

1 IN CIRCULATION & READERSHIP SOUTH ASIA'S LEADING TRAVEL TRADE FORTNIGHTLY

TRAVTALK

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India needs more Buddhist tourists

Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (I/C), Tourism & Culture, says that it is imperative to increase the number of Buddhist tourists and pilgrims coming to the country, for which both government and industry need to work together and overcome shortcomings.

Nisha Verma

As the country grapples with a drop in tourist numbers both domestic and international, Ministry of Tourism (MOT) is set out to maximise all possible avenues to better the situation. While some may be new initiatives, some others, like the promotion of Buddhist tourism in India, have been part of MOT's blueprint for a while now. Keeping with the ministry's efforts in the furtherance of the segment,

Tourism Minister **Prahlad Singh Patel** recently inaugurated a webinar on cross-border tourism that was organised by Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) to promote Buddhist pilgrimage. Speaking at the webinar as the Chief Guest, he highlighted the initiatives taken by Ministry of Tourism for the development and promotion of Buddhist sites in India. Addressing the fact that India receives only 0.05 per cent of global Buddhist tourists and pilgrims, he listed some important Bud-

It is important for everybody to determine the reasons for India receiving only a fraction of Buddhists as tourists and pilgrims, and take corrective measures

dhist sites in India and added, "Buddhism has a large following across the world, and India

is 'The Land of Buddha'. Our country has a rich Buddhist heritage, but still attracts only a very small percentage of Buddhist pilgrims. It is important for everybody to determine the reasons for India receiving only a fraction of Buddhists as tourists and pilgrims, and take corrective measures accordingly."

Patel also shared that one initiative by Ministry of Tourism that had been successful in increasing Buddhist tourism numbers in India was the installation of signage in the



Prahlad Singh Patel
Minister of State (I/C), Tourism & Culture

Sinhalese language at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, for the convenience of the large number of tourists from Sri Lanka visit-

ing the site. "We have signage in international languages at important Buddhist sites in the country, which have been put up at five Buddhist sites or monuments in Uttar Pradesh, including those in Sarnath, Kushinagar and Shravasti. In fact, the decision of the government to declare Kushinagar Airport in UP as an international airport will offer better connectivity to travellers, resulting in the boost of domestic and international tourism, as well as economic development of the region," Patel said.

SpiceJet gets nod for US & UK

SpiceJet has received the government's nod to operate flights to the US and the UK. It has already operated over 450 charter flights to repatriate over 75,000 Indian nationals stranded abroad. The airline will also operate its first long-haul flight from Amsterdam to Bengaluru on August 1.

Manas Dwivedi

In terms of Air Services Agreement between Government of India and the governments of USA and the UK, SpiceJet has been designated as an Indian scheduled carrier to operate to the two countries. On this, **Ajay Singh**, Chairman & Managing Director, SpiceJet, says, "The UK and the US are two of the top international destinations for airlines and we are delighted to have got this designation to operate to these two countries.



Ajay Singh
Chairman & Managing Director, SpiceJet

There is an opportunity in every adversity, and the present crisis has seen SpiceJet rise to the occasion and play a pivotal role.

From operating over 4300 cargo flights to over 400 charter flights to bring stranded Indian nationals back home, SpiceJet has worked non-stop and contributed in whatever manner possible." In addition

There is an opportunity in every adversity, and the present crisis has seen SpiceJet rise to the occasion and play a pivotal role

to the charter flights, SpiceJet has been actively participating in the Vande Bharat Mission, operating 25 flights.

Business in FY2019-20

In terms of business operations, the recently-released Q4 results of FY2020 reveal that SpiceJet incurred a net loss of ₹807.1 crore against a profit of ₹56.3 crore in the same quarter of the previous year. The airline reported a net loss of ₹934.8 crore in FY2020. Singh says that two factors that adversely impacted the airline's

Key business updates for FY2019-20

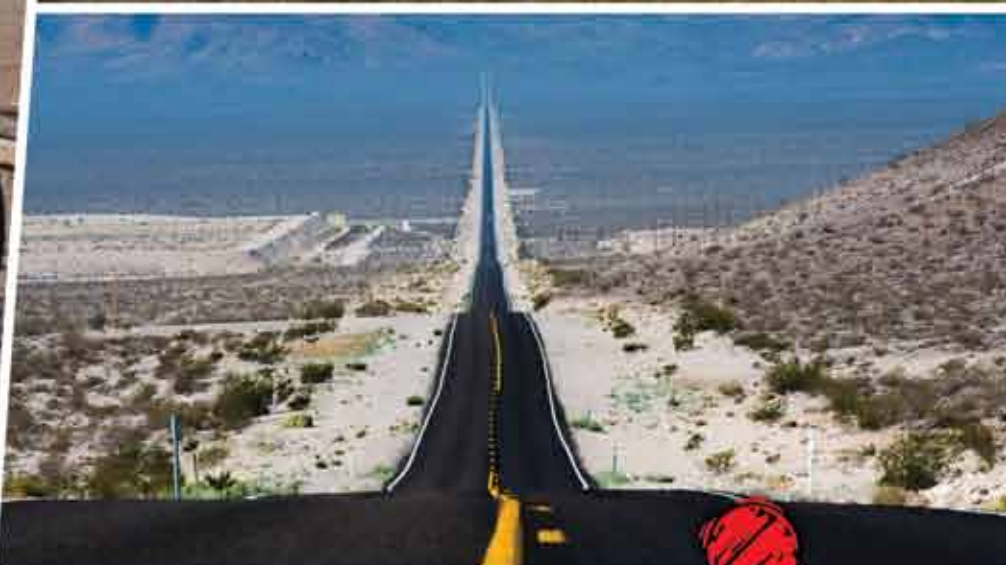
- ❖ Passenger capacity up by 40%; operating income up by 36%
- ❖ Aircraft fleet at 114 as on March 31, 2020
- ❖ Clocked 90%+ PLF for 58 successive months till February'20
- ❖ Operated 570 average daily passenger flights before COVID-19
- ❖ Signed definitive codeshare agreement with Emirates
- ❖ Likely return to service of MAX in Q1 of CY2021 to be big boost

performance and bottom line were the COVID-19 pandemic and grounding of the 737 MAX. In terms of operational parameters, SpiceJet had the best passenger load factor

amongst all airlines in the country during the quarter and the year. The average domestic load factor for the quarter was 90 per cent while for fiscal 2020 it was 92 per cent.



