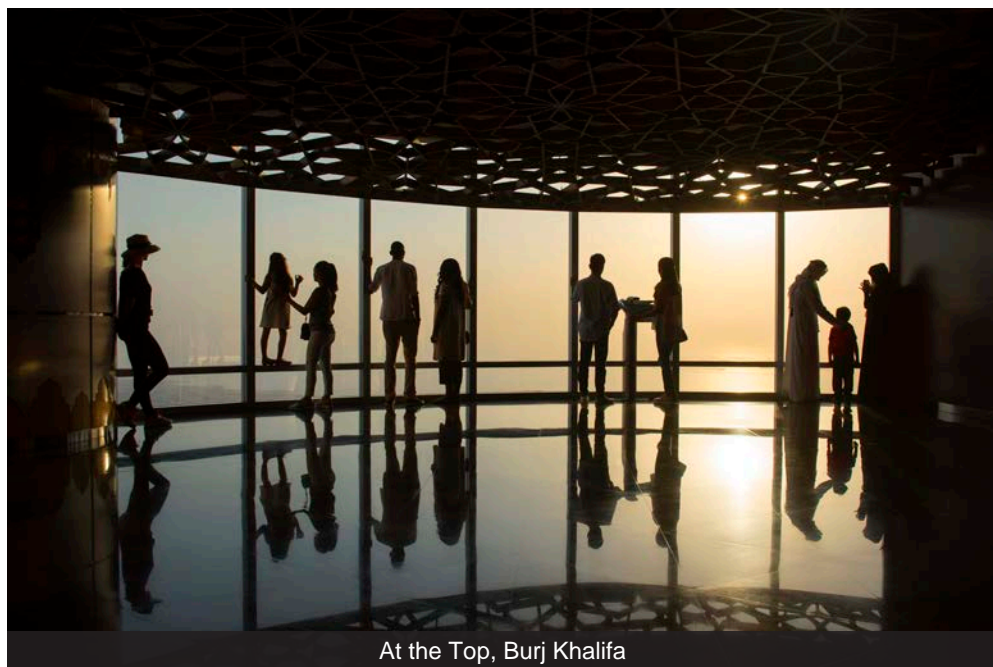
The Emaar Entertainment team gave a video tour of the Observation Decks at Burj Khalifa along with showcasing

acts at the Dubai Opera in the COVID times, the venue has more to offer like, stand-up comedian Nemr, Ronnie Scott's Giants of Jazz, award-winning

'Dubai Assured' - a certification given to local establishments for compliance with health and safety measures and protocols. The authorities have ensured that all tourism touchpoints comply with the health and safety guidelines. Thus, Dubai is fully prepared to handle its tourists with all the necessary protocols in place.

Bader Ali also shared how the combined efforts of Dubai Airports, Emirates Airlines, and flydubai along with UAE's tourism stakeholders and the effective management of the UAE authorities resulted in the early opening of the destination.

Talking about MICE, Bader Ali said, "While local events have started taking place in Dubai since September 15, and international events will start from October first week. We are ready for both MICE and FIT travel. We have issued circulars on clear safety protocols that must be adhered to by



At the Top, Burj Khalifa

the safety precaution at these places. The observatory decks, terraces and lounges at Burj Khalifa offer visitors the unprecedented opportunity to soak up unmatched views of the city and beyond. One can enjoy a guided tour to Level 148, 125, and 12 and enjoy a panoramic view of Dubai's breathtaking skyline.

Dubai Opera

Dubai Opera has the exceptional ability to transform into three modes: from a theatre into a concert hall and a 'flat floor' mode. This seamless flexibility has enabled Dubai Opera to host a wide variety of events including theatre, opera, ballet, concerts, gala dinners, weddings etc. While many artisans and performers have showcased their

comedian and actor Omid Djalili, and the Flamenco Passion show, scheduled for October and November 2020.

Talking more about Destination Dubai, Bader Ali Habib, Manager, Indian Subcontinent, International Operations, DTCM, shared about Dubai receiving the Safe Travels Stamp from World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), which reflects positivity and confidence for the destination.

According to Bader Ali, the UAE is the top 10 of the world's safest countries in terms of managing the pandemic and comes first in the region. They restarted early on July 7, and have since then been welcoming tourists back to Dubai. They also had a compliance programme in place called



Bader Ali Habib



Dubai Opera

event organisers and attendees, which include sanitisation, social distancing, mandatory face masks and isolation zones." He also mentioned that the 'The Expo', which was a highly anticipated enthralling event and a game-changer for Dubai has now been postponed to October 1, 2021, with new hopes.

"India has always been an important market for Dubai, as many Indian citizens reside here, and is almost a second home for many and India has always been one of Dubai's top source markets. Thus, DCTM is keen to welcome Indian travellers whenever they are ready," concludes, Bader Ali.

COVID-19 prevention measures receives global certification



RTA's safety measures heighten the confidence of public transport riders

Team TTJ

A reputed international entity in infection prevention and the management of associated risks, Norwegian DNV.GL on the World Tourism Day globally recognised the preventive measures taken by Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) to combat the outbreak of the COVID-19. The award follows a field survey and a comprehensive assessment undertaken by the company to examine RTA's health and preventive measures taken to protect public transport riders and service beneficiaries as well as employees. It cements the standing of Dubai as a safe global destination compliant with the advanced preventive measures of coping with the virus. The international acknowledgment culminates the Dubai Government's efforts to combat the pandemic and start the gradual return of trade and tourism in the Emirate.

His Excellency Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer, Director-General, Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of RTA, received the DNV.GL's Maturity Statement from the team of RTA's Strategy and Corporate Governance Sector. The event took place in the presence of His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri, Director-General of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism).

Best Practices

Al Tayer expressed his delight with the obtaining of the certificate from a reputed international specialist entity; which reflected the effectiveness of RTA's preventive measures since the outbreak of COVID-19 in various transit means and affiliated facilities.

"In implementation of the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President, Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and follow-up of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince, Chairman of the Executive Council, RTA adopted top global practices in coping with the virus. Our ultimate aim was



His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri and His Excellency Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer receiving the award

to nurture a safe and healthy environment for all," said Al Tayer.

"RTA measures were focused on three elements: protecting the health of all employees through the provision of a safe working environment, ensuring the safety of all facilities and transit means to ensure the continuity of services, and supporting the Dubai Government efforts in tackling the outbreak of COVID-19. For instance, during the National Disinfection Programme, RTA sanitised each metro train at the terminal station and sanitised the entire fleet of trains (79 trains) by the end of the working day. The 47 stations witnessed daily sanitisation as well," he noted.

"RTA managed to keep all services on the go, thanks to the migration to smart services provided through four digital channels and a website 24/7. Meanwhile, construction works continued in strategic projects as planned thanks to the implementation of a project management policy responsive to risks and challenges," added Al Tayer.

Beating the Virus

"Dubai has successfully survived the challenges of COVID-19 thanks to the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President, Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and the follow-up of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince, Chairman of the Executive Council. The achievement is also credited to the cooperation of various entities of the Dubai government. Dubai has now reopened for tourists and trading activities under specific preventive measures and is moving ahead towards full recovery," said HE Helal Almarri.

"Various public and private entities were

keen to implement preventive measures against COVID-19. This compliance boosted the confidence of global travellers and the public in Dubai as a safe, must visit destination," he continued.

Almarri commended RTA's preventive measures during the lockdown period which led to RTA obtaining the COVID-19 Preventive Measures Verification Certificate. "The achievement couldn't have come at a better time as it coincides with World Tourism Day. It enhances the readiness of Dubai to receive tourists from all destinations and ensures they're able to enjoy a memorable experience in a safe environment", he further added.

Logo Posters

"RTA will fix posters bearing the logo of the Infection Prevention of COVID-19 certificate on all mass transit means (metro, tram, buses, marine transport means) and their stations in addition to customers' happiness centres. RTA has fulfilled the Infection Risk Management Maturity Assessment along with other health and preventive measures needed for obtaining this certificate by the end of last August," said. Nada Jasim, Director of Safety, Risk, Regulation and Planning at Strategy and Corporate Governance Sector.

"This certificate will raise the security and satisfaction level of public transport riders. It will also enhance Dubai rallying to attract more visitors and tourists from all over the world shortly," she further noted.

It is noteworthy that the logo posters bear the confidence brand (My Care-Infection Prevention Trust Mark). It also has a QR Code enabling any person to download information about RTA's health and prevention measures taken to protect against COVID-19.

Where there is despair, there is hope too!

As India continues to face challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis, there is still potential for recovery in the travel and tourism sector and which can be possible, if harnessed in a diligent and effective way.

Prateek Hira



Prateek Hira

After being locked we entered the phase of unlocking and now we are fast moving towards the phase of being lockless. At work, there was a time when even plain enquiries had stopped, there were no e-mails at all to be answered but slowly all that seems to be changing. Having said that, I surely do not mean that we are inching towards normalcy in travel or that the business is returning in full flow but surely from hopelessness, we are now in the arena of hope and visibility of business is clearing up.

Essential business travel and domestic leisure travel is in sight for now. Long weekend outings in the periphery of 500 km are limping back and most of it is by road. Hotels and resorts are leaving no

stone unturned to attract tourists and low tariffs are a big attraction for many. This really is a good way to build confidence among the travellers, if not profitability in business.

Signs of revival are visible

The trends during Gandhi Jayanti's long weekend (2-4 October) were really encouraging and it brought back hope that people are now ready to travel for leisure after having spent six months of either government-imposed or self-imposed restrictions. The travel distance from home has reduced somewhat, which was very much expected too, at least in the initial phase of opening up. Self-driven road travel is up due to less confidence in other modes of transport

and understandably so, at least till the confidence is regained; train travel for leisure is on hold for now and this seems so because people are not ready to travel by rail, though this too with time will reverse and people will return to this mode of transport; destinations that promise nature retreats and open environs are much in high demand as compared to urban cluttered areas and it seems this will continue for some time till the disease is under control and the confidence to travel returns

It may be 'new normal', let's not make it look 'abnormal'

Another most important aspect is that most in the industry are now making the 'new normal' which in many cases

looks like an 'abnormal', as they use this term to highlight a 'sales pitch' or so-called 'USP', which unfortunately will only do more harm than any good to the destination as a whole. This might just create more confusion and fear in clients' minds, plus induce unwarranted negative competition within the industry, putting the entire destination at stake.

After all, we all care about our guests and do follow prescribed protocols for the safety of our guests and our people and this should always be projected collectively by India as being a safe destination, taking the entire industry in its gamut, to instill confidence among tourists, both domestic and international. Each property or each tour operator, highlighting its own safety (over-safety) protocols too loudly and making these their USP or a differentiator, will only put the destination's credibility at stake and would do more harm than any good.

Worry about unequaled travel demand

One fact that the industry should be worried about is the unequaled travel demand due to a dampened economy that has left little disposal incomes in the hands of people world-over and has somewhat lowered the sentiments, which in turn has tightened the purses of people. This fact for some time might adversely affect the travel demand. Analytically seeing, the adversity in the travel demand could be a multiple 'W' shaped rise and fall for quite some time, wherein, travel will see a sudden rise in certain periods and then a sudden dip, and this trend might last for another one year or so. Ideally, a slow rising slope consistently would have been better to turn around paused businesses quickly and making them economically viable, especially in the present scenario, when travel and hospitality companies are re-starting in phases and rehiring the furloughed staff to reposition themselves in the market.

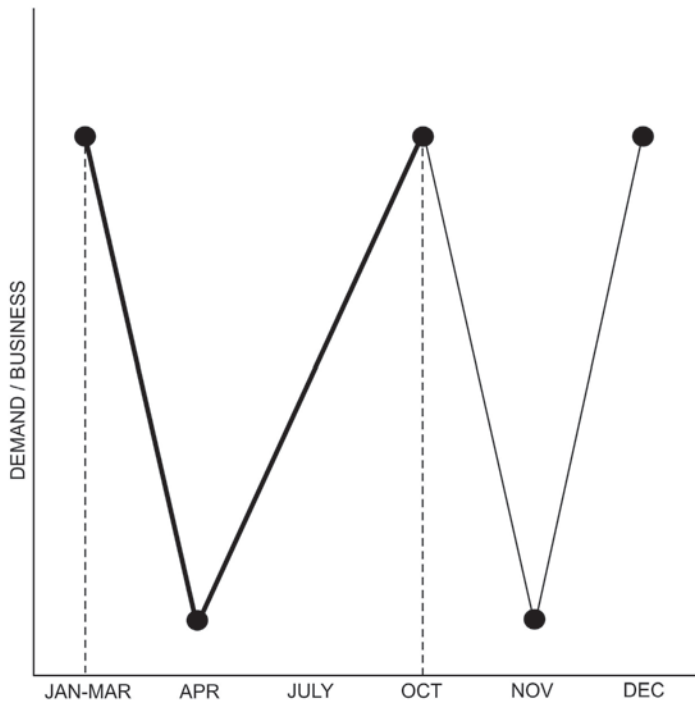


Image only for representation and explain 'W'

Overall, the trends have shown very encouraging sign probably for the first time this October and the industry really wishes, it continues unhampered and only improves further, to return to the levels where it had paused.

Revenge Tourism?

'Revenge Tourism' is an interesting term that exemplifies the surge in demand to travel. Anything that is restricted for long, generates a lot of curiosity and willingness, thereby it only pushes the demand upward.

People had been locked for long and probably for the first time in their lives in such a manner and that too globally. All this while they have been glued to the internet and books, flipping through innumerable destinations, making a long travel wish-list and understanding destinations deeper than they ever did, thus it is very natural that the level of curiosity has gone up. After all, technically, effective demand is when the desire is backed by a willingness and ability to pay. Desire to travel is at its peak and so is the willingness while the market price of products is much lower than they ever were and this in total, is an encouraging trend that will also help in market extension and traverse into new segments. To catalyse travel demand and to return to pre-COVID figures, Revenge Tourism will surely help but having said that, re-growth in travel and leisure has to be responsible.

The fears of some experts about the emergence of over-tourism and tourists turning blind towards social and environmental responsibilities are not unfounded and could be a factual question-mark on sustainability and responsible tourism. As a tourism professional, we of course are in the midst of the worst crisis

of our careers but this surely shouldn't mean that we just unthinkingly slaughter the hen for the want of golden eggs, creating a question mark on the sustainability of the destination and finally jeopardizing our own existence.

Period of lull is an opportunity to relearn and redo

Every crisis always brings along with it some opportunity. The entire tourism industry should see this period of a lull as a period that could help us ramp up

our businesses, rectify all the past mistakes and see markets afresh. For long we have been in our comfort zones of selling what we had been, and not trying our hands on anything new or innovating our existing products, both from a sales point of view and also from the consumer point. The last six months were actually a time to relook and restructure, mend our mistakes of the past, learn and re-learn many things that could help us stay above the rest in the future. For the first time, our businesses came at a level playing field with the best in the trade, as if all of us stood on the starting mark of the race and the real test of our endurance begins now. Only if we see ourselves as a fresh startup, on ground zero and if we imbibe the spirit of a learner, we can revive quickly and much better.

Practically speaking, all travel businesses will post a substantial loss this financial year (2020-21) and probably the next (2021-22) too, the strategy that I suggest to lessen the pain and to breakeven in 2022-23 are as under:-

Realign Business: Our businesses have to go back on the white-board planning, where we ought to re-plan it as if it's all fresh and new. Relook at the capital and its structured deployment, reenergising our staff that has been the strength but for quite some is the most depressed lot, re-strengthen our customers who will finally be at the core of the business. We have to re-package all our products in the current light and scenario, look for new markets and avenues to augment are businesses and above all have faith in ourselves and bring back the spark that we all had when we had first started.