Ghost Town



seema.datt@buzzindia.in, +91 9650196531 | ritesh.ahluwalia@buzzindia.in, +91 9650311775



Recognition is the first step

The Regional Office of the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) recently conducted an online training session on its guidelines on how the travel trade can get recognised by the ministry, and how they can avail the MDA scheme which is in part a financial support.



Hazel Jain

In order to help a group of people, one has to recognise them first. Re-initiating its programme to 'recognise' the travel trade during this time of crisis, the Regional Ministry of Tourism Office recently conducted an exclusive webinar on the process of applying for MOT recognition for members of the Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA). More than 300 members attended the event.

Venkatesan Dhattareyan, Regional Director (West & Central India), India Tourism Mumbai,



Venkatesan Dhattareyan
Regional Director (West & Central India), India Tourism Mumbai
Ministry of Tourism

Ministry of Tourism, presented the process that the tourism stakeholders need to follow to get a 'Ministry of Tourism Recognised Service Provider' stamp. However, there was a caveat. He

began by stating, "There is a difference between recognition and registration. The MOT does not register any organisation but it recognises the existing organisations. Registrations are done by various authorities in the state and other forums. But MOT,

tors to bring them in the organised sector. Application fee is ₹3,000 for all categories to be paid online and is valid for five years. It is also open for tourist transport operators. But, please ensure that whoever is registering is the owner or a permanent employee."



This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide tour operators to bring them in the organised sector



through its guidelines, recognises the travel trade fraternity and they are called 'MOT-recognised Service Providers'."

It is a three-step online process on etraveltradeapproval.nic.in and the only time it goes offline is when the regional office person comes for verifying the documents. Dhattareyan said, "This is a voluntary scheme open to all bonafide tour opera-

By enrolling, agents can use the Market Development Assistance (MDA) which is in part a financial support. MDA for domestic tourism was earlier ₹30,000 but MOT is looking to enhance it keeping the pandemic in mind. Dhattareyan added that his Delhi team is also working on relaxing certain requirements for this programme since things have changed. For instance, many agents have given up office space and working from home. ETAA North Chapter has also requested India Tourism to conduct a similar webinar for its members.

India Tourism has another programme called the 'Incredible India Tourist Facilitator's Program' which was launched in 2018. ↴

Benefits to agents

- ❖ Being a 'Ministry of Tourism Recognised Service Provider' offers great branding
- ❖ It gives a stamp of trust to clients and thus helps in marketing
- ❖ It allows listing of approved service providers on the Ministry website
- ❖ Operators get preference to participate from MOT's pavilion in domestic and international fairs
- ❖ Approved operators can also avail financial support under Market Development Assistance
- ❖ Approved operators get to use the Incredible India logo

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TRAVELTALK

VIEWPOINT

Living with COVID

At some point in our COVID-affected lives, we must presume that the worst is now behind us and make efforts to move on.

Some parts of the globe have accepted this and have already started to cautiously open doors to the outside world. Will India be ready when things reach a tipping point?

Stakeholders in the industry have been making demands – both monetary and policy-wise – of the government during the pandemic. But it is important to question whether they have also looked inwards to see, how they can help themselves. Are we, as an industry, prepared to fight this impending battle?

While domestic tourism is slated to pick up first, we must ensure that we are also ready for inbound tourists – a vital segment that can help us kick-start our economy. Is our messaging aligned to the requirements of each international market? Have we looked at the right marketing mix? Have we continued to keep our communication lines with our clients as well as vendors open? Are we conducting webinars that are relevant for our trade partners? These are some of the questions we need to ask ourselves, and ask right away without passing the buck to the government.

Having said that, all plans and blueprints that we make today need to be fluid and adjustable to keep in line with the changing market dynamics. To ensure that we remain always in sync with these ever-evolving global updates, we need to keep our ear to the ground. Which countries require health certificates for visitors from India? What documentation does the Indian immigration officer expect from foreign tourists? Which states have their international and domestic airports open?

But before we can get to the next step, our focus should be on re-building the confidence of not just our clients but also our DMCs. And to be heard by everyone, we must do this together – hotel chains, big and small tour operators, travel agents, trade associations, the ministry. Every little action taken right now will have a compounded effect later on. Small changes may not seem to matter much in the moment, but they do lead on to positive visible results in future. Are we, the industry, ready to handle the business coming our way?

India: Bookings hurt but will lead

ForwardKeys, in association with PATA India Chapter, has come up with air travel trends to India and South Asia during COVID-19. The report, which also lays focus on the future, predicts that growth in air travel bookings to the region will be led by India.

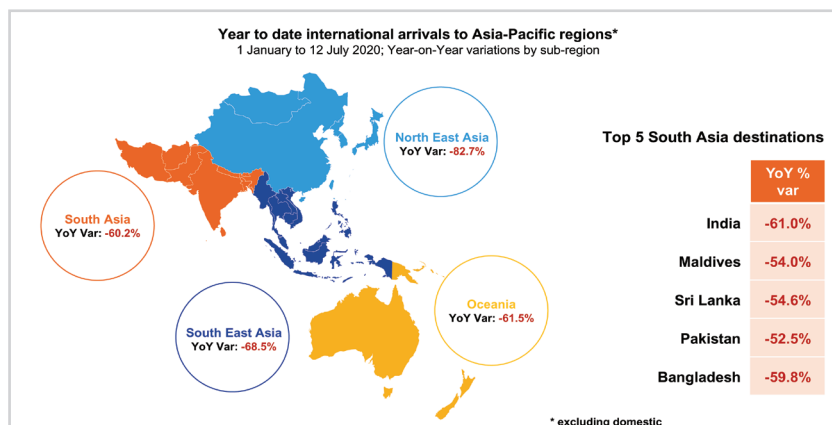


Travel analytics company ForwardKeys has employed several data-sets to reflect on the entire



ForwardKeys

traveller journey, resulting in some key predictions for the future while also mapping how booking behaviour has panned out during the COVID-19 pandemic, a step that is key to understanding the future of travel to India and South Asia.



capacity and actual air reservations data, combined with historic trends, to estimate the total air market forecast in the region.