Plug Financial Leakages: When the business was moving well, there were

innumerable financial leakages that we never looked at, as we did not consider that as an important issue. It is now time to plug such leakages, get away from loss-making, painful and financially stressful segments and look at our core competences to get the most out of our business. No matter if it means reducing the size or even augmenting it if required.

Cut Costs - Not Corners: Cutting costs doesn't mean cutting corners. In a running and a roaring business, costs are often ignored, though it is a proven fact that input costs are inversely proportional to profits, the lower the costs, the higher is the profits. In the 1980s American Airlines saved a whopping \$40,000 per year by just removing an olive from every plate of the salad served to its passengers, similarly, Southwest Airlines in 1994 saved \$300,000 by not using the garbage bags with its logo on it. Very small efforts often result in huge cost cuttings and add up to our profitability. It surely doesn't mean, compromising on services or delivery but instead, rationally identifying unnecessary costs and plugging avoidable expenses.

Multiply Revenue Heads: When all is well, seldom do we look beyond what we do. Travel has many verticals and probably we were only putting all eggs in one or a few baskets, despite the fact, there are so many that we never explored or were ever serious about. To ramp up revenue it would be good to multiply revenue heads. If we had not chartered into wedding management territory or the cruise travel, it is time we now do, so that we have added revenue heads. Similarly, exploring new markets is another way to source additional revenue, if as inbound operators we have mastered the UK as our source market, Scandinavia or Eastern Europe could be another source or for that matter even the US or Australia. The idea is to effectively have both, market extension as well as market development strategies in place.

Though in terms of business it is the worst one could experience and quite depressing too but then where there is despair, there is hope too. Let's also see it positively that the tourism industry has got a breather when it can look back, re-analyse and then move ahead. Being engrossed in work and day to day issues, no organisation ever got this luxury of time to redo many things and think beyond the usual business operations to achieve greater heights and position it more strongly than ever.

Prateek Hira is the President & CEO of Tornos & Gastroutes and Co-Founder & Director of River Rhapsody and Indian Frontiers. He is also a tourism researcher and an academician, teaching tourism in different Indian and foreign universities.

The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has its uncertainty, but there is hope

The COVID situation is unrivalled and unlike any other disaster in modern times. Within the space of months, the framing of the global tourism system moved from over-tourism to non-tourism and there is much evidence that COVID-19 is different and transformative for the tourism sector.

Biji Eapen

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought travel and tourism to a near-standstill, and no one can predict when it will restart for sure. The situation is still worse, as several state governments have imposed localised lockdowns to curb the spread of infections. Even if the vaccine is readily available by mid-2021, the economic recovery will be slow and uneven with employment and financial stability. In the current scenario, it is even harder to predict when economic activity could return to pre-virus levels, primarily because of the health crisis and the government's timid fiscal response.

Present situation in the Indian aviation industry

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the aviation industry due to travel restrictions, flight cancellations and airport closures worldwide. COVID-19 has put the global economy to the test, with air transport being undoubtedly the hardest hit sector by the pandemic.

Domestic flights are making a slow recovery, despite the growing number of cases in India. Operational restrictions are relaxed, and major airports such as Mumbai and Kolkata are allowing more flights daily. Since the resumption of domestic flights on May 25, the average occupancy rate or passenger load factor (PLF) of domestic flights stands close to 50-60 per cent and gradually pick up as states ease travel restrictions.

The new revised civil aviation guidelines for quarantine and general health protocols for flying within the country implemented to surge air travel as the festive season closes in, may create more confidence in travellers. The permission to serve pre-packed snacks, meals and beverages on domestic flights depending on the travel time is also expected to generate more confidence in passengers. Besides food, DGCA also allowed the usage of the in-flight entertainment system on international as well as domestic flights, wherever available.

However, the growth of the aviation industry is likely to be a lot much slower in the next few years that too, depend on assuming a vaccine is available in the next year.



Biji Eapen

Changing tourist attitudes and importance for domestic tourism

It is very clear that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdowns unambiguously forced 1.3 billion Indians to stay indoors. Indian economy crippled with the recession. Millions of jobs lost and has shattered people's livelihoods, shops, eateries, factories, transport, services and business establishments.

The pandemic is also likely to have an impact on tourist attitude and behavioural nature, impacting the resumption and recovery of domestic and international tourism. The world will never be the same before. The new travel normal is a shift to driving rather than flying. As a rebound in travel and tourism, people will start slowly and stay closer to home. Most people may feel a little hesitant to board an aircraft. This means that people may gradually opt for nearby attractions in a neighbouring state and prefer a couple of days' stay at a sanitised rental property. In other words, travellers prefer domestic destinations reachable by car and stay at private rental properties instead of crowded hotels and resorts.

Revenge tourism is what people are talking about, but such spending describes the huge buying desire by people whose pockets are flush with cash after weeks of lockdowns. It will just be a temporary phase. 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. And the government and tourism organizations should come out with a package of 'holiday bonuses' to its nationals to encourage them to travel within the country.

Till we restore confidence for people to begin travelling once the COVID-19 pandemic finally diminishes, domestic tourism only will work out. Passengers will be cautious of long-distance travelling and thus domestic tourism is expected to play an essential role in leading the initial recovery phase. Protocols of social distancing, sneezing, wearing a mask, washing hands, sanitation, and minimum interactions need to be followed everywhere. Health and hygiene are of crucial importance to restore the traveller's confidence. And, when we do open now, it will be under new operating procedures in the absence of a vaccine. When people feel more comfortable and confident in health and safety, they will start going on longer routes.

The industry faced similar challenges in the past, including the 9/11 attack and the 2008 financial meltdown, SARS, Nipah but we overcome all these. Once medicines and vaccines are made available, people will continue to fly internationally in great numbers, and leisure travel will be less affected.

Anticipating international travel

We have to see that Europe was at the forefront to open its borders and territories for tourists as post-COVID strategies. As the second wave hit, bars started shutting down, Spain declared a state of emergency, and Germany provided soldiers to help, and Italy started mandating masks. The Czech Republic celebrated the 'Farewell COVID' party in Prague in June, seems painfully naive now that the country has the highest infection rate in that continent. Such irresponsibility is because of some stakeholders or self-made touristic promoters may have become immune to their doctrines and do not care about the sufferings of others.

If we look at international tourist arrivals, it is expected to drop up to 80 per cent in 2020, and tourism spending is not likely to return to pre-crisis levels until 2024—the forecasts to put 120

million jobs at risk. Reopening tourism-related businesses in a way that is safe to the tourists, and economically managing its recovery should be the primary requirement and to be coordinated at a new dimensional level.

While international travel will become possible again, new travel requirements probably are imposed, like, proof of mandatory vaccination, quarantining upon arrival. And, as all these come with increased cost and hassle for travellers, domestic travel will pick up more quickly than international travel because it is not subject to the above restrictions.

Role of Technology during COVID

Technology has made a material impact on aviation patterns. The new nature has changed the life pattern business too. Many business people conditioned to use virtual meetings such as Zoom, Microsoft, etc. The new platforms of Virtual Meet & Virtual Expo solutions help businesses without travelling.

Technologies now play a significant role to increase hygiene. Touch-less seats that connect to Bluetooth on mobile to lower car seat back or fold out the tray.

Touch-less lavatories; regulated boarding procedures so people aren't falling over

each other in the aisles and at airports, facial recognition technology and tracking through customs and boarding, so customers and staff aren't touching the same boarding pass.

Is there hope for the Travel Agent?

Ultimately, the post-corona will create significant challenges for the survival of Travel Agents in India. As the uncertainties continue, recovery of the travel and tourism sector may take a long time. Airlines, both domestic and international, through Vande Bharat Mission or air bubble agreements, are freely operating without much competition in market price. Despite the regulatory directives, travel agents are deprived of their commission or remuneration for services rendered to the carrier.

However, with this pandemic outrage, the travellers are now left with a shift in trust that is to depend on a responsible intermediary - a travel consultant (rather than relying on the online or web-based robotics systems), who will be accountable for safety, security, quality in services and activities including financials.

Thus, I feel that traditional travel and tour agents will get the upper hand. Potential travellers want assurance on safety to travel, flight availability, specific destination, security, health and quarantine, and finally a reassurance

- Can I get a refund if I need to cancel? As in the case of airline ticket refund issue, travel agents and tour operators are approachable, accountable, and reliable and trustworthy. It is a new beginning for the travel and tour agencies to coordinate and work together to rebuild the tourism industry. The post-corona travel will be an age of sanitised travel with stringent regulatory formalities and regulations.

Change to be united

The new manner in which we go about our life shall still require a substantial livelihood for all stakeholders to survive. To create a new kind of perception to solve our problems, we need unity. It implies cooperation amid diversity and the accord should be the exclusivity of the Trade Associations working with 'commission'. First, we have to sort out matters together for the welfare of the entire 'commission agents' community. We have already taken the initiative and let us get inspired by the words of Henry Ford, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." So let us unite and make a change to our existence.

Biji Eapen is the National President, IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI) & CMD-Speedwings Aviation Group.

India has Air Bubble Pact with 17 countries

Air Bubble agreement is a bilateral air corridor being established between various countries to ease travel restrictions amidst travel ban imposed by various countries due to COVID-19. Despite the ban, India was among the first few nations to start a repatriation drive as early as May to bring back stranded Indians.

Prashant Nayak

India had initially established travel bubbles with countries like the United States, Germany and France. Soon after, Air Bubbles were established to further ease the travel in. Since then, India has formed agreements with 17 nations in total the latest being Ukraine on October 14, 2020.

The listed countries under this agreement are France, Germany, USA, UK, Canada, Maldives, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Japan, Kenya, Bhutan, Oman and Ukraine. The government is in discussion with Italy, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Australia, Israel, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Ukraine and Thailand for similar arrangements.

'Transport Bubbles' or 'Air Travel Arrangements' are temporary arrangements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular

international flights are suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the arrangement, airlines from both countries are allowed to operate, unlike Mission Vande Bharat where only Indian air carriers were allowed to operate flights. They are reciprocal in nature, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.

Also, unlike Vande Bharat Mission, the Air Bubble Pact allows flyers to travel freely without registering with the government. In Vande Bharat Mission, one has to register their name with the Indian Embassy in order to fly out of a specific country. Also, the air bubble agreement allows flights from both countries to fly increasing the options for travellers and reducing prices. Mission Vande Bharat is undertaken only in countries where no flight is allowed to fly.

Hardeep Singh Puri, MoS, I/C, Civil Aviation had informed in a recent press

meet that till the first week of October, the government has facilitated the repatriation and international travel of over 20 lakh people through different means since May 6, 2020. The Minister also said that under Vande Bharat Mission, 17, 11,128 people have travelled back to India and 2, 97,536 people have travelled out of India.

However, the majority of flights are still bringing out stranded Indian citizens, OCI cardholders and diplomats not all countries are allowing visas of all categories. It's only that under the air bubble agreement, you don't have to do additional paperwork like registering online or with the embassy to fly in and out of the country. The rest of the travelling remains the same as the pre-COVID period, only that international border rules apply. In India, for example, even people holding valid tourist visas are not allowed.

Will privatisation of passenger trains work in India?

The Indian Railways has kick-started the process of inviting bids to allow private companies to operate passenger trains on selected routes in India to address the excess demand in the railways. This process is expected to attract an investment of ₹30,000 crore. While this seems like a large and exciting opportunity, there are nuances that must be considered.

Rohan Dedhia



Rohan Dedhia

Before I begin, as a Co-founder of Railofy, India's first 'Waitlist and RAC Protection' service, aimed towards tackling the problems faced by the passengers travelling by trains after being put on the waiting list, I wish to state that why we have an opinion in this area? Let me explain! Railofy connects excess demand from the railways at affordable prices to other modes of transport like flights and buses through our WL & RAC protection products. Hence, we sit at the intersection of all the intercity transportation modes in India (trains, flights and buses) and have a birds-eye view of passenger behaviour across these transportation modes. So let's begin.

Domestic Passenger Traffic

Despite the growth in passenger air traffic of 18 per cent CAGR (14-19)

over the last 5 years, which is primarily driven by new to air customers migrating from long-distance trains, the traffic in railways has remained flat over the same period. This is not surprising given that over 300M+ Indians get waitlisted each year on the Indian railways where demand far exceeds supply. What is surprising is that we are nowhere close to the "peak" of the problem. Take this for an example; in the USA an average person takes 3.1 trips per year via flights (ignoring other forms of long-distance travel). If we compare the same number in India, an average person takes 1.6 trips per year via trains (reserved class) + flights put together. As you can see that as India becomes more aspirational, domestic travel is likely to explode manifolds in the next few decades leading to further constraints on the Rail capacity.

The problems faced by Indian Railways

Despite so much demand, the Railways in India has a peculiar problem. Approximately, 10M passengers travel by long-distance (non-suburban) trains daily. Given its impact on the masses, governments over the decades have been reluctant to increase passenger ticket rates. This has resulted in the Railways having to run these trains at losses. So every time you hear a rail minister announcing a new train in the annual budget, the Railways is only increasing its losses that have to be funded by the government. On the other hand, the freight operations of the railways are both profitable and also have a strong potential to compete with other modal solutions especially transport by Road. The Railways would love to have increased the number of freight



trains to enhance profitability but there is massive congestion on tracks on account of passenger trains also using the same tracks.

The proposed solution

Welcome Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and Privatisation of trains! The DFC is a project by the Railways that is currently under construction (expected official completion date - 2022) that seeks to, in simple terms; add new track capacity specifically for freight trains. This will enable the railways to not only introduce more freight trains but also freezes up existing track capacity for more passenger trains. Now, here is the interesting part. Instead of just introducing more passenger trains on its own (which would only further increase Railway losses), the Railway is experimenting with an interesting idea of privatisation of trains where they are hoping that better amenities and services by private players will lead to better fare realisation leading to profitability.

So will private passenger trains work in a country like India?

As per media reports, there is significant interest by private players. To better understand the impact of these trains one must divide the entire market into short routes (Mumbai-Pune, Chennai-Bengaluru, etc, that buses generally ply on) and long routes (Mumbai-Delhi, Chennai-Kolkata, etc that buses generally don't ply on)

Short Routes

The cost of the traffic on these routes travel via trains or buses as flights are generally not operational. For most

passengers, the Railway is generally the preferred choice not just because of the pricing but also the comfort of travel. Hence a lot of demand for buses on this route can be assumed to be spillover demand – there is either no train available in that time period or no seats available on the trains. Welcome Private trains! Private trains on these routes will essentially compete with buses as they will provide superior comfort and services at a similar price point of AC buses. We have already seen a lot of success (as per Railways) of the trial of Tejas Express (a proxy for a private train) on the Delhi-Lucknow route.

Long Routes

However, the picture is not so clear on the longer routes. Welcome airlines! In India, significant capacity (by some estimates 40-60 per cent) of the airlines is filled at 10-20 per cent premium to AC train (Rajdhani) prices. Airlines also provide the superiority of travel time making them a preferred choice – For example, a Mumbai- Delhi flight will take you approximately 2 hours while at the same time trains will take close to 18 hours. The vast majority of Indians only travel on trains on these routes for price benefit. Now, given the extremely

competitive pricing of airlines in India, there is very little headroom for private trains between the price of a flight and the price of a train run by Indian Railways. There is of course ample pricing headroom available for private trains between 14 to 0 days to departure when airlines jack up their prices. Whether this window of opportunity is good enough to create a large enough market remains to be seen. Also, there will always be a significant looming threat for private trains on these longer routes if any airline decides to disrupt pricing in order to compete for market share. In India, this a real threat especially has given that Indian airlines have an order book of 1000+ planes as per media reports.