Current booking pattern

ForwardKeys reveals that based on year-to-date variance in international arrivals to Asia Pacific

same period last year, South Asia has been the least affected within APAC with a -60.2 per cent variance. The most affected region is North East Asia with a variance of -82.7 per cent. The analysis also reveals that within South Asia, India has been the most affected country with a variance of -61 per cent.

travel in October–December 2020 vs travel in October–December 2019. India, however, will continue to have a year-on-year variance of -78.1 per cent, which is higher than the year-



on-year variance predicted for total inbound to South Asia that stands at -70.4 per cent. In fact, international bookings for travel to South Asia in Q4 2020 are said to peak in September.



Top 5 most searched destinations in South Asia from key long-haul source markets

United Kingdom	U.S.A	Germany	UAE	Australia
1 Pakistan	1 India	1 Iran	1 Pakistan	1 India
2 India	2 Pakistan	2 India	2 India	2 Pakistan
3 Iran	3 Iran	3 Pakistan	3 Maldives	3 Sri Lanka
4 Sri Lanka	4 Maldives	4 Sri Lanka	4 Sri Lanka	4 Iran
5 Bangladesh	5 Bangladesh	5 Maldives	5 Bangladesh	5 Bangladesh

The methodology includes application of flight search, seat between January 1, 2020 and July 12, 2020 compared to the

Outlook for South Asia in Q4 2020

ForwardKeys reveals that the top five South Asian inbound destinations for international travellers will be led by India. This outlook is based on bookings confirmed in the first week of July versus the same period last year, for

Key findings - APAC

- ❖ More cancellations than new bookings for international travel to South Asia since early March
- ❖ New bookings overcome cancellations to the Maldives towards June-end for the first time since March
- ❖ Issued tickets for domestic air travel in China show an uptick since late May
- ❖ As Europe begins to rebound, tickets issued for international flights to Spain, Greece and Portugal for travel in July and August rise
- ❖ Spike in cancellations to India and South Asia from southern Europe
- ❖ Weekly tickets made for future domestic travel in India show slow signs of recovery
- ❖ Spike in tickets issued during Easter break correspond to travel within India between June–August

Top 5 South Asia inbound destination countries for International travellers* – October, November & December 2020

	YoY %
India	-78.1%
Maldives	-49.2%
Sri Lanka	-67.0%
Nepal	-70.4%
Pakistan	-76.5%

*Excludes Domestic travel

Most popular domestic routes in India

June 2019	June 2020
Delhi - Goa	Delhi - Patna
Goa - Delhi	Mumbai - Varanasi
Mumbai - Delhi	Mumbai - Delhi
Delhi - Mumbai	Delhi - Mumbai
Bengaluru - Delhi	Delhi - Goa

The above city pairs are the most searched domestic India routes in June for any future travel



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Adapt or perish, your choice!

Different sectors of the tourism chain are adapting technology in innovative ways and the pandemic has only hastened the process. From use of Artificial Intelligence to speeding up the airport experience through faster check-ins and boarding, technology seems to be the way to go. Have you jumped on the wagon yet?

Airline marketing strategy firm

“Touchless travel is set to improve passenger experience. Necessity is the mother of invention. Ideally, it would not have taken the tragedy of the pandemic for the industry to embrace touchless technology wholeheartedly, but I'm convinced that the end result will in many ways be better and more seamless all around.”



Shashank Nigam
CEO
SimpliFlying



Menino D'souza
Director, Department of
Tourism, Goa

State tourism board

“Social media is going to be key in gathering data – culling out relevant information, analysing it and coming up with a response system to be able to respond promptly. Such intelligent systems have to be put in place. AI-based interventions are something we are looking forward to in the coming years.”

Corporate

“Technology doesn't mean that the human touch will completely disappear. The customer is ready now and if you don't do it now, then when? The time is now. Now is the time to reset your business OTP – Operations, Technology and Process. For many agents, it is their last chance to act.”



Rajdev Bhattacharya
Global Head Travel &
Hospitality Services and
Way2Go, Wipro



Natasha Moorhouse
Research Associate,
Manchester Metropolitan
University

Academia

“Virtual reality certainly offers a solution to overcoming several challenges the industry is facing at the moment. It will likely play two pivotal roles: a powerful destination marketing tool to entice people to travel again, and a temporary escape for those who are not yet willing to travel.”

Passenger experience company

“We thought there must be a better way to travel, so we started by building kiosks, bag drops, and boarding gates and trying to make them as quick as possible with the whole idea that somebody checks-in in five seconds, drops off their bag in five seconds, and boards in five seconds.”



Aaron Hornlimann
CEO
Elenium Automation



Lindsay White
VP, Eastern Region
(APAC & ISC), Etihad Airways

Airline

“We have utilised the past few months to innovate and adapt. We are about to launch self-service check-in and health screening at Abu Dhabi Airport which will read guests' respiratory system, heart rate and temperature. Thermal cameras have been installed at immigration which will measure their temperature.”

Inputs by Hazel Jain



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Common protocol is must

Meenakshi Sharma, DG, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), says they will be working towards a common protocol in all states, as well as the new tourism policy with responsible tourism at its core.

Nisha Verma

Meenakshi Sharma believes that the pent up desire of people to travel will lead to the opening of tourism. But, building confidence among them will be a task, for which MOT has taken several initiatives already. While domestic travel continues to be a priority, different SOPs, guidelines and quarantine rules being followed by states is a hurdle for all. Thus arises the need for common protocol across the country. Sharma adds, "It is absolutely required, and MOT would be an advocate for it. We need to start working towards making the state governments agree. If we start now, maybe in 2-3 weeks' time, we can have some consensus, and even ICMR and Ministry of Health could come up with suggestions on the request of MOT and the industry. Persuading state governments requires some reality check on ground as well. I am sure there will be no difficulty on the principle of it; there may



Meenakshi Sharma
Director General
Ministry of Tourism

be some difficulty in implementing it depending on where states stand in the COVID situation."

The DG adds that now is also the time to stress on responsible tourism, including a policy that supports such initiatives and infrastructure projects, and the willingness of the travellers and the industry to be responsible. "We are in the process of making some changes in the new tourism policy, making responsible tourism its foundation. We

can't discuss responsible tourism as a separate entity, but it should be a part of everything we do going forward. There are more elements that will be added as we move forward,

We are already in the process of making some changes in the new tourism policy, making responsible tourism its foundation

one of which will be health and hygiene. It's also about the practices of people and the behaviour of the traveller as a responsible tourist. It cannot only be the responsibility of service providers alone. This will now be our priority and we will be working on it," she says.

Agents stay informed

In its latest initiative, Travelport has launched the Travelport COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin, offering comprehensive information on travel restrictions across the world to travel agents, updated daily.

Nisha Verma

Offering ease of operation to travel agents, Travelport has launched the Travelport COVID-19 Smartpoint Plugin, which offers travel agencies with the latest information on government restrictions, lockdowns and safety measures across the globe, all within the agent workflow. Available free-of-charge to all Travelport customers globally using Travelport Smartpoint 8.2 or above, the plugin can be downloaded directly from Travelport Marketplace.



Sandeep Dwivedi
Chief Operating Officer
InterGlobe Technology Quotient

level information displayed at the click of a button, allowing agents to advise their customers easily and instantly.

cessible up-to-date information, including on government and airline policies, shall unequivocally prove beneficial for our network of agents and serve as a ready aid for gaining momentum in

This free built-in plugin in the GDS is a welcome move from Travelport, one that will result in both an informed traveller and a travel enabler



Agency partners can use the new tool to get detailed information on a range of topics, including lockdown rules, entry requirements and quarantine measures for travellers. One can get country-

Sandeep Dwivedi, Chief Operating Officer, InterGlobe Technology Quotient, says, "With looming uncertainty across the globe, having a substantial amount of certainty through readily ac-

operations and transactions. This free built-in plugin in the GDS is a welcome move from Travelport, one that will result in both an informed traveller and a travel enabler." The information is provided by Safeture, and is updated daily.

Need for a policy overhaul

Arijit Purkayastha, Chapter Chairman for North East, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), feels that not only is there a dire need for a tourism policy overhaul but also a need to bring all stakeholders under the tourism board. He also proposes an inter-country consortium for the growth of tourism.

There is a need for an overhaul of the tourism policy, especially for the Northeast, both from State and Central governments. Assam is the tourist hub for Northeast India. Geographically and culturally, the northeast states have an interdependent relationship. From Guwahati, one could connect other parts of northeast including the neighbouring country Bhutan. Samdrup Jongkhar, the oldest town in East Bhutan, is just 110 kms from Guwahati. Hence, tours can be easily extended to Assam from Bhutan allowing tourists to visit two finest zones. As of now, foreign tourists use the route very often to enter East Bhutan, or exit out of East Bhutan to fly out of Guwahati for their onward destinations.

Bhutan has, for long, enforced a strict policy aimed at attracting "high value, low volume"

tourists by stipulating a minimum royalty of US\$250 per day per tourist (excluding nationals of India, Bangladesh and the Maldives) and propose tourism itinerary

The culture and wildlife tours of Assam and Northeast can be combined with nature tours of Bhutan. We propose the carving of an Assam, Bhutan consortium

wherein visitors can visit both the regions with fine connectivity that promise excellent tourist experience. For example, the popular birding tours in West and East Bhutan, currently conducted by Bhutanese tour operators, can be extended to



cover a birding tour in Assam and Northeast which has fine birding habitats. Similarly, the culture and wildlife tours of Assam and Northeast that are phenomenal draws for foreign tourists can be combined with pristine nature tours of Bhutan. It is in this context that we propose the carving of an Assam-Bhutan Consortium (ABC).

Moreover, domestic tourism will automatically revive the northeast region if LTC (Leave Travel Concession)

is extended by the Centre, which is valid at the moment till September 2020. A Central Government official can avail LTC to travel to Northeast, Andamans and Jammu & Kashmir in any airline, unlike other destinations in India where they have to travel by Air India only. Lesser-known destinations in the northeast also need to be promoted with infrastructure sanitation followed by training the locals by the respective state tourism departments.

Registration of all stakeholders Another vital point that is yet to be implemented is the registration of all agents and hotels in Assam under the Assam tourism board. Although tourism activities in Assam have developed in an unplanned manner, travelling to the region through a tour operator has always been important for a smooth journey. It will be more so even for local tourism, post COVID. On May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for "vo-

cal for local" necessitates the urgent registration of all local tour operators whose head offices are in Assam under the Assam Tourism department. This will enable monitoring and maintenance of tourism service standards. Bringing all local tour operators and hoteliers under one umbrella will be the key to making tourism in Assam a success as they will play a major role in benefitting local communities socially and economically.

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Arijit Purkayastha
Chapter Chairman
North East, ADTOI

The opportunity to profit exists

'Total transformation is the key,' says **Steve Borgia**, Creator, Mentor, Developer, INDeco Leisure Hotels and an exemplar of survival during crisis. He led the group towards profit in the month of June by cutting costs, offering innovative products to local guests as well as arranging weddings at his hotels. This is his story...