Stating Anand Srinivasan, an industry expert and ex-Head of Revenue Management at GoAir, “Privatised trains present a very exciting prospect for short-haul connectivity in the country. Rail connectivity between metros on the short-haul provides the perfect balance of speed and convenience. Flights on short hauls are not attractive to passengers since the overhead on air travel far outweighs the speed and comfort provided by flights. On the other hand, buses, while frequent, usually involve longer travel time and

lower levels of comfort. Fast, comfortable travel between metros on short routes is a market that shows huge potential. This is especially attractive to business travellers who can be productive the entire duration of the travel with easy availability of Wifi and connectivity. This will serve a niche market that is willing to pay a premium for the right blend of comfort and convenience, which none of the existing modes (air and road) can meet.”

In conclusion, in our view, the private train opportunity is extremely attractive on short routes where buses operate. In fact, the total size of the bus market in India is pegged at \$15B annually which is larger than the entire passenger revenue of the railways (\$8-9B). However, the case for the private train is not clear on long-distance routes in India. Even if there was a case to be made, there is no doubt that trains on these routes will always carry a potent threat from airlines trying to increase the market share aggressively.

Rohan Dedhia is Co-Founder—Railofy, India's first WL & RAC Protection Platform.

Indian Railways to run 392 festival special trains from Oct 20- Nov 30, 2020

Earlier this month, Railway Board Chairman and CEO, VK Yadav, had said that the Indian Railways will take stock of passenger train services on a daily basis depending on the state governments' needs and the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the Railway Board had conducted meetings with the Zonal General Managers and also instructed them to speak with local administration as well as review the pandemic status and based on it will be decided how many trains can be introduced during the festive season.

Team TTJ

Indian Railways will run the 196 pairs of trains during the festival season in addition to those being run already. These new festival special trains, however, will operate only till November 30 and will not have a continued run.

As the festive season of the country approaches amidst the novel coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Railways has approved the Zonal Railways' proposal for the operation of additional 196 pairs (392 trains) of Festival Special trains. The trains will be operated between 20 October to 30 November. The decision was taken as the national rail transporter is

anticipating a passenger rush during the upcoming festive season.

The fare applicable for these services will be that of the earlier special trains allowed to run by the ministry, said Indian Railways. This means that 'special charges' will be levied on the train tickets, making them costlier by 10 per cent to 30 per cent as compared to the fares of express/mail trains, depending on the class of travel. These special trains will be mostly third AC coaches. The timing of these trains will be as per regular trains. The Zonal Railways will notify their schedule well in advance, the ministry said in a statement. These festival special trains

will be operated at a speed of 55 kmph.

The special trains will be run for destinations such as Kolkata, Patna, Varanasi, Lucknow among others to cater to the growing demand in the ensuing holiday period of Durga Puja, Dussehra, Diwali and Chhatt puja.

The Railways has suspended all its regular services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is operating trains as per demand and necessity and till now, the railways has been running more than 500 express and mail trains that are now being operated regularly across the Indian Railways network and have been effectively catering to people travelling across the country.

Time to pay attention to the paradigm shift in the mindset of travellers

At SOTC, we are witnessing pent-up demand and opportunities in the new phase of travel.

People are longing to travel again due to the pent-up demand created for travel during the lockdown and their desire is to take a holiday and emerge from quarantine now more than ever.

Daniel D'souza

From celebrating important anniversaries to special occasions, holidays have given travellers the chance to celebrate the important milestones in life. SOTC has witnessed a growing trend with customers choosing to opt for places that are close to home away from crowded cities. Seeing an uptick in enquiries for quick escapes like back to nature and beach destinations, workations and drivecations are a popular first choice.

With a trend in Bleisure trips combining work and vacation, mini getaways offer a perfect opportunity of work-life balance through a rejuvenating escapade from ones' routine life. We have specifically launched packages for working people who might want to enjoy a break while on work at a nearby boutique property. We see an uptick in staycations due to the rise in stress levels during lockdown. Staycations allow for people who are unable to get much time off work besides their weekends, to implement micro-breaks in their routine daily life for some well-needed rejuvenation and relaxation time.

With consumers opting for non-standard/eclectic accommodation such as a colonial bungalow, plantation villas (coffee -tea estates), heritage properties-palaces, it is time to tap into the demand for non-standard and unique journeys. With international destinations such as Dubai and Maldives reopening for tourists there has been pent-up demand.

The COVID-19 era has redefined travel. Private trips are an emerging trend, that lets families and friends enjoy and explore a destination in privacy and safety in the COVID era. As travellers now look towards made-to-measure, bite-sized travel with more safely curated travel itineraries into shorter timeframes is an evolving new trend.

Carefully designed packages with a complete focus on health, safety and affordability for customers will be the way forward. Travellers want certainty and peace of mind now more than ever,



Daniel D'souza

and many companies have catered to the current need by introducing flexible rescheduling, booking and cancellation policies that allow for last-minute changes and cancellations. The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the importance of travel insurance as a necessity.

Indian consumers are displaying an increasing appetite for getaways that are at a drivable distance- Staycations that offer meticulous health and safety measures at affordable pricing. Visiting places closer to home also allows vacationers to take shorter trips more frequently. Private mobility may be on the rise over the long term, as travellers feel safer in privately owned vehicles. As a result, drive-to destinations have increased in popularity

There has been a paradigm shift in the mindset of consumers today - with more travellers actively seeking out less crowded trips, searching for privacy and a greater sense of calm and peacefulness. We see customers recognising the value and peace of mind that booking with a reputed travel firm offers especially during these uncertain times.

We have seen an immense demand with travellers who want their own itineraries, but actively seek travel connoisseurs to help them make informed decisions. Through our ALa Carte Holidays, SOTC

provides a service that is flexible and convenient to suit every travellers need.

There is an expected rise in local tourism, offbeat places, wildlife tours. Demand has similarly increased for drivecations and rural getaways to experience the local culture. The pent-up travel demand due to the lockdown has resulted in a new-found interest in Destination India.

From exploring the local cuisine to finding offbeat experiences at every destination, millennials wish to explore the unknown and are keen to escape the city life for more glocal experiences. Owing to the pressures of lockdown, customers have shown a strong sentiment and preference for outdoor experiences.

Gen Z and Millennials also show a strong inclination to explore adventure and nature based holidays with their families. We see great interest from honeymoon couples who wish to experience the thrill of wildlife holidays. Fun outdoor activities such as nature camps, national parks and hiking trails are popular among Indians travelling with friends and families. We have seen strong demand for Ranthambore for the month of October & November with our wilderness packages. Other popular wildlife reserves include Kanha, Gir and Jim Corbett National Park. We have seen renewed interest with new-age travellers seeking experiences in travel that are novel and unique while being wellness and spiritually driven.

The stringent restrictions on social gatherings limiting wedding celebrations this year, couples are looking at investing their savings towards a memorable honeymoon. With countries such as the Maldives and Dubai emerging from lockdown and with the lifting of travel restrictions, we see a rising trend especially amongst honeymooners and young couples to choose a destination for their romantic escapes.

Daniel D'souza is the President and Country Head, Leisure Section at SOTC Travel.

Adventure lovers line up for white river rafting at Rishikesh

The state of Uttarakhand is witnessing a continuous upsurge in the number of tourists ever since the Government has allowed relaxations in the protocols being followed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent announcement on the opening up of adventure tourism in the state has already pumped up the adrenaline among the adventure seekers who have lined up to participate in various adventure sports activities like rafting, bungee jumping, flying fox, etc.

Team TTJ

According to the recent data shared by Dinesh Bhatt, President, Rafting Association, Rishikesh alone-recorded over 4000 tourist's inflow since September 26, following the reopening of the popular white water river rafting adventure activity in the city. The adventure tour operators who conduct river rafting in Rishikesh received almost 90 per cent more bookings from places like UP, Delhi and Haryana, which was way above their expectations for the first day itself. Enquiries for bookings continue to pour in for the next two weeks.

Rajpal Yadav, owner of rafting operator agency in Rishikesh says, "We are extremely elated with the opening up of adventure tourism in Rishikesh and are seeing a continuous increase in the number of rafting lovers. We hope that the tourists visiting for rafting activities will adhere to all the safety norms in regards to COVID and enjoy their visit to Uttarakhand."

Dilip Jawalkar, Secretary, Uttarakhand Tourism said, "Adventure Tourism contributes to a majority part in the state's overall tourism industry. I am happy that our step towards resuming the adventure sports activities has heeded the desired results and has attracted a large number

of adventure seekers in the state. While we have opened up the activities for the tourists, I also expect full cooperation from all the stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of rules and guidelines to control the spread of COVID-19 in the state. There has been a steady increase in the number of tourists appearing for rafting in the last four years. 68,604 tourists arrived in the year 2017 from September to December, over 3,49,736 in 2018, 3,34,753 in 2019, and 29,932 tourists till March 2020 have enjoyed river rafting. On the other hand, after the commencement of adventure sports activities in Uttarakhand over 19,872 tourists had arrived in the state from October 2nd to 5th."

In order to ensure maximum health safety, the Government of Uttarakhand has also issued guidelines for the tourists as well as the adventure activity operators. As per the guidelines, the owner of the adventure company has to ensure that the employees undergo proper training for the prevention of COVID-19 and ensure the proper implementation of health measures like thermal screening, social distancing, and covering of the face by masks, and regular washing of hands.

USP of Rishikesh's White River Rafting

Memorable experience

The White River Rafting in Rishikesh has always been one of the most preferred

activities for all adventure enthusiasts looking for adrenaline-pumping outdoor sports after the six months of lockdown. The sport adds those essential elements of surprise and excitement in tourists' trips to make it memorable. Riding the currents of a temperamental river on an inflatable raft and bouncing over rapids is an experience like no other and is guaranteed to make the trip a truly memorable one.

Stunning views

Additionally, the River rafting in Rishikesh offers breath-taking views of the surrounding Himalayan range. On clear days, the mountains are a sight to behold with the sun lighting up their snowy peaks with myriad hues. The rafting trips allow tourists to visit different stretches of the Ganga so that they can enjoy the views of the mountains from various angles.

Budget-friendly River rafting trips

Adventure Sports companies in Rishikesh offers some great budget-friendly trips, which can be enjoyed by everybody. Typically the half-day and full-day Rishikesh rafting packages start from as little as ₹900 per person. It's a great opportunity for both beginners and experienced rafters with the former getting a quick taste of the sport with an outing that they can easily fit into their trip itinerary. The experienced rafters get the chance to tackle some great rapids and challenge themselves.



Dilip Jawalkar



‘Believers in harnessing the power of innovation’



With the firm belief that every crisis is an opportunity in disguise, The Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) has implemented the R.E.S.E.T 2020 strategy to mitigate the impact of the crisis and explore new revenue-generating avenues while optimising costs and maintaining excellence in operations and corporate overheads. TTJ speaks to Rakhee Lalvani, Vice President – Public Relations and Corporate Communications, IHCL, to know more about new developments at Asia’s largest hospitality company.

Prashant Nayak

What are the key indicators you have been watching or following which can/will help the recovery of the travel industry?

We have been seeing green shoots of travel emerge lately as some of the travel restrictions across the country are slowly being lifted in a phase-wise manner, with hotels and even restaurants being allowed to operate in certain states. Possibly one of the most resilient industries, the travel and hospitality industry will definitely revive itself, even as it undergoes a sweeping change. With the key focus being safety and health, which is a priority for all, people will gravitate more towards trusted brands with strong precautionary measures and SOPs laid out.

Moreover, with travellers itching to scratch that dormant travel bug and take a much needed break after months of being confined to their homes, domestic travel will lead the industry’s revival in the short-to mid-term. In fact, domestic travel, which contributed to 87 per cent of the bulk of India’s leisure travel in 2018, is expected to grow with renewed vigour, marking the beginning of a new era of travel in the coming months.

We have been seeing a rising trend in staycations and driving holidays, with

people looking to discover lesser-explored destinations within the close vicinity of their residence. The growing focus on overall health and wellness too has resulted in a growing demand for workcations – where one can balance work with a much needed getaway – and wellness-focused travel experiences. IHCL has launched a number of exciting initiatives for guests to cater to these trends – be it the 4D - Dream, Drive, Discover, Delight offer that gives travellers the perfect opportunity to drive with families and friends to discover, unwind, and be one with nature once again at idyllic locations such as Coorg, Rajasthan, Chikmagalur, Rishikesh, Shimla and more or the Urban Getaways offer for those looking for quick staycations. IHCL’s Bizcations offer caters to those looking for a slice of paradise whilst at work while the Taj Wellness Retreats, with Jiva Spa’s decades of expertise deep-rooted in the Indian traditions of Ayurveda and healing, allows travellers to embark on a soulful journey to revitalise mind, body and spirit.

We have also seen a growing demand in the weddings segment, with guests looking at hosting intimate but unique wedding ceremonies while meeting the required government regulations. With Taj’s Intimate Timeless Weddings, couples can transform their dreams into

reality at unique locations, with carefully curated menus, exotic themes and the quintessential Taj service.

What programmes/projects has IHCL been working on (or your strategies) to be successful post crisis?

What the pandemic has brought to the fore is the increased focus on safety and hygiene and the need for social distancing measures. With the health and wellbeing of all our stakeholders being of utmost importance, we have implemented enhanced safety and hygiene measures across all our hotels under our Tajness – A Commitment Restrengthened program, which follows the highest precautionary standards of in accordance with the guidelines published by the World Health Organization (WHO), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the Government of India. Keeping in mind the need for minimal contact, we launched I-ZEST – IHCL’s Zero-Touch Service Transformation – a suite of digital solutions across our hotels that further ensure social distancing for both, guests and associates, while offering the sincere care, warmth and guest-centric service that we are synonymous with. These digital enhancements span guest experiences, from pre-arrival to departure offering

zero to minimal touch options through innovative facilities such as digital pre check-in registrations to contactless guest access to their rooms via optional digital key cards, while maintaining the highest levels of safety and security. Check-outs too are optimised with online invoicing services without the need to use card machines while digital menus installed across restaurants facilitate dining orders through QR codes.

At IHCL, we have always believed in harnessing the power of innovation to meet dynamic consumer and market requirements while creating a robust hospitality ecosystem. We recently launched Qmin – a repertoire of culinary experiences, which brings signature dishes from the company's iconic restaurants at guests' fingertips, offering them an opportunity to enjoy Taj@Home across nine cities, with a tenth in the pipeline. For the ease of use, we also launched a mobile application for Qmin, becoming the first large hospitality brand to launch an F&B centric delivery app in the country, completely conceptualised and created in-house within the Tata

group. Qmin will also expand its scope to launch a gourmet Qmin shop and will also extend to the Company's loyalty platform, where guests can earn and burn points using Qmin.

Keeping in mind the key role digital and e-commerce platforms play in meeting customers' requirements, we have leveraged Tata Group synergies to launch our signature Taj Hospitality@Home luxury collection on Tata CLiQ Luxury, with the curated collection to expand further soon. This retail collection comprises some of the finest quality products from the signature bed and bath linen to time-honoured wellness products and signature memorabilia designed to pay homage to the iconic Taj Mahal Palace & Towers.

What are your thoughts on the 'New Age in the travel industry' post the pandemic?

While the pandemic is unprecedented and something the world and the industry has never witnessed before, the world has and will continue to adapt to the new normal. Emphasis on overall health and wellness will make safety and hygiene the

new currencies of luxury, and guests will continue to choose trusted brands with strong safety standards.