Nisha Verma

In a time when businesses are struggling to survive or even exist, INDeco Leisure Hotels managed to make profit in the month of June, despite the lockdown hitting them hard, too. "We were amidst the third failed tourism season and we have not seen a hit like this in the last several decades. It took us time to realise that everything will change, and we need to be ready to transform the product, ourselves and the way we work. However, it's go-



Steve Borgia
Creator, Mentor, Developer
INDeco Leisure Hotels

ing to be tough because with nil revenue and hotels and establishments locked, we need

to meet the payroll, maintenance and security costs. In most countries, the government has taken over the payroll. There is a lot of disappointment and hopelessness



April and May
were just to earn our
salaries, June was for
making small profits,
and July was to get
into the normal grind



we ran our hotels only with 15 people. The government was coming down heavily with rules. The first step was to keep the hotel shut with minimal cost, with lean, efficient, multi-tasking staff," shares Borgia, reminiscent of the hardship and adding that business had to be owner-driven.

How was this achieved?

Borgia shares that once they'd decided to create a team of ever-ready, multi-skilled, responsible and low cost staff, they focused on continuous visible cost control initiatives and increase in productivity. "We cut down frills in the rooms, enhanced tourist experiences while abiding to state

Initiatives undertaken

- ❖ **Love thy neighbour:** Meant for the immediate neighbourhood, it provided rooms and takeaway food at enviable discounts.
- ❖ **Pay as you like:** Friends, clients and elite locals were invited to walk in, check-in, choose their room and enjoy the hospitality. At check out, guests paid whatever they liked.
- ❖ **Long stays:** COVID-safe programme for senior citizens. NRIs were contacted & offered safe, appropriate care of their parents in Tamil Nadu.

and country laws, and delivered back-to-basic products. April and May were just to earn our salaries. June was for making small profits, and July was to get into the normal grind. We offered unimaginable discounts in tariff to attract the young and risk takers. Crowded city apartment dwellers

wanted to escape to safe spaces. We reached out to them for long stays. Entire families moved in," informs Borgia, adding that another timely move was to go for quick-to-kill farm products. In the end, he says, "Not very enviable, but our continuous cost control is what helped us." 🐦

Borgia shares key to survival

"We had to creatively evolve products that were permissible. When there is no scope for revenue, profits are made by cutting down cost continuously. Total transformation was the key. Whatever we did, we were certain that all of it had to start with people who know us and people who lived around our hotel. We had cut room services, prevented staff from entering the rooms, etc. Then came a lot of understanding and achievable goals."

ness among stakeholders, and rightly so. Like most, we have gone back by almost 25 years," shares **Steve Borgia**.

But, besides the hardships of an adversity, Borgia feels that one must look for opportunities. "Down from 120 employees,



The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has partnered with Wanderlust World for the launch of a new App designed to facilitate safe and seamless travel in the wake of COVID-19.

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Tourism Breaking News

■ Airlines lose cash influx with consumers using travel vouchers

■ Goa to invest in social media analytics to target tourists

■ Rajasthan announces more relief for tourism & hotel sector

■ Railways invites bids under PPP to redevelop Bhuj station

■ #FHRAIWorkFOS campaign to provide temporary employment

■ New tourism policy, 5-star hotel in Aizawl on anvil in Mizoram

■ Railways to introduce QR-code enabled contactless ticketing

■ 100% investment from NRIs permitted in Air India now

#TogetherThailand engages the trade

The India offices of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) in New Delhi and Mumbai have launched a digital campaign - #TogetherThailand - to increase their engagement with the India travel trade. The month-long campaign promises to be stimulating, exciting and fruitful.

Manas Dwivedi

In an exclusive conversation with TRAVTALK, **Vachirachai Sirisumpan**, Director, TAT New Delhi – North and East India and **Cholada Siddhivarn**, Director, TAT Mumbai – South and West India, share more details.

The campaign

According to Sirisumpan, this campaign is a 'travel agent engagement' activity by Tourism Authority of Thailand, India Offices in New Delhi and Mumbai. "This year has been a very challenging one for the tourism industry, including us all. As the name of the campaign suggests, through #TogetherThailand, we would like to send a message to our travel trade partners that TAT stands with them to explore all that we can do for our travellers and clients now and in the future," he says, adding that the cam-



Vachirachai Sirisumpan
Director, TAT New Delhi – North and East India

campaign will feature weekly contests on four different themes for each week, to update the trade on destinations, products and services in Thailand that can be planned for the post-COVID-19 travel scenario. "In addition, each week there will be a contest and quiz competition related to the theme for everyone to participate in and win exciting prizes," he says.

Adding to that, TAT Director from Mumbai, Siddhivarn says that the

campaign will be launched on August 5, 2020, and it will be a month-long campaign that will conclude on September 5, 2020. "I think it is good timing for this campaign, to engage with travel agents so that they start prepar-



Cholada Siddhivarn
Director, TAT Mumbai – South and West India

ing for business. I would like to invite all our travel trade partners and travel agent friends in India to join this campaign," she shares.

Boosting relations

Siddhivarn says that the objec-



tive of the campaign is to promote Thailand and maintain it as the top-of-mind destination for travel agents in India by creating an awareness of new products and destinations, along with regular updates on the developing situation in Thailand. "During this time, Tourism Authority of Thailand India Offices (New Delhi and

Mumbai) would like to continue boosting relations with travel trade partners and keep them updated. The campaign is part of our commitment to the Indian market to continue the successful journey with our travel trade partners as we make 'Amazing Thailand' the preferred destination for everyone," she says.

Ayodhya's 1st travel agency

Lucknow-based Tornos has become the first travel company of Ayodhya. It seeks to promote the local community through employment and encourage more tourists to visit the temple city.

Manas Dwivedi

Having worked and researched extensively on the revival of Ayodhya as a tourist destination, Tornos has now set foot in Ayodhya with an office in the temple city. Specialists in immersive travel experiences for the last 26 years, Tornos has been associated with projection of Ayodhya internationally. 'Mokshdayni Walk' and 'Ram Vivah' have been the company's most innovative tourism products based on Ayodhya, which were till now being operated and managed from Lucknow but with the new setup in Ayodhya, would be oper-



Prateek Hira
President & CEO
Tornos

ated locally, bringing down cost and making them more affordable. Tornos is looking at providing employment opportunities to locals and to come up with many more immersive travel ex-

periences to showcase this deserving destination to the world.