Digital innovations and interventions will continue to lead the way to ensure zero to minimal contact without comprising on the care and services that hospitality brands are known for. And while travel will resume – if fact, travel will return, and when it does – may well surpass pre-COVID numbers when a full recovery happens, the way people travel will change.

Travellers are and will continue to become more socially conscious with increased awareness about the environment and community, and one's impact on it. Travel in the future will be increasingly influenced by a growing sense of responsibility towards the places one visits and local communities, with greater demand for slow and sustainable travel, and immersive experiences as people look to explore authentic local traditions and culture, with sustainability at their core. Value-driven experiences will lead the way when it comes to the new age traveller making their travel choices in the future.

Curating unique and luxurious experiences

A recent initiative that the hotel is leveraging upon is Marriott on Wheels, a home delivery service for a luxury dining experience in the comfort of your homes. With Marriott on Wheels, the hotel is able to target social outdoor catering opportunities by offering customized meal experiences and innovative setups.

Ahemer Shaikh, Director of Catering Sales, JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, shares more with TTI.

Rachita Sehgal

JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar has always aimed at offering exceptional and lavish experiences for their guests. The hotel has introduced lucrative staycation packages to appeal to their guests, "Our retail segment has seen a growth with our world-class staycation experiences. The team has created special staycations where one can unwind in the comfort of their own city clubbed with a host of inclusions. Apart from this, corporates are using our hotel to accommodate their employees as part of their business continuity plan and shipping companies are accommodating their on-signer requirements at the hotel," shares Ahemer.

Weddings and Social business has been consistently performing, with the government norms to allow 50 pax events and the hotel foresee this segment to persistently perform in the coming months as well. With Marriott International's initiatives Commitment To Clean and Connect With Confidence, the hotel follows enhanced safety and hygiene protocols at every stage of a guest's

journey, Ahemer adds, "We have observed that large organizations have downsized their budgets and spending which in turn has reduced travel and accommodation requirements. Also, considering the current government norms, we anticipate small to mid-scale business during the first quarter of next year. We do not foresee any sizable MICE business taking place before quarter 4 of 2021 with large conventions in the city currently being planned during this period. The renewed dining experience has been thoughtfully curated, keeping in mind a contact-less experience."

A recent initiative that the hotel is leveraging upon is Marriott on Wheels, a home delivery service for a luxury dining experience in the comfort of your homes. With Marriott On Wheels, the hotel is able to target social outdoor catering opportunities by offering customized meal experiences and innovative setups. The hotels' team is also catering to corporate meals with a range of customisable Bento Boxes. Additionally, "We are actively catering to food delivery orders for our discerning



guests directly from our hotel and via food delivery portals such as Zomato and Swiggy. Owing to our close proximity to the airport and being located in the corporate hub of the city, at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar we have curated work-from-hotel day-use packages for our guest rooms and meeting rooms at exclusive rates for people looking at spacious and quiet working arrangements. Guests can book workspaces on a day-use basis to work in our tranquil environs with a prestigious business address," concludes Ahemer.

‘For the love of Travel, for the love of Now’

Accor has creatively launched unique concepts such as staycations, movie screenings at their hotels. This has been complemented with enhanced dining experiences like Saturday night live barbeque, traditional thali and drive-ins at some of their hotels. In a conversation with TTJ, Rohit Chopra, Regional Director - Sales & Distribution, India & South Asia, Accor Hotels, shares more about the recovery of MICE business in the hospitality and the brands’ lucrative new concepts.

Rachita Sehgal

As the lockdown guidelines continue to relax across the country and states, we are witnessing several trends that are driving occupancies. However, hotels that implement the highest health and safety standards and are recognized as trusted brands will enjoy significant traction.

With the increased number of domestic flights, amid continued international travel restrictions, we foresee growth in domestic travel. Additionally, we are already seeing optimism from guests who are seeking staycations and weekend travels. As remote working conditions continue, guests are also willing to work from hotels and therefore workcations are becoming popular. Rohit adds, “While business travel is still impacted, we do expect it to return in the short-medium term as well. Weddings, especially in India, is a resilient segment. Even during the pandemic, with a limited guestlist, weddings is one segment, which has shown a lot of promise. As the restrictions on guestlists have eased, we are hopeful that we will be hosting many more weddings and related events. Across all our hotels, irrespective of the brand, we have hosted weddings and continue to receive more queries as well. Our hotels are extending curated customised wedding packages to match the evolving requirements of the guests.”

Under the Unlock 5.0 guidelines, the government has allowed events (social, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious academic and political). “We expect MICE to gain significant momentum with the easing of restrictions, as events can be hosted with 50% capacity of the event area with a maximum of 200 people. We anticipate that large-scale weddings, small and mid-sized conferences, product launches, training programs and sporting events (domestic leagues) will resume over the next couple of quarters. In fact, at several of Accor’s hotels, we have witnessed a rise in demand for curated weddings and are expecting an increase in bookings of small meeting rooms as various organisations would like to conduct their meetings in premises, which can offer a safe and hygienic environment.



Rohit Chopra

Moreover, organisations prefer premises that can provide good food and beverage, and are technologically well-equipped, so that the meeting can be streamed live to all their team members or customers across the globe,” shares Rohit.

The majority of Accor’s properties are well equipped to cater to events across varying budgets, number of guests and services. Their specialised event teams at various properties provide unique ideas and tailor-made services that adapt to the ever-changing and latest trends in the MICE industry. Additionally, the group has trained its hotel staff to understand the guest requirements along with being mindful of all safety and security protocols. To do this effectively, Accor has implemented ALLSAFE, their global cleanliness and prevention standards, developed with and vetted by Bureau Veritas, ensuring a ‘contactless’ experience yet retaining the warmth that is the very essence of the Accor experience.

The pandemic has resulted in businesses thinking out of the box and exploring newer revenue avenues. The team at Accor believes in innovation with hospitality to offer their guests safe and enjoyable experiences. The new normal has a number of opportunities in store and their initiatives are well designed to cater to the demands of our guests. Sharing further about the alternative revenue sources that

Accor hotels have dished out to attract their guests, Rohit says, “We have initiated lucrative campaigns and collaborated with like-minded brands to better enhance our offerings. We are currently driving a campaign ‘For the Love of Travel, For The Love of Now’ inviting travellers to live in the moment and rediscover their love for travel. As a part of Accor hotels ‘For the love of Travel, for the love of Now’ campaign, we have launched the ‘Missed Celebrations’ offer encouraging our guests to celebrate every special occasion that was missed during the lockdown. The offer provides guests to dine at any of our F&B outlets across our 51 hotels and earn a 30 per cent discount voucher. This voucher can be later redeemed at rooms, restaurants, spas including all other in-house hotel services.”

With a continued focus on the food and beverage segment, Accor has offers enabling guests to enjoy their favourite foods such as takeaways, deliveries and have even curated DIY food kits for their guests. Rohit adds further, “We have also creatively launched unique concepts like staycations, movie screenings. This has been complemented with enhanced dining experiences like Saturday night live barbeque, traditional thali and drive-ins at some of our hotels. We also have seen a gradual rise in the number of diners and small meeting requirements, which is a positive sign. To ensure we continuously provide experience to our guests, we are collaborating with key brands. We have partnered with IndiGo’s 6E Rewards Program across India as the preferred hospitality brand. This partnership offers Accor and Indigo’s guests the opportunity to earn rewards while enjoying world-class hospitality and impeccable food offerings at Accor’s extensive network of Fairmont, Sofitel, Pullman, Mövenpick, Grand Mercure, Novotel, Mercure, ibis and ibis Styles hotels in 23 cities. Additionally, we have associated with Vistara Airlines for our ‘Welcome Back Program’.”

As for the upcoming festive season, most of the brand hotels will be offering a wide selection of curated gift hampers across different price points.

'Identifying and examining customer behaviour based on real-time travel intent'

These are challenging times, completely unprecedented, and things are volatile for the present but the hospitality scenario is in a constant state of evolution. Vineet Mishra, General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Pune & Cluster General Manager, Marriott, Pune, shares more about the market conditions and their focus on the growing market for their hotels by building back their occupancy levels at the acceptable average rates.

Prashant Nayak

There are consistent signs of travel recovery as green shoots are finally starting to show. Borders are reopening, growth in capacity, and occupancy rates are all encouraging. The stage of the recovery journey varies greatly by region — and likewise, within that region, some cities are performing better than others. At Marriott Pune, they are witnessing a consistent pattern of recovery emerging.

Also, as markets are reopening, albeit with daily changing policies, Vineet feels, "When people realise they are allowed to travel again, bookings are starting to follow. Digital engines and OTAs are showing the strongest signs of recovery first and the value of being able to retail online is more evident than ever. This presents great opportunities for in-city, drivable bookings, as well as upselling ancillaries. As the online consumer market picks up, recovery rates across the other sectors will start to improve too. Trips are usually booked anywhere from seven to 60 days out and ignoring corporates, families is the biggest persona."

Marriott Pune properties are flowing back into recovery and that is encouraging. Though it remains to be seen how the area's curve will take shape, the market is coming back to life. "First, we identify the moving,

growing city pairs. Then, we examine buying behavioural metrics, so that our teams can develop the most effective targeting and acquisition strategies. This in turn makes tailoring additional services and experiences much easier and helps our guests to make informed booking decisions. Our key project includes aligning our Marketing and Revenue Management Strategy to ensure parity across channels, direct booking perks, new offers and packages, and most importantly, a flexible cancellation policy. We've also ramped up marketing efforts focused on brand awareness and fueling new guests into the booking funnel to reach people beginning to daydream about rebooking and planning holidays as well as partaking in experiences to make up for missed vacations. Other strategies involve staying in touch with guests that have cancelled, producing editorial and destination content and prioritising lower-funnel initiatives and focus on targeting potential guests based on real-time travel intent to the destination," further shares Vineet.

The teams at the Ritz-Carlton, Pune, JW Marriott Pune, Marriott Suites Pune and Courtyard by Marriott, Pune Hinjewadi have rolled out an exciting tailor-made offer that ensures maximum flexibility and savings, unique to audience and preference. These 'Contact-Free Safecations' come



Vineet Mishra

with the added benefits of a complimentary room upgrade to the next room category, personalised chef-curated meals, free meal and stay for kids under 12 years of age, up to 5000 Marriott Bonvoy points and much more.

"As we prepare for travel demand to build long term, it is important for our hotels to take a step back and go beyond travel demand forecasts to look at the state of the world holistically. Long term, there are so many variables that will impact a hotel's business plan that go beyond travel demand. These factors include the state of the economy, unemployment rate, consumer spending power, as well as shifts in consumer behaviour. For example, it is predicted that post COVID-19, virtual meetings will become a more common place that will most likely impact business travel as well as meetings and groups. Ultimately, as hotels prepare for the phase of recovery when travel demand strengthens, it's a delicate balance between preparing for a 'new normal' while implementing tried and tested practices and strategies," concludes Vineet.



'We anticipate an increase in MICE business in the coming months'



Vikalp Raj

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway is positioned as the city's leading corporate hotel with a strong focus on the MICE market due to its large convention facilities. The hotel consists of 230 guest rooms, including eight restaurants and bars.

MICE has always been a major revenue generator for the hotels but with the current times, there has been a cap on the maximum number of guests that can be accommodated in a particular space. Customers are shifting to hybrid events where organisers host a

Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, the first Sheraton to be crown 'Grand' in South-Asia, is located in the neighbourhood of Malleswaram. The hotel forms a part of the expansive Brigade Gateway lifestyle enclave comprising of the World Trade Centre office tower, the massive Orion Mall and Multiplex, green space, a manmade lake, and more. Vikalp Raj, Director of Sales and Marketing, Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway, shares more on the MICE perspective in the current market conditions.

Prashant Nayak

meeting with few participants at the hotel and the attendees are part of it virtually. Currently, the wedding segment is helping in driving the volumes for the hotels. Smaller residential social events are the new trend from now till quarter one of 2021, in lines with current government guidelines.

"In the coming months, we are anticipating an increase in MICE business as compared to the past two quarters. Resorts have started experiencing small MICE movements. People want to host a small conference in a resort destination for change in the environment and also an event in isolation. From February 2021, city-wide events are going to take place in Bengaluru like Aero Show, for which we have started to get queries from various companies," shares Vikalp.

Their pillar-less Grand Ballroom is one of the

city's largest and features modern architecture and design that will impress any gathering. Its 640 square metres can accommodate up to 800 guests theatre-style. They also have a selection of meeting venues that can serve as breakaway rooms, as well as a 640-square-metre pre-function area for exhibitions and displays.

In these challenging times, alternative revenue sources are also important. Vikalp shares, "The major alternative revenue source is the social segment, self-isolation and staycations. While people are using their own vehicles for family getaways, they are using hotels in the city for transit. Home delivery of food is also another segment where we have seen a good customer response. Our full board staycation package has seen a rise in the bookings for people wanting a small and quick break without going out of the city."

An upsurge in the wedding business



R Srijith

MICE including weddings continues in a controlled manner at The Leela Goa. The hotel has observed a significant demand from high-end domestic wellness travellers. Their packages consist of holistic, ayurvedic and international treatments that cater to all age groups. Treatments for detoxification, stress management, skin therapies, respiratory problems, etc, have seen an increase in demand during the COVID era. Their existing base of high-end repeat Guests are traveling with their families too and the resort is considered a destination in itself. The average length of stay for their guests has increased during the current

A unique property set amidst sprawling 75 acres of lush landscapes and beautiful lagoons The Leela Goa offers spacious and airy rooms, balconies that open up to majestic views of the lagoons and the Arabian Sea. The hotel has curated holistic packages to lure and boost their business. R Srijith, Director of Sales and Marketing, The Leela, Mobor, Cavelossim, Goa, gives an insight into the growing demand of wedding business.

Rachita Sehgal

period vis-a-vis the same time last year.

Being one of the major revenue driving segments for hotels, weddings and social gatherings have played a major role in the hotel industry's revival strategies, sharing his views regarding an upsurge in the wedding business Srijith states, "We are noticing an encouraging demand for weddings. Due to the travel restrictions and closing of the international market, high-end Indian weddings which would take place overseas have shifted to the domestic market. Goa is an all-time favourite for destination weddings and The Leela Goa is the most sought after resort due to its unique location, varied venues and unmatched service standards."

The hotel has identified new and inimitable sources to boost up the otherwise pent-up revenues of the hotel during the COVID era, "We have established ourselves in the wellness

segment too, and our rejuvenation packages are increasingly gaining popularity. The breath-taking flora and fauna of the property add to the rejuvenation and relaxation experience. Besides this, our hotel is renting out its venues for photoshoot purposes (ad films, photography brochures, etc). Given the beautiful 75 acres landscape, we are the most coveted property in Goa. These are our new business verticals for revenue generation," shares Srijith.

If you are looking for luxury in a beachside setting, then The Leela Goa is a perfect choice. The resort, all the while adhering to strict hygiene and sanitisation standards defined by Suraksha by The Leela, offers some of the most sought after services in Goa. The Leela Goa has its very own - The Club. Private and exclusive, The Club has twenty lavish suites, each with a personalised 24-hour butler, all-day dining at the Club Lounge.

Group demand will continue to be significantly impacted, particularly large ones

MICE will take its due course to pick up, for now the wedding business has observed a significant increase. The hotel has dished out various worthwhile deals and packages to boost up its wedding and MICE business. Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels & Resorts, shares more with TTJ.

Rachita Sehgal



Kush Kapoor

MICE has been one of the major revenue generators for hotels. With the current scenario, what market

segments are going to drive the performance of hotels?