Prateek Hira, President & CEO, Tornos, who has been involved in the conceptualisation of

Ayodhya can be seen as a sought-after tourist destination, and the government is possibly seeing tourism to be its main economic driver

Ayodhya's much-celebrated Diwali event, Deepotsava, that draws a lot of attention, says, "The best local experiences can only be delivered by locals, so we decided to set up our office in Ayodhya. Ayodhya can be seen as a sought-after tourist destination, and the government is possibly seeing tourism to be its main economic driver."



Are OTAs leading the race?

OTAs are not only following their website traffic statistics and analytics to draw up projections but are also seizing opportunities that come their way. TRAVTALK talks to three such aggregators.

"We are observing that most travel right now is for emergency purposes or for returning to home destinations. This is because 90% of bookings are for one-way travel and more than 80% of travel is within two weeks of bookings. We expect travel to revive in four phases moving from emergency travel to intra-state, to travel in bubbles between regions that are less impacted, and finally to opening up of leisure and corporate travel for domestic and international. The pace of recovery will be contingent on the evolution of the pandemic."



Balu Ramachandran
Global Head
(Air Business), Cleartrip



Muzzammil Ahussain
EVP - Consumer Travel Unit,
Seera Group

"Corporate and government travel is still very low. Charters in itself is not our core business yet but we are looking at how we can build it as one of our services. The challenge with this is really the approval process. The demand for charters is just not for repatriation but also for leisure or business to destinations that don't have direct flights. If it gains interest, it may become part of our business, but it won't be purely online. We will have some kind of offline, high-touch element to it so that it becomes a bespoke product."

"Travellers from metros are searching for destinations for road trips to Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Goa. Young professionals working from home are willing to shift their workstations to either the hills or the sea-side. Many are opting for ground transport. Also, with business travellers, particularly entrepreneurs and field agents from MSMEs and SMEs returning to work-related trips, we are witnessing early yet strong recovery for our cabs segment between metro to non-metro and non-metro to non-metro routes."



Vipul Prakash
COO, MakeMyTrip
and Goibibo

Inputs by Hazel Jain

Safe and inviting, that's Andaman

Faraway Tree Hospitality, a pure B2B operator that specialises in holiday packages to the Andaman Islands, shares an update on the destination and how ready their on-ground team is to receive your clients during these challenging times. They also claim that today, it is one of the safest places to visit in the country.



Hazel Jain

Faraway Tree Hospitality, a pure B2B operator that specialises in holiday packages to the Andaman Islands, recently conducted a virtual tour of the destination for the travel trade. This was followed by an extensive product update and an interactive Q and A session. One lucky agent, Syed Kausar Peer from Uniglobe Bharath International Travel (Mysuru) who answered the quiz correctly, also won a free holiday for two worth ₹80,000 for 6N/7D as per the showcased itinerary.

Akshat Rawat, Founder and Director, Faraway Tree Hospitality, along with his team took the audience through a detailed summary of the offerings and dos and don'ts for clients. They have handled more than 5,563 guests in the last year alone. The B2B



Akshat Rawat
Founder and Director
Faraway Tree Hospitality

travel company is a one-stop solution – it has its own fleet of vehicles which is COVID-19 ready, and it also runs its own beachside restaurant 'Something Different - A beachside cafe' in Havelock Island, ranked number one on TripAdvisor.

About the destination

Rawat spoke about how the islands are connected with each other. The team has cre-

ated multiple itineraries, but what they focused on during the webinar was a special itinerary they have created for 6N that includes all major sightseeing places. He also added, "The islands will also have good internet connection during sea-



Andaman is also a beautiful MICE destination and we can also create an itinerary for your corporate clients; I will revert to all your queries

son time. Andaman is also a beautiful MICE destination and we can also create an itinerary

Attractions included in the itinerary

Light & Sound show at Cellular Jail	Anthropological Museum
Mahatma Gandhi National Park	Fisheries Museum
Havelock (Swaraj Dweep)	Kalapani Museum
Neil Island (Shaheed Dweep)	Trip to North Bay & Ross Island
Natural Bridge (not recommended for senior citizens)	Trip to Baratang
Samudrika Naval Museum	Sea Walking or Scuba Diving

We also sanitise the inside and outside of our vehicles after every trip. We can do this because we have our own fleet. Each car has a pressure pump and it is sanitised after every trip. Every luggage is sanitised before taking it to the hotel," he shared.

Rawat added that his team is expecting SOPs from the UT

for your corporate clients. If you have any questions, my team and I will revert to all your queries promptly."

Ready for the new normal

Speaking about the main concern of agents, Rawat underlined the protocols the team has put in place. "Are we ready to handle your guests in the new normal? Yes, most definitely. We greet all our customers by checking their temperature and oxygen levels. We also give them a free hand sanitiser



and face mask on arrival. All our fleet drivers have mandatory face masks and gloves on and their temperature is checked regularly.

administration to be released soon. COVID-19 testing is mandatory in Port Blair and is done free of cost. 🐦



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Travel Relations



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Renuka says..

"I believe that 'everything cannot be homedelivered & virtual reality is not real so travel will survive; revive & thrive"

Low-cost solutions for every agent



Nisha Verma

Taking cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Atmanirbhar' message, **Harmandeep Singh Anand**, Managing Director, GPS, says that their initiatives under the banner give them an opportunity to make agents independent or 'Atmanirbhar'. "We have a large following of 50,000-plus travel professionals across India. With these initiatives, we are bringing the cheapest solutions in the world for travel agents so that they can have a portal of their own. All the products we are offering with our partners are cloud-based solutions," he adds.