The leisure segment in form of staycations and wellness packages at resort properties - The Roseate Ganges in Rishikesh and The Roseate New Delhi have been doing extremely well. With the re-opening of the T2 terminal, domestic travel has been on a rise as well as corporate and business queries have started pouring in. We have seen a surge in occupancies at Roseate House since its reopening, the room sales numbers are extremely good.

Regarding the MICE are you anticipating any business?

MICE business will take its time to recover and come full throttle, we have seen an encouraging number of queries for weddings, for now, I am hopeful by next quarter we will see a positive movement in terms of MICE

business. Group demand will continue to be significantly impacted, particularly large ones. While the bookings for essential meetings and small group events booking have started trickling in already it would take several months to reach the Pre COVID levels.

Apart from MICE what are the alternate revenue sources the property is engaged in?

The volume of wedding numbers will be there, however, the number of guests will reduce. We have been able to optimize on home food deliveries, laundry service, advance purchase vouchers, minibar replacement with a reasonably priced consumption menu that a guest can order from IRD and the introduction of online retail to offer goodies from our Upstage Collect. Work from Roseate has also been introduced to attract corporates who have largely been working from home and looking for a fresh change from their mundane routine.

'Talent has to be nurtured, preserved and polished for a better post-COVID tomorrow'

Radisson Blu, Faridabad is located in the proximity of many corporate offices offering the luxury of space that is spread across 1.6 acres, and which houses 124 aesthetically designed rooms. Keshari Ranjan, Director of Sales, Radisson Blu Faridabad, talks about the strategies, programmes, and projects that his property has been working on to be successful post-crisis.

Prashant Nayak



Keshari Ranjan

Speaking of key indicators that he has been following, which can help the recovery of the hospitality industry, Ranjan tells, "Weddings having close family members and relatives, pre and post-wedding events and

residential wedding and related groups have still kept the momentum alive for hotels that opened post lockdown; though the sizes of the events have shrunk considerably due to social distancing norms. MSME sector has been the saviour for many hotels in terms of room sales kick off whereas the staycation and near the city guests have been the flag bearer segment from the local market. These are not high ticket customers and the requirements are volatile as well as price sensitive. Thus, hotels should focus on sustaining this demand by effective services and maintaining hygiene standards so that there is a long term gain."

Presently, the property is focussing on the price-sensitive MSME sector, staycation lovers and corporates engaging in office space/ work from hotel module. Also, thoughts are given to the wedding segment as it is the prospective top-line generator whereas Dynamic Rate Plans for OTAs will keep on stimulating the online demand.

"We have taken ample health & safety measures and focussed on maintaining cash

flows by bringing down the costs and at the same time preserving our key assets and talent. Sales and marketing is operating with a long term vision understanding customer pain points and exhibiting flexible approach." shares Ranjan.

Post the pandemic, in the 'new normal', Ranjan believes that crisis drives change and most of the time these changes are auto-correction. Hygiene & Safety Protocols will be the key decision making factor for customers to choose a hotel; experimented Ancillary Revenue Plans (on the digital platform also) will go side by side with the core business of Rooms & Food and Beverages; Cost control, revenue optimization and maintaining cash flows without compromising on safety, security and level of satisfaction for a guest will determine the success of a hotel which is ultimately the survival of the fittest.

"Last but not the least the greatest asset for hotels: their talent has to be nurtured, preserved and polished for a better post-COVID tomorrow," concludes Ranjan.

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts set to debut in Jaipur

Promising unparalleled luxury, The Leela Palace Jaipur is a testament to the company's strategy to grow in gateway cities and key leisure and resort destinations across the country.

Team TTJ

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts recently signed a management agreement with Tulsi Palace Resorts Group to expand its portfolio to Rajasthan's capital city, Jaipur. Over the next few months, the existing hotel in Jaipur, will undergo enhancements both in the product as well as its service offerings and will be branded upon completion of the renovation by early 2021. A reflection of modern palatial grandeur, inspired by the Rajputana heritage, the property will introduce The Leela Palace Programming and signature Palace Service delivered with authenticity and the warmth and graciousness of Indian hospitality to the Pink City.

Anuraag Bhatnagar, Chief Operating Officer, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts said, "We are excited to introduce the famed Leela Palace experience as the epitome of true Indian luxury to the vibrant city of Jaipur. This hotel will be a significant addition to The Leela brand portfolio and will join our coveted Palace properties, The Leela Place New Delhi and The Leela Place Udaipur to complete the leisure circuit of one of the most sought-after

tourist itineraries in the world. The branding is in lockstep with the growing demand from the discerning global traveller to experience meaningful and transformative journeys that are an authentic expression of a city's heritage, history, culture and traditions."

Located amidst tranquil environs near the Amber fort on Delhi-Jaipur highway, the hotel is set on over 8 acres of landscaped gardens, against the majestic backdrop of the Aravalli range. Within easy driving distance from Delhi, it offers the perfect vantage to explore the city in all its glory, with the city's historical places of interest, buzzing bazaars brimming with textiles, art and handicrafts and the famous silver and gemstone markets only a short distance away.

200 lavishly appointed rooms suites and villas, including 88 uber-luxe private villas, will offer luxuriant indulgence. While the culinary repertoire at the

hotel will evoke the art of fine taste-making and seduce the senses with everything from the royal kitchens to traditional Indian to contemporary fine dining. The Leela Palace Jaipur boasts of over 50,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space including a stunning pillarless Grand Ballroom, and verdant lawns providing a superlative venue for iconic celebrations, memorable weddings and bespoke events. Leisure facilities will include a pool, a state-of-the-art gymnasium and a holistic wellness-oriented Spa.



One Rep Global to represent Gangtey Lodge, Bhutan in India

Discretely nestled near a cluster of farmhouses, the Lodge provides the perfect springboard to refresh and rejuvenate in the pristine Himalayan environment. The 12 beautifully appointed farmhouse-inspired suites, reflect Bhutan's rich cultural heritage with warm fabrics and earthen tones.

Team TTJ

One Rep Global partners with Gangtey Lodge, Bhutan to represent them in the outbound tourism sector of the India market.

Located in a protected nature reserve, the spectacular Gangtey Valley is home to the black-necked cranes that fly in to roost every winter from Tibet. The Gangtey Lodge is perched at the head of the valley, with sweeping views over the 17th-century monastery, upland pastures and extensive pine forests. Discretely nestled near a cluster of farmhouses, the Lodge provides the perfect springboard to refresh and rejuvenate in this pristine Himalayan environment. The 12 beautifully appointed farmhouse-inspired suites, each with their own cosy fireplace and spacious private bathroom, reflect Bhutan's rich cultural heritage with warm fabrics and earthen tones.

There are several experiences for guests at Gangtey Lodge to enjoy. These have been designed to embrace one's spiritual side or to cater to the adventure or nature seeker. The

Lodge's Guest Experiences partners with the local community and its neighbouring 17th-century Monastery and Monks University and serves to drive its ethos of placing people and traditional livelihoods at the heart of its mission to grow and thrive together.

One can reconnect with nature and hike the numerous ancient trails in the valley accompanied only by birdsong or find spiritual enrichment at the Gangtey Monastery. For those who like a quiet and relaxing vacation, the resort also offers culinary experiences and pampers one with its wellness programme.

Khin Omar Win, the Co-founder and Owner of Gangtey Lodge, said, "In 2003, when Brett and I first came across the beautiful Gangtey Valley, we envisioned a special retreat where guests could completely unwind, and at the same time connect with the valleys pristine nature and authentic culture. In partnership with One Rep

Global, we are excited to welcome our friends from across the border."

Speaking on the occasion, Hemant Mediratta, Founder, One Rep Global, said, "Post COVID-19, people will be more encouraged to take fewer, more immersive trips as opposed to travelling multiple times a year. Their emphasis will be on experiential travel and their choice of hotels will follow suit. Gangtey Lodge is one such destination that we are proud to represent to the Indian customer as it represents everything that people are now looking for."



Lemon Tree Hotels launches Lazy Lagoon, Baga- A Lemon Tree Resort

The resort features 44 well-appointed rooms and suites, and caters to every traveller's needs, from daycationers and extended leisure travellers to beach and party animals.

Team TTJ

Lemon Tree Hotels, through its management subsidiary Carnation Hotels has announced the opening of the 44 key resort- Lazy Lagoon, Baga- A Lemon Tree Resort. This marks the launch of the company's fifth hotel in Goa, with existing hotels in Candolim, Calangute and Morjim.

Located on Baga Creek, Lazy Lagoon, Baga is an expansive and aesthetically designed Lemon Tree Resort. This charming retreat, located in the heart of the vibrant North Goa area, offers alluring views of the Baga River and Creek.

The resort features 44 well-appointed rooms and suites, which combine understated elegance with modern amenities and facilities. Designed for the comfort of every traveller, most of the plush and comfortable rooms and suites offer a panoramic view of

the Baga River and Creek.

The resort caters to every traveller's needs, from daycationers and extended leisure travellers to beach and party animals. Guests can swim a few laps in the stunning pool, chill at the Verandah, test their skills at the fishing deck, shoot a few games of pool, or beat their friends at foosball. Animal lovers can also spend some time with the six turtles who have taken up residence in one of the lagoons at Lazy Lagoon, Baga. All this, while sipping on your favourite drinks and brews, and savouring the delicious food, spanning from international, to Indian, to local Goan delicacies.

For the water lovers and thrill seekers, the famous Baga Beach is in close proximity, and features a variety of activities, from snorkeling and boat rides, to jet skiing and paragliding. The resort is also strategically

situated to provide access to some of the best nightclubs and hot spots, as well as the other popular beaches in North Goa, including Vagator, Anjuna, Calangute and Candolim. The Saturday Night Market is five minutes away from the resort and promises to keep your weekend busy with the best that Goa has to offer in one place.



WTTC recognises India's commitment to save Travel & Tourism

As of September 2020, more than 121 million jobs and livelihoods in the Travel and Tourism sector have been impacted globally creating the worst economic and social crisis. The WTTC presented a plan which aims to restart international travel and tourism and recover 100 million jobs globally.

Team TTJ



Gloria Guevara

During the historic meeting of G20 Tourism Ministers and CEOs of the world's leading companies, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) acknowledged the government of India for its support to the private sector.

Gloria Guevara, President & CEO, WTTC,

said, "We would like to thank the Government of India for its continued support and commitment to Travel & Tourism. We also express our gratitude for recognising that cooperation between the public and private sectors will be critical for the recovery.

"India is a major tourist destination and is, therefore, a strategic ally to strengthen the recovery of Travel & Tourism activity in the region. In 2019, India's Travel & Tourism sector made up 6.8 per cent of the country's total GDP, and 8 per cent of total employment. The government of India's leadership is instrumental and essential for us to be able to work towards a single agenda and the reactivation of international travel to benefit the millions of people in India who depend on the sector for their livelihoods."

Puneet Chhatwal, MD and CEO of Indian Hotels Company Limited, said, "It was an honour to be part of the historic G20 Tourism Meeting. In India, travel and hospitality contributes 9.3 per cent to the overall Indian GDP and accounts for over 8 per cent of India's total employment. It is therefore imperative

to come together and focus on the revival of the sector across the globe with optimism, hope and unity in solidarity of the industry. It is important for governments and the private sector across the world to collaborate and set standardised protocols which includes rapid testing procedures, establishing consistent global quarantine practices or creating a framework for synchronised global contact tracking. A unified approach will allow us to build the new age of travel, stronger and better than ever, whilst inspiring traveller confidence."

WTTC has been at the forefront of leading the private sector in the drive to rebuild global consumer confidence and encourage the return of Safe Travels.

According to WTTC's 2020 Economic Impact Report, shows how the Travel & Tourism sector will be critical to the recovery. It revealed that during 2019, Travel & Tourism was responsible for one in 10 jobs (330 million in total), making a 10.3 per cent contribution to global GDP and generating one in four of all new jobs.

FAITH calls out to survive and revive on 'India Tourism Vision Day'

With the theme 'For Indian Tourism to thrive tomorrow, it has to survive and revive today,' the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), the policy federation consisting of ten national associations representing the complete tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India, on October 8, 2020, had organised 'India Tourism Vision Day'. The Board and the Presidents of all the ten FAITH Associations held a virtual National Press Conference to address the theme and their respective visions for the present and future along with addressing the issues the hospitality and travel industry is facing owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.



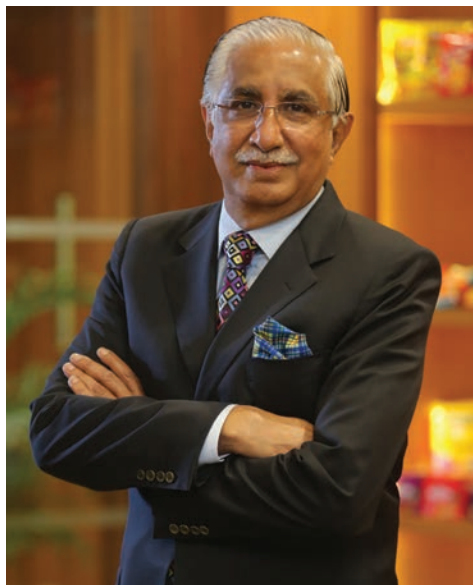
Prashant Nayak

When FAITH was launched in 2013, Indian Tourism was ranked at 68th at the World Economic Forum Tourism Competitiveness study. FAITH along with the support of the Ministry of tourism worked on many initiatives to better this rank. In the World Economic Forum, tourism 2019 competitiveness study, India is now ranked 34th. From 68 to 34 is a giant leap but Indian Tourism still has a long way to go and FAITH wants to take it to the next level.

Over the past seven years, the FAITH Associations, their Executive Committees across the country have indeed worked very hard with their respective state governments and with the central government to undertake countless initiatives to double the global tourism competitiveness ranking of our country. Now, their first goal is to move India into the Top 20 ranks in global tourism competitiveness in 5 years post COVID and then on to the top 10 rankings in the next following five years. Below are excerpts from the speeches made by the association members on 'India Tourism Vision Day.'

Nakul Anand Chairman, FAITH

To give you an estimate, Indian tourism accounts for between 9–10 per cent of Indian GDP on a direct and indirect basis. In the post-COVID normal as our country moves towards the stated goal of becoming a \$ 5 trillion dollar economy, our vision is to have a tourism economic footprint of \$ 500 bn. That would more than double the economic footprint of tourism from what it is today.



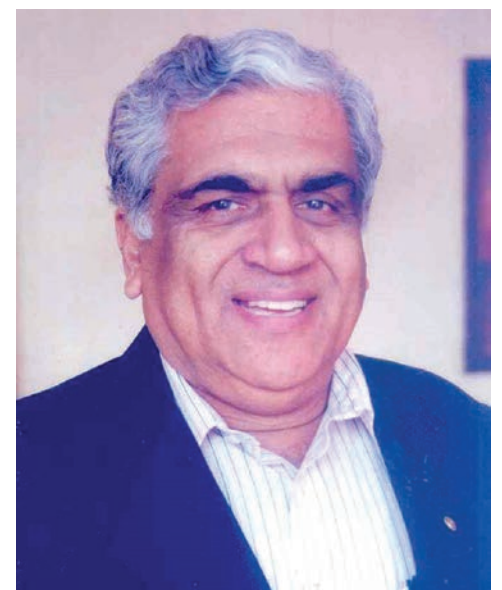
From now, till the time the vaccine is deployed, we need to sustain tourism and the service talent that forms the core of this industry. We believe this will be best served by a tourism COVID-19 Fund set up by the Ministry of Tourism where interest-free funds are given to support the employees and the operating costs of tourism companies.

We need to ensure that an across the board moratorium is made immediately applicable for tourism enterprises till March 2022 or till complete recovery happens and there should be no interest on interest during that period. As we restart tourism from a zero base today across all our verticals, we need revival policies in terms of GST correction, export status, infrastructure status, industry status, secured refunds, SEIS, all of which will be detailed shortly by the 10 Association Presidents of FAITH. These are the fundamental enablers of putting the Indian tourism economy back on track.

Indian tourism needs to be structured through a constitutionally empowered legislative body - A national tourism

council headed by our Honourable Prime Minister along with the presence of all chief ministers. This will enable fast track centre state-level tourism decision making and work on a One India- One Tourism approach leveraging and utilizing full synergies of India's tourism potential across all our states. This will raise the decibels for going Vocal with Local. In line with Made in India, our vision is Tourism - Made in India, to make India one of the most preferred Tourism destinations both for domestic and international tourists offering best in class tourism experiences, infrastructure and services right here in India.

Captain Swadesh Kumar President Adventure Tour Operators Association of India



In the \$ 750 bn+ world adventure tourism industry which is poised to touch \$ 1.5 trillion in the post COVID world, India currently has a negligible share. We look forward to working closely with the central and each state government to move towards a vision

is to get at a respectable market share of 5-10 per cent in the medium to the long run in the world adventure tourism market which is commensurate with our immense natural assets.

At the outset, we must have a sustainable and responsible development plan around each vertical of natural heritage tourism be it in Mountaineering, cruising, trekking, wildlife and reserve forests based activities, snorkelling, paragliding, white water rafting, conservatories, paragliding, ballooning, desert safaris and so on.

Most adventure tourism activities are based on working with the local population in hinterlands and rural areas and which is in unorganised sector. Currently, all of them are unemployed with no work. We need a robust social security mechanism effective immediately across the country on the lines of MNREGA for such tourism industry stakeholders. Some states such as Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Uttarakhand have started a support mechanism for such tourism stakeholders that need to be replicated across the country. We need to have a robust hub and spoke, all-season, intermodal connectivity model across air, rail, road, or water connecting such destinations across the country. We want to become one of the top ten nations in adventure tourism ranking in the post COVID world and must accordingly have to enable policy mechanisms such as search and rescue, satellite phone connectivity, x visa, global insurance recognition and more.

PP Khanna
President, ADTOI



In the post - COVID period, our vision is to double India's share of domestic tourism to almost 4bn domestic tourism visits in 5 years post normal and then increase it again to 8 bn domestic tourism visits in the next five years post that. However, the domestic tour operators are in bad shape

as today people have just started only travelling short distances in their private vehicles. This situation is likely to continue till the time vaccine comes.

To survive, the domestic tour operators need to be supported have an operating cash subsidy to pay their salaries and operating costs. To boost the fast track revival of the domestic tourism market, income tax needs to be exempted for travelling within India. Indian citizens can get income tax credits for up to ₹1.5 lakhs when spending with GST registered domestic tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers and transporters. Not only will this organise the domestic tourism industry which is highly unorganised, but this will also revive domestic demand systematically, a practice that is being followed in many countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Japan, etc.

For our domestic tourism to become world-class, we have to have a consistent national focus on 3S - Safety, Sanitisation, Sensitisation. The ideation drive by our tourism ministry to create Special Tourism Zones across states which would reflect the unique heritage of India in integrated world-class Infrastructure is commendable and its implementation must be fast-tracked to boost tourism supply.

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, Federation of Hotels & Restaurants Industry of India



India has an estimated more than 70000 hotels and over 5 lakhs restaurants. Our vision is to establish India as the concept hospitality and cuisine capital of the world. To make India the global hospitality and cuisine tourism capital and create an ecosystem for entrepreneurship and business models we need an enabling environment from state governments and the central government.

Foremost, hotels and restaurants across each state of India need to be declared and treated as an industry. Unlike commercial establishments we don't just retail, we create and produce high-quality service. Power and water utility rates must be at industrial rates effectively.

GST rates for hospitality in India are one of the highest in the world. This makes both domestic and inbound tourism in India expensive. The 18 per cent GST category for hotels above room rates of ₹ 7500 must be abolished and merged with the category of 12 per cent GST. Gradually, it should be brought down further below 10 per cent with full setoffs in line with global trends.

Today, hospitality covers both conventional and also alternate accommodation such as b&b guest houses, short term rentals and so on. It is thus critical to ensure there is a level playing field in terms of compliances and entry requirements among all sub-segments. This is the darkest moment for the worst-hit industry hospitality and restaurants and our constant dialogues make us confident that State governments and the Central government will enable a lot of policies to revive hotels and restaurants to enable us to move towards our vision.

MP Bezbaruah
Secy Gen, Hotels Association of India



Our vision is to increase the intensity of high-quality hotel accommodation in India which is currently low as compared to global tourism leaders. India has less than 0.2 million classified rooms. This has a direct correlation to our global tourism share which is around 1 per cent. To enable our vision of tourism leadership and to attain our goal of enhancing quality hospitality infrastructure we need to make enabling policy changes to Hospitality which is social infrastructure and is the core of tourism.

If India targets 1 million classified quality hotel infrastructure, that would imply a mammoth capital expenditure of ₹25 lakh crores. If we assume a conservative weighted average estimate of ₹25 lakhs per room. Such kind of capital can only come from the private sector and that requires a long term favorable low-interest rate regime. Hotels are projects with a long breakeven period. Hotels thus require to be declared as a social infrastructure sector so that long term funds are accessible at suitable interest rates to attract private capital hospitality, to create all India jobs and build quality accommodation supply.

Land banks are the most critical resource for hospitality projects. They are also the biggest capex drivers. Very high-quality land assets are available with public sector units and government which can be used to enhance hospitality growth. However, to do that, our hospitality PPP models need to be standardised across the country which create lease structure which enable government share to be linked to business growth and not as fixed payouts which will drive immense hospitality capital into India.

Amaresh Tiwari
Vice Chairman, India
Convention Promotion Bureau



The global MICE industry is estimated to be upwards of \$800 bn and India's share is estimated to be around 1 per cent. This sector has a direct correlation with the GDP. Thus, in line with our GDP share of the world, our first goal post COVID, in 5 years would be to double our MICE share to 2.5 percent of the world and then doubling it over the medium term.

In the global international congress associations rankings, our goal will be to take India's rank to the top 10 in the world from 28 where we are currently. We will also aim to benchmark our cities to the top

global MICE cities. Currently, we have 1 city in the top 100 ranks. Our goal will be having 3 Indian cities in the top 100 in 5 years post COVID and 6 cities in the top 100 in the medium to long term. We need to recognise MICE tourism as a distinct business segment and we need to create a sub-brand to the main brand 'Incredible India'.

To target global congress, conventions and conferences, and social events, we need to create a global MICE bidding fund with a corpus for ₹500 crores to enable our entrepreneurs to undertake techno-economic bids for events that have a bid cycle of 2 years plus. We need to create city convention bureaus in each of our main cities which will work with ICPB as their hub to carry out a global bidding activity. In the post – COVID era, we also need to incentive Indian corporates to undertake domestic MICE and to prevent Indian MICE events from going abroad. For that, we need to offer a 200 per cent weighted income tax expense benefit to Indian companies that are undertaking MICE events in India.

MICE infrastructure is a highly capital-intensive long gestation business and thus we look forward to this being also declared as the infrastructure sector to have long-term funding access to low-interest rates. Of the Special Tourism Zones being planned by the tourism ministry, we look forward to the mega tourism zone which should be fully integrated into world-class MICE city.

Sharat Chandra
Treasurer, Indian Tourist
Transportation Association

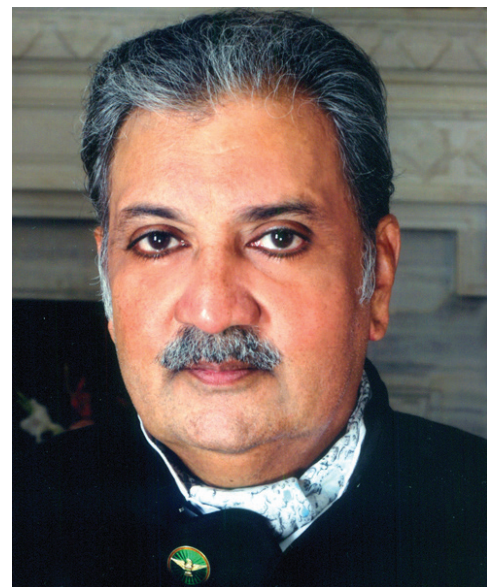


Tourist transportation is the backbone of domestic tourism. Globally in all countries stable and uniform policies for tourist transportation have stimulated growth. Thus our vision for Indian tourism is very simple and straightforward. We

want to provide a seamless, safe and satisfying driving Experience across the lengths and breadths of India for city tourism, state tourism, or national tourism.

Lack of cash inflow is the most pressing issue during the COVID and thus it is most critical that refund of unutilised GST credit lying with the government to the operators must happen which will get liquidity into the system. It is important to have an exemption from payment of insurance premium for the tourist transport vehicles for the financial year till complete stability happens. There needs to be a complete waiver from payment of interstate taxes on tourist transport vehicles for a period of one year till complete resumption takes place. Implementation of these will ensure the survival of tourist transporters and movement towards our vision of creating a seamless tourist experience.

HH Maharaja Gaj Singh
President, Indian Heritage
Hotels Associations



Today, it is estimated that just about 1 per cent of India's heritage has actually been monetised for hospitality and a large part of it may be falling apart for lack of funds or policy focus. Be those our palaces and forts, our monuments and museums, our food, arts and crafts, our historical sites, a lot of them have the potential to become world-class tourism assets.

We need to create a special focus on Indian heritage through a heritage sub-brand which is linked to the main brand of Incredible India. In the post-COVID normal, we need to have India heritage evenings in each of the top 100 cities of the world. We need to create a heritage restoration fund and set up a corpus of at least ₹1000 crores which encourages the custodians of our heritage across the country by funding their efforts at keeping our history alive.

Heritage civic structures are extremely delicate to maintain and thus our depreciation policies, property and other municipal taxes need to be accommodative and supportive to help their owners maintain them commercially. More so heritage hotels bring our history back to life with an enormous amount of effort to restore and conserve them while creating unique hospitality experiences. For the heritage tourism of India, our past will be our future and we look forward to working with all state governments and with the central government to making that happen.

Pronab Sarkar

President, IATO



In the pre-COVID period, India had a global share of 1.2 per cent of international travel. This is not commensurate with the size and scope of India can offer. In the post - COVID period our vision is to double India's share of inbound tourism to 2.5 per cent in 5 years post normal and then double it again to 5 per cent in the next five years post that. This will rightfully put Indian tourism in the global league where it belongs.

To survive till then, the inbound tour operators need to have an operating cash subsidy to pay salaries and operating costs as has been effectively done in the USA and the UK. Our SEIS rate should be made effective 10 per cent for the next 10 years and should be payable immediately on our financial year 2019-20 gone by.

In the post COVID era, each of our missions abroad should be activated with tourism resources for enhancing our tourism distribution in all countries. We are confident that Indian tourism is the next global champion sector for India and the road to that vision begins by surviving and reviving today.

Jyoti Mayal

President, TAAI and Vice Chairman, FAITH



The Indian tourism industry is and will undergo a massive radical change. In the post COVID era, we see Indian travel and tourism becoming one of the biggest travel opportunities globally over the medium to long term. Whether it is outbound, domestic, or inbound travel or in segments of business travel, leisure travel, weddings travel, conference travel, or special activities such as medical or rural tourism travel.

We look forward to creating multiple opportunities for our travel agents fraternity. We have been in close discussions with the tourism ministry for the same and look forward to exciting new segments emerging for our travel agents community. For all of this to succeed, partnerships are critical between the travel agents industry, across the tourism industry value chain and with various ministries and we keenly look forward to that. This is time we have to survive and revive and continue to build trust and confidence to deal with the challenges today in the post-COVID era.

Pradip Lulla

President, TAFI

Our primary vision for our travel agents fraternity is foremost to ensure their security and their protection while making efforts to identifying their business expansion possibilities. No future is safe till our present is safe for our travel agents fraternity.

We have to build on this further collectively to ensure that we create security for our travel agents. Travel agents' payments to principals is unsecured credit and we need to ensure that some form of mechanisms whether escrow or guarantee or underwriting



based mechanisms are in place to ensure that travel agents' money stays secure. We look forward to working with the Government on the same.

India is going to be one of the biggest source markets for outbound travel. We see this as the largest opportunity for our travel agents fraternity. In 2019, 27 million Indians travelled outwards. This has doubled over the past 10 years and post-COVID, we see this doubling again into almost 50 million travellers in less than 10 years and our goal is to enable our travel agents fraternity to provide Indian consumers the best on the class tourism experiences.

Subhash Goyal

Honorary Secretary, FAITH



This is a highly stressed time for the government. But, we are confident that our concerns will be addressed by the government and they will be able to prioritise a relief package for the Indian tourism, travel and hospitality from their limited resources. We are thankful to the complete membership of all our 10 member associations and all the industry who have stood together in this darkest moment of tourism and are with us now in thousands.

Tourism development based on conservation and enhancement

Portugal was declared the Best Sustainable Tourism Destination in Europe, thanks to the example of a shared effort and innovation in responsible and sustainable tourism, part of their 2027 strategy. Claudia Matias, Director, Turismo de Portugal, India, shares more with TTJ...

Rachita Sehgal

Turismo de Portugal's strategy is a digitally oriented one. What started for promotion, is already in knowledge management, with emphasis on technology and innovation. This strategy, moreover, is a reason for praise by OECD and WTO, which consider Portugal as an example to follow. Claudia further shares, "We want to continue to be a pole of attraction for tourists from all over the world, ensuring economic benefits as a result from the tourism sector extends to the whole country, stimulating innovation and digitisation across the value chain of this activity, extremely relevant to our economy."

To affirm Portugal as a sustainable, innovative and competitive destination, based on a cohesive territory and where work and talent are valued, is the purpose of the entire tourism sector. Nevertheless, this implementation and execution are only possible with companies that have created solutions, methods, tools, aiming more efficient processes and resource usage. Portugal has an array of sustainable destinations. Destinations such as Azores, Sintra, Cascais, Torres



Claudia Matias

Vedras, Minho region are magnificent examples, levelling up Portugal as World Leading Destination. "The Azores are the first archipelago in the world to achieve international certification of sustainable destination by an entity accredited by the Global Council for Sustainable Tourism," adds Claudia.

The Regional Secretary for Energy, Environment and Tourism (Azores) mentioned that the certification of the Azores as a Sustainable Tourist Destination is a 'continuous process' and

a 'commitment to leadership, by example and responsibility for the future'.

Leading the tourism of the future is the motto of Portugal's 2020-2027 strategy, focused on people, which defines a vision: to affirm tourism as a hub for economic, social and environmental development throughout the territory, placing Portugal as one of the most competitive and sustainable tourist destinations in the world. The country has set environmental sustainability goals, to ensure more than 90 per cent of tourism companies adopt measures for the efficient use of energy and water and, develop environmental waste management actions. Through these efforts, Turismo de Portugal wishes to increase tourist demand in the country and across several regions.

"We consider ten strategic assets of national tourism: people; climate and light; history and culture; sea; nature; water; gastronomy and wines; artistic-cultural, sporting and business events; welfare; living - living in Portugal. Our goal is tourism development based on the conservation and enhancement of cultural and natural identity's heritage contributing and improving the quality of life of the local communities," concludes Claudia.