EASEBUZZ

GPS is now offering cashless digital payment solutions to travel agents in partnership with EASEBUZZ. Elaborating



Harmandeep Singh Anand
Managing Director
GPS

on the partnership, he says, "It is a subscription-based model and free of cost." To this, **Rohit Prasad**, Director, EASEBUZZ, adds, "Our platform is very easy to use. We only take 2-3 KYC documents and the idea is to make it very convenient so that even a non-technical person can use the platform. From a console to a dashboard, we give the complete package."

GST-ready accounting solution

Since accounting is a must for everyone, they are now offering a GST-ready accounting solution for the travel and retail industry in association with Infozeal eSolutions. Anand



Rohit Prasad
Director
EASEBUZZ

shares, "It was initially a desktop-based solution and we have been partnering with them for GPS. Now, they have brought in a cloud-based solution."



Mahesh Patel
Director
Infozeal eSolutions

Sharing details of the product, **Mahesh Patel**, Director, Infozeal eSolutions, says, "It is a back-office management product called ePrompt. Users can create invoices, credit notes, transport vouchers, excursion vouchers, handicap services, visa services and other miscellaneous services in this product. One doesn't have to know about accounting."

Own booking engine

"Today, a booking platform will not cost less than ₹5 lakh. The solution we offer can allow travel agents to have a portal of their own. The cost for the platform will be based on their GPS membership. For Elite members, it's ₹5,000; for Gold members, ₹6,000; Silver members, ₹7,000; for basic membership, ₹9,000; and for non-members, ₹10,000. By becoming a member, though, one gets benefits and the membership fee is already recovered by subscribing. The monthly subscription is ₹1,000-2,000 only. All of this put together makes it one of the cheapest solutions globally. One doesn't even need to get a server, as all these things are taken care of by our technology partner."

—Harmandeep Singh Anand

"We are giving them technical solutions, which means that they can still use their own GDS and login details of various airlines. The only thing is that they can connect on the technology platform, which we are providing to them, to go online. This is for agents who are not online. Those who are already online, they can switch to our portal in case they are not happy with their current solution, and get affordable technology. We are charging only a small setup fee that ranges from ₹5,000-10,000, apart from the subscription fee."



Ajay Jain
Director, Influence
Technolabs



Relax payments, movement

Sarab Jit Singh, Managing Director at Travelite India and KTC India, has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighting the hardships faced by tourist transport operators in the wake of COVID-19, while also suggesting simple measures the government could take to help the sector out.

Respected Sir,

Pandemic has brought tourism to a naught. Tourist transport operators are facing unprecedented hardship due to no business and heavy financial commitments.

Temporary relief on payment of instalments till 31st August 2020 has only delayed the inevitable. Operators will face the reality when payment of instalments will begin. With no financial support from Government, operators are compelled to sell their fleet at half the price as there are very few takers. A large number of drivers and staff members have been retrenched as operators cannot afford to pay salaries without any revenue, turning large number of people jobless.

One can understand government's inability to help tourist

transport operators financially because of financial constraints, but there are certain steps that can be taken by Government at this juncture, which will help survival of some of the operators despite this entire ordeal:

1. Due to lockdown and other restrictions, tourist vehicles are not allowed to operate and the transport offices are also closed. Therefore, Government has extended the validity of all vehicle documents till 30th September 2020.

We request that the validity of the following vehicle documents be extended for one year without payment of any fee or tax or parking charges. The extension should be from the last date of the validity of each vehicle document:

Maximum speed per hour in kilometres on roads in India

S.No.	Class of Motor Vehicle	Expressway with Access Control	4 lane and above divided carriageway (roads with Median strips/Dividers)	Road within Municipal Limits	Other Roads
1.	Motor vehicles used for carriage of passengers comprising not more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat (M1 category vehicles)	120	100	70	70
2.	Motor vehicles used for carriage of passengers comprising nine or more seats in addition to the driver's seat (M2 and M3 category vehicles)	100	90	60	60

- a. Permit
- b. Fitness Certificate
- c. Annual Tax
- d. Parking fee (wherever applicable)

The extension should be granted automatically, so that operators are not required to queue up at

transport offices, where they are harassed and fleeced.

2. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways vide its notification no. S.O.1522(E) dated 6th April 2018 has

notified speed limit permitted for various types of vehicles on roads.

The speed limit should be same for all vehicles in each category. There should not be any differentiation between private and tourist taxis. This disparity has created lot of problems to the traffic on road, as well as operators who are running from pillar to post to get speed governors for such vehicles models where the speed governors are not even manufactured. The operators are also receiving over-speed challans for driving @ 43 Kms p/h in the city of Delhi.

3. Free movement of tourist vehicles across India should be allowed on payment of annual fees as presently done in the case of goods transport.

The tax structure should be derived in such a manner that the tax implications for tourist vehicles is not more than double than that of goods transport vehicles.

We sincerely hope that the request made above will be considered and accepted in the interest of survival and revival of tourist transport sector in India.

(Views expressed are the author's own. The publication may or may not subscribe to the same.)



Sarab Jit Singh
Managing Director
Travelite India and KTC India

The ups and downs of air travel bubbles

While air travel bubbles are a safer approach to starting international commercial flights, it's not an easy feat to achieve. Some travel agents are happy with these international connections, others are still confused. The bottom line remains that the country had to start somewhere, so why shy from employing the safest possible way to travel during a pandemic.



Nisha Verma

Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Hardeep Singh Puri recently announced the opening of air travel bubbles between India and select countries, namely France, US and the UAE. He asserted that these bilateral air travel bubbles will be the only way for-



Manoj Saraf
Managing Director
Gainwell Travel

Air India to Frankfurt as well. As of now, it's not easy to open up these bubbles to every country, since bilateral talks regarding procedures at both destinations take time and



Jay Bhatia
Vice President
TAAI



Biji Eapen
President
IATA

own policies regarding allowing a foreign carrier to land in their country," he says, adding that one way to avoid chaos is for the travel agent to keep clients updated on the constantly changing flight schedules and security norms not only at the time of booking but even a day before the flight.