Sete Cidades Lake, Azores



Enchanted Princess officially joins Princess Cruises fleet

The finalisation of Enchanted Princess also marks the first ship to be completed during the time of COVID. In fact, Fincantieri was one of the first businesses to reopen in Italy, helping to energise the economy, while operating in new and innovative ways to ensure a safe and productive work environment.

Team TTJ

The newly completed Enchanted Princess was delivered to Princess Cruises on September 30, 2020 in an official handover ceremony presented via live streaming video from the Fincantieri Shipyard in Monfalcone, Italy. With the arrival of this 145,000-ton, 3,660-guest ship, Enchanted Princess expands the Princess Cruises global fleet of MedallionClass™ vessels.

The ceremony was virtually attended by executives from Carnival Corporation & plc including Micky Arison, Chairman of the Board of Carnival Corporation; Arnold Donald, President and CEO of Carnival Corporation; Stein Kruse, Group CEO of Princess Cruises, Holland America Line, Seabourn, Carnival Australia and Carnival UK; and Jan Swartz Group President of Princess Cruises and Carnival Australia. Fincantieri was represented by CEO Giuseppe Bono. International media and stakeholders for Princess Cruises across the globe also joined the ceremony virtually.

Enchanted Princess is the 100th cruise ship built by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri. This milestone is significant for both companies since Crown Princess was the first ship to launch Fincantieri into the modern passenger ship building business, when it was delivered in 1990. The finalisation of Enchanted Princess also marks the first ship to be completed during the time of COVID. In fact, Fincantieri was one of the first businesses to reopen in Italy, helping to energise the economy, while operating in new and innovative ways to ensure a safe and productive work environment.

"We officially welcome Enchanted Princess into the Princess global fleet and recognise the strong bond between Carnival Corporation, Princess Cruises and Fincantieri, our long-standing shipbuilder partner," said Jan Swartz, president of Princess Cruises. "Fincantieri shares the Princess spirit of delivering the highest level of excellence, and we know they will also share in our enthusiasm with pride when the ship welcomes its first guests."



Nishith Saxena

Nishith Saxena, Founder & Director, Cruise Professionals, added, "The completion of Enchanted Princess and her induction in Princess fleet is a mark of resilience of mankind, commitment towards growth & wellbeing & faith in the efforts we all put in the recovery of the cruise industry. Having spent nearly 20 years of promoting Princess Cruises in India, we're confident that passenger demand for premium cruises would start building up soon and we shall witness very busy booking offices."

Enchanted Princess represents an evolution of the design platform used for her sisterships - Regal Princess, Royal Princess, Majestic Princess and the most recently introduced Sky Princess - offering an elevation of spectacular style and elegance that is distinguished by Princess. The cruise ship introduces

new dining experiences, the most pools and whirlpool hot tubs ever, world-class entertainment venues and the breathtaking Sky Suites, offering expansive views from the largest balconies at sea.

On MedallionClass ships, the OceanMedallion™ wearable device transforms vacations by making the entire cruise experience effortless, delivering highly personalised service, and enabling touchless interactive experiences and entertainment. Among enhancements, guests enjoy expedited boarding; on-demand food, beverage, retail and service delivery; keyless stateroom entry; contactless payment; friends and family locator; anywhere wagering; interactive games; and movies/live TV on the go.

Enchanted Princess also features the best Wi-Fi at sea, MedallionNet™, on board so guests can stay connected to the things they love and share vacation memories with ease. MedallionNet offers unprecedented connectivity that's fast, unlimited, reliable, and affordable with an access point in every stateroom, so guests can stream favorite movies, shows, games and music; connect to favorite social media sites; and video chat from anywhere on the ship.

First introduced on Sky Princess and now Enchanted Princess, are the new luxury Sky Suites with inclusive amenities, attentive service and a dedicated Suite Experience Manager. In addition, Enchanted Princess features Take Five, the only jazz theater at sea, celebrating the iconic sounds, culture and history of jazz.



UTAH

Where five national parks are only the beginning



Rachel Bremer

Our state motto is Utah Life Elevated®, but, our tourism team has fondly coined Utah as a destination where ‘mother nature played favourites’ We do indeed have five breathtaking National Parks, (known as the Mighty 5®), and 44 State Parks, (many of which could be National Parks), but, that is only the beginning. We are also home to The Greatest Snow on Earth®, with 15 ski resorts and 10 within an hour’s drive from Salt Lake City International Airport, we are a true year-round destination.

Rachel Bremer

Utah is a road trip state that beckons taking your time, stopping to take in the breathtaking vistas. A state that offers respite and a clear mind in uncertain times.

Utah’s capital city and urban core, Salt Lake City appeals to the nature lover, the music lover, the foodie, and the enthusiast of the arts. Visitors flying into Salt Lake City International Airport are welcomed to Utah’s capital city, with the backdrop of the Wasatch Mountains seemingly within reach as you land. Salt Lake City International Airport recently opened its brand-new, \$4.1 billion massive new rebuild, featuring a new terminal and a new concourse. Salt Lake City International Airport is Delta’s fourth-largest hub, this coupled with the airport rebuild ushers in new non-stop flight

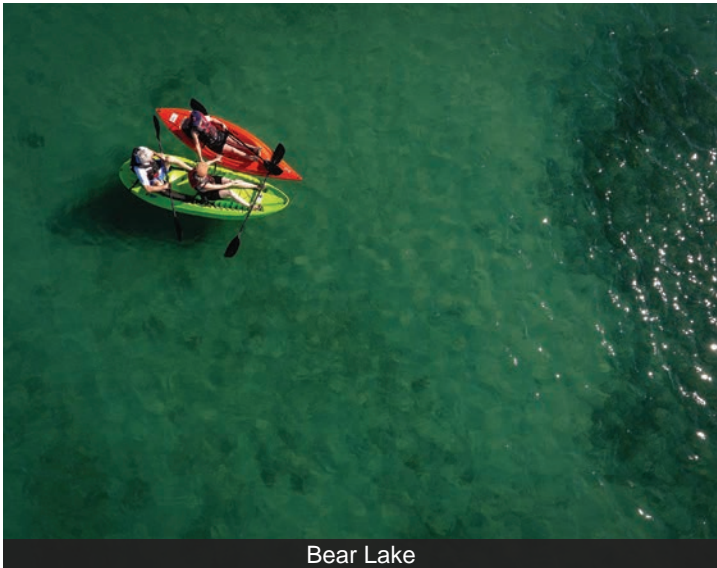
opportunities globally, including Asia. I am lucky enough to be able to work near the State Capitol, with trails like Ensign Peak and City Creek Canyon accessible from my office.

Salt Lake City International Airport is also the closest International Airport to Yellowstone National Park and an excellent gateway to the hidden gems along the route to Yellowstone in Northern

Utah. Stop at Ogden’s historic 25th Street, visit Utah Olympic Park in Park City, drive through the Logan Canyon scenic byway, and enjoy the turquoise waters of Bear Lake en route to Yellowstone.



Salt Lake City Skyline



Bear Lake

Traveling from Capitol Reef to Bryce Canyon, I invite visitors to take it slow, and enjoy the All American Road: National Scenic Byway 12, and take it even slower by spending a night or two in serenely remote Boulder, an unexpected haven for Zagat-rated cuisine. (Not to be missed!)



Zion National Park

Four hours south of Salt Lake City is Moab, one destination with two National Parks, Arches & Canyonlands. The landscape transitions from the granite and lush green of the Wasatch Mountains to the red rock of Southern Utah. Arches National Park is the largest collection of arches in the world, with over 2,000 arches. I hiked to Delicate Arch as a child, and just as we talk about in our commercials, the chills that came over you when you round the corner to Delicate Arch do happen and are remembered. Canyonlands features endless deep canyons, towering mesas, pinnacles, cliffs, and spires stretching across 527 square miles, (848 kilometres). Canyonlands is excellent for solitude, to moderate hikes, to stargazing.

Capitol Reef is Utah's lesser-visited National Park, and a different landscape altogether. My favourite part of Capitol



Bryce Canyon

I had the opportunity to visit Bryce Canyon for the first time in the winter two years ago, and seeing the hoodoos, (the orange spires), capped with snow was surreal, and an unforgettable experience. Bryce Canyon is open year-round, as are all of our national parks.

Zion National Park, located in South-West Utah is a must for both the avid hikers and the moderate hikers. Zion carries a reputation as a bucket list destination for adventurous trail seekers and sightseeing enthusiasts around the world. Angels Landing is a 5.4 miles (8.7 km) round-trip strenuous hike, and is not for the faint of heart, but, the view is worth it!

East Zion includes towns like Kanab. Kanab, Utah is a classic American West, surrounded by towering Navajo

sandstone cliffs and vistas of sagebrush. This scenery has lured filmmakers to Kanab for nearly 80 years. Abandoned film sets near town have become tourist attractions. The buildings all over town have plenty of movie posters and

autographed photos to support Kanab's self-proclaimed title, "Little Hollywood."

Lodging around the state varies from 5-star properties such as the Amangiri near Kanab to 3 and 4-star chain properties, for the family looking for a pool, and hot breakfast. In Utah, we have bookable and developed

products including unique lodging like the Conestoga Wagons in the Bear Lake and Capitol Reef areas, with views of the Milky Way, Hogans in South-East Utah, and Yurts in Escalante, Utah.

When travel resumes, we invite you and your clients to a road trip in Utah. Where enjoying the stargazing, serene vistas, pristine skies, and authentic communities are encouraged and demanded.



Capitol Reef National Park

Reef is visiting Fruita. Fruita is home to fruit orchards, featuring heirloom fruits, and there is nothing like enjoying a fruit pie at a picnic table surrounded by the vistas and expansive views of Capitol Reef.



Milky Way over Conestoga Wagons at East Canyon State Park

Rachel Bremer is the Global Travel Trade & Destination Development Manager at Utah Office of Tourism and Film

Greece intends to dynamically enter India market in the next 3 years

GNTO is working towards finding more lucrative opportunities to strengthen and expand its network in India and directly involve travel communities to boost travel activities and position Greece on top of every Indian traveller's bucket list.

Team TTJ



Dimitrios Fragakis

The Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) finds that Indians have been consistently on the list of global target markets owing to its evolving population of experimental millennials who are now embracing travel as a part of their lifestyle. In this context, it has an objective to re-establish its connection with the travel trade fraternity in India and further entice Indians to visit Greece.

Also, GNTO is looking towards the means of communicating the COVID-19 situation in Greece and share the safety measures and travel guidelines that are being undertaken to ensure travel safety. Further, GNTO wants to capitalise on the opportunity to ensure that the health and safety of its visitors is undoubtedly the priority of the tourism board. Thus, the GNTO team is working towards new initiatives in India which can manifest into Indian arrivals in Greece soon after lockdown relaxations.

Dimitrios Fragakis, Secretary-General, said, "Health first—has been our imperative since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.

And I am proud to say that we have been successful. The Greek government designed detailed health protocols, in consultation with the leading experts. The protection measures have been implemented professionally, consistently and credibly by the businesses and the Greek state, since the reopening of borders in July of 2020. My clear message as the Secretary-General of the Greek National Tourism Organisation is that this summer Greece managed to keep its visitors safe, by implementing all health protocols in tourism. The South Asian market, and in particular the Indian market, is a new dynamic and exciting field for the Greek Ministry of Tourism and the Greek National Tourist Organization. We are looking forward to enhancing our collaboration with the Indian market."

Adding to that, Harris Theoharis, Minister of Tourism commented, "India is one of the emerging markets of high quality and importance on international level and it is one of the strategic goals of Greek tourism to enter this market dynamically in the next 3 years. Already, before the pandemic started, we were in close cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism of India, the first goal being to establish a direct air flight connection. In fact, last February, I was at an outbound travel exhibition and met with my Indian counterpart Prahlad Singh Patel. In these bilateral meetings, we agreed that there is great interest from both countries to sign an MoU on issues of

investment and tourism, the priority still being that we ensure a direct air flight connection. I want to communicate to the trade and consumers that, The Ministry of Tourism is always at your disposal to help with such efforts and I am sure that soon there will be international flights without restrictions and that I will be back in India and will welcome friends from India to Greece."

Taking these endeavours forward, fedHATTA, the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Travel & Tourist Agencies, is the nationwide representative of the entire travel agency sector in the relevant national, European and international organisations. fedHATTA, through its member associations, represents approximately 2500 travel agencies, employing approximately 22000 people, across Greece. The organisation pursues the development and promotion of Greek tourism and contributes to the effort of the country for the expansion and enhancement of tourism services.

Greece continues to be one of the most coveted international destinations preferred by Indians owing to its unparalleled cityscapes and holiday experiences. GNTO is working towards finding more lucrative opportunities to strengthen and expand its network in India and directly involve travel communities to boost travel activities and position Greece on top of every Indian traveller's bucket list.



BLADE India introduces 'BLADE Anywhere'



'BLADE Anywhere' is an extension of the brand's time-efficient short-haul flights and seamless experience, connecting any destination with more value additions for its customers. A trusted UAM lifestyle service, BLADE provides a safe, personalised, hassle-free and convenient option for consumers opting for charter services.

This exclusive service by BLADE was launched in Maharashtra and by the seat services resume from November 2, The bookings can be made on the website, on the app and via the Flier Relations team. Once a customer books, they're assigned a dedicated relationship manager to take care of all their travel needs. The customer's experience starts with a pickup and drop off through on-ground premium automobile partners; curated and customisable menus of food and beverages, and a warm customer experience team to ensure the BLADE experience. Apart from the standard benefits that chartering offers, BLADE Anywhere goes above and beyond in making the journey an experience in itself.

BLADE India has partnered with Tamarind Global to provide customers holistic travel solutions.

American Express Global Business Travel acquires AI Start-up 30SecondsToFly



GLOBAL
BUSINESS
TRAVEL

The 30SecondsToFly technology will enhance the travel experience for GBT's clients' travellers by increasing the number of service options available to them throughout the trip lifecycle. In addition to live chat via the Amex GBT Mobile App and Apple Business Chat, travellers will be able to initiate automated servicing requests from their favorite messaging service. By providing tested, AI-powered self-service options, the technology complements the best-in-class service provided by GBT's global network of travel counsellors.

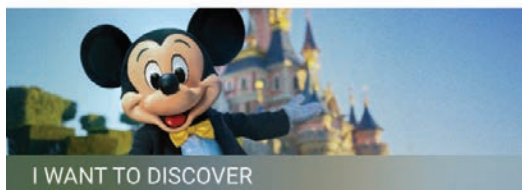
The platform is tailor-made for business travel and has already been used successfully by thousands of travellers. 30SecondsToFly's experienced AI developers will join GBT's growing team of technology experts as part of the acquisition. The technology will be integrated into GBT's services over the coming months.



CATALOGUE



WHAT'S NEW?



I WANT TO DISCOVER



I WANT TO SELL MORE



Disneyland Paris launches new DisneyStars training platform

With an easy-to-use interface that is optimised for mobile and completely new content, lots of games and quizzes, the new DisneyStars training platform is the best way to learn all things Disneyland Paris all while having fun.

Disneyland Paris shares the top three reasons encouraging Travel Agents, Tour Operators and other Tourism Professionals to start using the training platform. For easy, universal access, the DisneyStars training platform is accessible now on a Web version and is also available as an app on Apple Store or Google Play Store.

The new training platform helps Tourism Professionals stay updated with the latest news and information about Disneyland Paris and study various modules at their own pace and convenience; accessible from mobile, tablet or desktop.

With the aim to enhance one's knowledge, Tourism Professionals can now gain access to exclusive courses covering Disney Parks, accommodation, dining, services and much more. With features such as a search engine and a personal profile to track one's progress, paired with lots of games, quizzes and tips to sell and upsell Disneyland Paris, one can also engage with their colleagues at the click of a mouse.

From unlocking exclusive perks, incentive prizes to industry rates and offers, Disneyland Paris encourages all Tourism Professionals to come aboard with them to this fun, new 'Learn and Play' style and relish the Disney magic while ensuring professional growth.

Dr Trust HJ Lin appointed as Deputy Director-General, Taiwan Tourism Bureau



Dr Trust HJ Lin has been recently appointed as Deputy Director-General, Taiwan Tourism Bureau. In his new role, Dr Trust will be supporting the Director-General in leading the tourism bureau to greater heights with his experience and international network with trade, tourism and countries globally.

Dr Trust will also lead the post-COVID revival of tourism from both an inbound and outbound perspective, with his PhD in Strategic Management serving as an essential tool in leading the new phase of Tourism.

With his current involvement leading TTB in India among other nations since 2018, the interest and travellers from India has grown 7-fold via key partnerships with relevant stakeholders, innovative campaigns and an atmosphere of curiosity and trust amongst travellers when thinking of travelling to Taiwan.

Garuda Indonesia launches the special mask livery on its Airbus A330-900 Neo



Garuda Indonesia has officially launched the special mask livery on Airbus A330-900 Neo at Hangar 2 GMF AeroAsia (01/10). The special livery has a mask on the front (nose) of the aircraft, which also makes Garuda Indonesia as the first airlines in Indonesia with the special mask livery. The launch of the special mask livery is the part of Garuda Indonesia's support to the government's education program through the 'Let's Wear Mask' campaign.

The total number of aircrafts that will use the masked livery are about five fleets, these special aircrafts will serve domestic flight routes as well as international flight routes, including to Singapore and Japan. However, currently, the total number of aircraft that have been designing with special livery is one and the rest of the aircrafts will be implemented in stages.

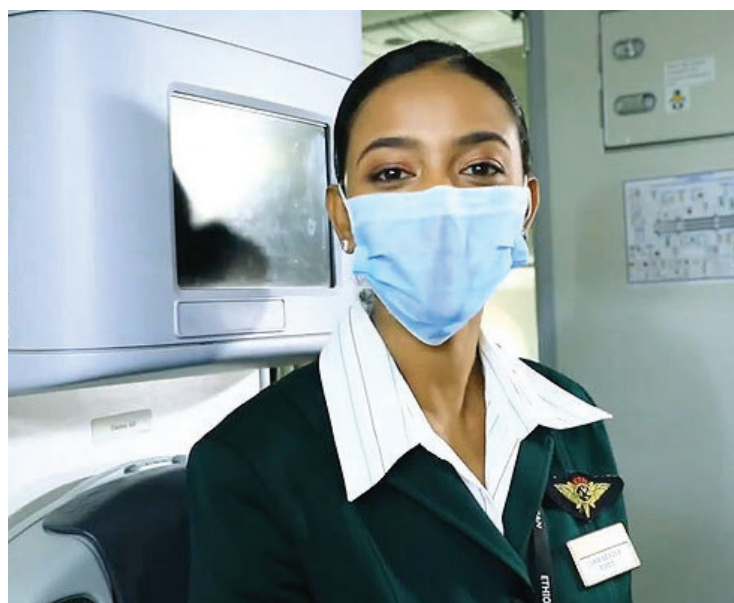
Furthermore, Garuda Indonesia consistently continues to ensure that the health protocols are implemented optimally in all flight operational lines, including through physical distancing between passengers, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for cabin crew, meals provided in mono use packaging, frequent disinfection of the aircraft cabin and through campaign towards the passenger about the air filtration system in aircraft which can filter dust, particles, and virus up to 99.97 per cent.

Ethiopian unveils COVID-19 Global Insurance Cover

Ethiopian Airlines Group has announced that it will cover the medical insurance including repatriation, evacuation and quarantine costs related to COVID-19 from now until March 31, 2021. The coverage is applicable to all Ethiopian's international flights booked with the airline's tickets.

The global cover dubbed Sheba Comfort is part of the airline's extra security measures to protect passengers and ensure that they travel with peace of mind.

Passengers will have their medical expenses up to 100,000 euros covered if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 during their travel in addition to quarantine costs up to EUR 150 per day for a maximum of 14 days. Sheba Comfort also includes repatriation and evacuation services whenever needed besides 24/7 assistance through the airline's hotline. The insurance scheme, introduced in collaboration with AXA Partners and Awash Insurance Company, is valid for 92 days for round trip and 31 days for one-way trip.



Hahn Air welcomes six new partner airlines into its leading network

Hahn Air has established contracts with six new partner airlines during the past quarter, bringing the total number of new carriers implemented this year to 13. Air Liaison (DU) from Canada, Blue Islands (SI) from the United Kingdom, Corendon Airlines Europe (XR) from Malta, Corendon Airlines (XC) from Turkey, Jet Fly (JFL) from Austria and Tayaran Jet (E8) from Bulgaria can now benefit from an expanded distribution reach and incremental revenue in up to 190 markets.

With its ticketing and distribution solutions, the German airline Hahn Air facilitates global business between travel agencies and airlines. Hahn Air partner airlines can choose from different distribution solutions. HR-169 enables airlines that have at least one GDS contract in place to sell tickets in markets where they are not connected to a local settlement system (e.g. BSP, ARC or TCH). H1-Air and X1-Air are the products for airlines wanting to enter the GDS world or looking to expand their ticket sales to additional GDSs and more than 100,000 travel agencies.

Of the new partners, the carriers Air Liaison (DU), Blue Islands (SI), Corendon Airlines Europe (XR), Jet Fly (JFL) and Tayaran Jet (E8) join Hahn Air Technology's X1-Air network and are now



available in Amadeus, Sabre and Travelport under the designator X1. Corendon Airlines (XC) complements the H1-Air network of Hahn Air Systems and can be booked under the code H1 in the following ten major GDSs: Amadeus, Axess, Galileo, Infiniti, Sabre, Sabre Pacific (formerly Abacus), Sirena, Travelport, Travelsky and Worldspan.

PCR test now included in all Etihad Airways tickets from Abu Dhabi



Etihad Airways will offer PCR tests included in all air tickets booked by customers in the UAE for flights departing from Abu Dhabi International Airport until December 31, 2020, with the exception of services to China.

The airline has collaborated with Life Medical Diagnostic Center (Life Dx) to offer convenient testing between 48 to 96 hours prior to departure, at its network of collection facilities in the UAE. Travellers flying First or Business will also have the option of selecting tests at their home. The quick and easy process can be booked directly with Life Dx.

This is a significant development which allows Etihad to provide greater ease of travel for those departing from Abu Dhabi, by removing as much inconvenience from the PCR testing process as possible. This follows on perfectly from the recent introduction of complimentary COVID-19 insurance cover on all Etihad Airways tickets. The solution's main concept is to ramp-up the capacity of Life Dx's central lab for up to 40,000 tests a day through fully automated state-of-the-art robotic systems and to create a wide network of sample collection centres through partnering with selected healthcare providers across the UAE. Now passengers can book their appointments online easily at their most convenient location and time before their flight.

Sarovar Hotels opens its first property in Bhimtal, Uttarakhand

Nestled in the

picturesque region of Kumaon, Rosefinch Sarovar Portico is Sarovar's first hotel in Bhimtal and sixth in Uttarakhand.

Located by the famous Bhimtal Lake, Rosefinch Sarovar Portico has well-appointed lake view Deluxe rooms, Luxury rooms and Family rooms encased beautifully by quaint architecture that reflects Bhimtal's history and culture. The hotel aims to promote tourism in the area and offer high-quality service and stay options. This scenic lakeside destination is a treat for those who enjoy aquatic sports, adventure travel, and outdoor activities.

For dining and entertainment experience, guests can opt for Lake Café, an all-day dining restaurant serving lip-smacking delicacies that offers a host of Indian, Chinese and Continental specialties. Wild Oak, the lounge, is a cozy sit back and relax area. The lounge space overlooks the quaint surroundings of Bhimtal and makes for a perfect unwinding experience.

The Courtyard is Rosefinch Sarovar Portico's party lawn for hosting a social gathering. This venue is surrounded by Oak trees all around. Opera, an ideal amphitheater for outdoor activities is situated close to the reception overlooking the emerald green Lake. With its gorgeous interior, the Euphoria banquet hall offers an ideal venue for leisure activities and business events. In addition, the hotel offers Yoga sessions, entertainment zone to its guests.



MoA signed between REC Foundation and SKUCT for Kedarnath redevelopment



Rural Electrification Corporation Foundation (REC) recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Shri Kedarnath Utthan Charitable Trust (SKUCT) in the presence of Secretary Tourism, Dilip Jawalkar. REC had announced a contribution of ₹23.53 crore under Corporate Social Responsibility to SKUCT. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in this regard was executed between Neeraj Sharma, REC Limited and Deputy Director, Jitendra Kumar, SKUCT.

Shri Kedarnath Utthan Charitable Trust is governed by a governing council/office bearer chaired by Chief Secretary, Govt. of Uttarakhand as the President of the Trust and other senior government officials from various departments. SKUCT has been constituted by Govt of Uttarakhand in 2017 to facilitate construction, re-construction, development, re-development and renovation of all infrastructure at Kedarnath Dham.

REC will be donating 40 per cent of the aforementioned amount in the first phase. Construction of admin offices and hospitals below Saraswati Plaza at an estimated cost of ₹12.08 Crore, Infrastructural development between Saraswati edge and temple street at an estimated cost of ₹9.03 crore, restoration and conservation-related civil works of Retas Kund, Udak Kund, Hans Kund and other developmental works at an estimated cost of ₹2.42 crore is allotted.

Kedarnath is the dream project of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, which the state government is constantly striving to realise. The development and strengthening of public infrastructure is the key to this objective. With this action plan, the local people will get employment in construction works, as well as the construction of tourism infrastructure will attract more devotees to this destination which will strengthen the local economy.

Hong Kong Tourism Board launches a standardised hygiene protocol to assure visitors of a safe and healthy stay

In a significant stepping up of the city's fight to control the virus, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) has launched a standardised hygiene protocol in partnership with the Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA), one of the leading conformity assessment bodies in the territory.



The protocol aims to provide a unified set of guidelines on hygiene and anti-epidemic measures for tourism-related industries that customers and visitors can easily recognise and understand to better prepare Hong Kong for the resumption of inbound travel.

The protocol will cover shopping malls, hotels, restaurants, retail stores, coach companies, tourism attractions, travel agencies, and more. Participating businesses and outlets are required to comply with a series of hygiene and anti-epidemic measures (see appendix). After passing the assessment, details of the businesses and outlets will be uploaded to a dedicated website of the HKQAA. The businesses and outlets can display a designated logo for recognition to show their commitment to the protocol. The HKQAA will conduct random visits for continued inspections.

The HKTb is currently working with the Hong Kong SAR Government and the tourism industry to better prepare Hong Kong for the resumption of travel to Hong Kong and aims to welcome visitors back with an assortment of exciting experiences and attractive offers.

Amazing Thailand participates as Destination Partner for Golf Corporate Team Challenge 2020

To promote Thailand as a Golfers' Paradise, TAT participated as destination partners for the Corporate Team Challenge 2020, organised by Golf Plus and SLW Golf. The tournament took place on September 26, at ITC Golf Course in Manesar, Gurgaon. 72 avid golfers participated in the 18-hole tournament that included top Corporates & CEOs.

With extensive branding on event backdrops, promotional material, golf balls, and on-course presence, the event was a great way to reach out to keen golfers in India and talk to them about the various golf courses, resorts and world-class golfing facilities that Thailand has to offer. TAT New Delhi Director, Vachirachai Sirisumpan welcomed the participants and also distributed prizes and invited them to Thailand for a great golfing holiday when international travel resumes.

Every year, a whopping 600,000 golfers visit this Golf paradise to try their hand at some of the 300 odd designer golf courses in Thailand. Many of the courses are designed by the biggest names in the business from Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman, Robert Trent Jones, Peter Thomson, Phil Ryan to a host of American, Japanese, Australian and British designers. Thai designers too have taken to the trade in a big way and the Banyan Golf Club in Hua-Hin, the finest in all Thailand is designed by a Thai Golf architect.

Singapore Tourism Board launches a WhatsApp channel for the Indian travel trade stakeholders



The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) India office has embarked upon an important communication initiative by launching a WhatsApp business account to continue strengthening their engagement with the travel trade fraternity in India.

As one of the first National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) to introduce a WhatsApp Business Account in India, the tourism board looks forward to leveraging this added B2B communication platform to disseminate information and updates on Destination Singapore in a more direct, swift and timely manner.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, STB India has undertaken the #UnitedWeStand trade engagement theme to ramp up trade engagement efforts. Video messages showcasing solidarity and unity with the travel fraternity, update sessions and webinars on Destination Singapore to upskill their partners' leisure and MICE product knowledge, etc. were some of the initiatives undertaken by them in the market.

To subscribe to the STB Whatsapp Business Channel, scan the QR code above, enter details in the form provided and save the number on vCard received, click "send" to receive messages.

Zurich Airport International to design and operate Noida International Airport under a 40-year concession

The Government of Uttar Pradesh recently signed the concession agreement with representatives of Zurich Airport International to commence the development of the Noida International Airport at Jewar. The concession agreement grants Zurich Airport International the licence to design, build and operate Noida International Airport for a period of forty years.

Noida International Airport will be developed as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Scheduled to open in 2024, NIA will merge Indian culture and hospitality with Swiss technology and efficiency. India's newest greenfield airport will deliver quick, efficient processes and excellent value for passengers, airlines and partners. NIA will operate as a fully digital airport, providing a safe and contactless travel experience and customized commercial offerings for passengers. NIA will be the first net-zero emissions airport in its class, setting a new standard for sustainable aviation.

In November last year, Zurich Airport International AG (ZAIA) won the contract to build and operate the airport in Greater Noida for a period of 40 years. ZAIA received the security clearance from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to develop the Noida International Airport at Jewar in May this year.

Korea Tourism Organization promotes South Korea as a Wedding Destination

Korea Tourism Organization organised its first-ever webinar in India for the destination wedding industry with Jeju Island being the focus destination on September 17, 2020. The online event was attended by over 75 reputed wedding planners, wedding industry suppliers and honeymoon holiday planners. Post the event, along with the destination information material all attendees will also receive Korean luxury cosmetic souvenirs to physically experience Korea during this

period when travel is not happening.

The webinar brought together industry stakeholders from both India and Korea on a common platform where they could discuss opportunities for collaboration. From the Korean side along with Korea Tourism Organization, the panel comprised of Jeju Tourism Organization the regional tourism board of Jeju Island and suppliers Jane DMC Korea and Shanti Tour. From the Indian side, the panel comprised of reputed Indian wedding planning companies Cosmic Light Events and Golden Aisle. The event was hosted in collaboration with the World Wedding Forum who gave the keynote address. Minister from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in India inaugurated the event with his welcome remarks.

To begin Indian destination weddings in Korea, KTO is focussing on small boutique and themed weddings along with pre and post-wedding photoshoots at unique locations. A luxury honeymoon in Korea is also a prime target for KTO. The focus of the webinar was mainly on Jeju Island which is also known as the 'Hawaii of Korea' and is famous for weddings and honeymoon. The webinar highlighted Korea's capabilities in managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Indian food availability and unique venues where Indian weddings can be organised.





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