Mahendra Vakharia
Immediate Past President
OTOAI



Mario Hardy
CEO
PATA

reclaim its pre-COVID numbers, the answer lies in bilateral air bubbles that will carry a possible number of people under defined conditions as countries, including India, are still imposing entry restrictions," he said at the time of announcing the routes under the arrangement.

A difficult task at hand

While the air bubbles are currently limited to the destinations mentioned earlier, talks are on with Germany for operating Lufthansa and

not each country is comfortable opening its borders to everyone.

Echoing the sentiment is **Mario Hardy**, CEO, PATA, who feels that there is a lot of complexity involved in setting them up. "It is not a simple task. There are bilat-

eral agreements involved between the two countries. It's not only the immigration department involved, but also health departments and ministries of health of the respective destinations. However, the countries need to agree to have enough trust in the healthcare system of the respective destination to allow people to travel across their borders."

Manoj Saraf, Managing Director, Gainwell Travel, agrees. "Every country is going to devise its



Zahoor Qari
Chairman, TAAI - Jammu & Kashmir Chapter

But, creates safe zones

While there can be complexities involved, the travel trade is happy.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI, says, "Having air bubbles is the most secure way of travelling currently, because if we have connecting flights and the bubbles are not created, there will be multiple complications with the rules and regulations that need to be followed. The direct flights under bubbles are much better and easier to follow from point to point. Hence, people don't have to move around in transiting to some

Contd on page 14 ►

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Invest in wellness tourism now

In recent years, a big draw for people visiting India has been healthcare, specifically alternative medicine. The Indian medical tourism industry was poised for a growth of about 200 per cent in 2020. Experts share their opinion and knowledge on the re-emergence on wellness, at the 'Selling Happiness' webinar on July 28 that was powered by TRAVTALK.

“As soon as the skies open, people will be keen on choosing wellness holidays. Through wellness, they will try and release stress, attain calmness and connect with the good spirit. India has been home to yoga, meditation, spirituality and Ayurveda for ages. I expect that India will become the most visited destination for wellness, healing and happiness post COVID-19. Wellness tourism will be the most sold tourism product.”



Zia Siddiqui
Managing Director
Alliance Hotels & Resorts



Guru Yogi Shivan
Director
Indimasi

“In India, physical problems are solved through Ayurveda, mental issues can be attended through Siddhaveda. You cannot buy health from shops; it should evolve from within. I believe that all our problems can be solved by looking within the Indian traditional system. India is teaching indigenous techniques for exploring the inner self. We should educate everybody to be healthy and in tune with Mother Nature.”

Questions to the panel

Do you have doctors and support staff that can speak European languages?

Guru Shivan: Yes, we have translators for assistance.

What itineraries would you recommend for a visit to Indimasi?

Guru Shivan: Four categories: 7 days, 14 days, 21 days and 28 days.

Why will wellness tourism do better than allopathic medicines?

Guru Shivan: Wellness tourism is also about inner happiness. At the end of the day, everyone is looking for containment, so wellness tourism will be the best and most sustainable type in the future.

Have you worked with foreign MICE groups coming to India?

Manohar: I primarily work on corporate workshops and yes, I have worked with big groups, corporates and companies.

For Ayurveda, what visa do you need to travel?

Dr Madhavachandran: For this, health visa is available and is ideal. At times, people do come with a tourist visa and in that case, we need to inform the authorities about the treatment.

Does insurance cover the medical cost of Ayurvedic treatments?

Dr Madhavachandran: Yes, Indian insurance does cover Ayurvedic treatment. Earlier, it was only 20 per cent of the treatment, but the new programme covers 100 per cent of the amount incurred.

“Serving happiness is the most important thing. When a client asks you about wellness, the whole idea is- how can I sell happiness and wellness, and start to understand what is coming? It is important to understand the age of the client; number of days they can take out; activities they prefer - whether outdoor or indoor, culture or knowledge-based; what is the objective- health and wellness or learning and exploring.”



Nuthan Manohar
CEO
Me Met Me



Dr V Madhavachandran
CTO
Rasayana Ayurveda

“Ayurveda is all about how to overcome the disease, maintain health and achieve a happy, fruitful and long life. Ayurveda advises a person to maintain a balanced health. It also teaches necessary processes to maintain health. Ayurveda is not just a preventive medicine but also a curative one. Our hospital, Rasayana Ayurveda, aims to provide a luxurious ambience under the supervision of senior doctors.”

Inputs by Manas Dwivedi

Expect a tough winter

The eighth edition of the CAPA Masterclass Series took a look at the air finance market in the rest of 2020. While some Asian markets are expected to better, some others may be in for tough times. Here's what the three aviation experts had to say.

“I'm still worried about some large segments of the Asian market. We all know that Asia has tremendous potential for growth and if the growth engine in Asia doesn't work very well, all industries are impacted. We are optimistic about China, but if you look at the rest of Asia, I am still worried about what's happening in Indonesia, Philippines, and I shall not forget to mention India with more than one billion people under lockdown. I am still more than worried on some large segments of population in countries in SE Asia.”



Bertrand Grabowski
Independent
Aviation Advisor



Steven Udvar-Hazy
Executive Chairman
Air Lease Corporation

“It is going to be a tough winter. What I also see is that the commercial banking sector is getting very close to its internal limits. Whatever capital the banks have available for the airline industry have pretty much been used up by the best carriers - ones that have either the strongest credit profile or government backing. There's not a lot of liquidity that they will advance to airlines without government guarantees or strong security such as aircraft. It is going to be challenging for a lot of airlines to raise liquidity.”

“There have been many pay cuts and resetting of the stage on labour costs, but that sort of cathartic approach to the industry is something that was long overdue. In fact, this is not just in this particular area. If we have even a quarter or a third of the industry's fleet grounded going into 2021, you have to think that there's a fairly quick erosion of value which flows right through to the capital markets and this really starts to rock the boat even more.”



Peter Harbison
Chairman Emeritus
CAPA - Centre for Aviation

Airline cash burn could accelerate

IATA reported intra-EU passengers have used a large number of vouchers, issued since mid-March 2020 in lieu of refunds, to pay for travel between June 15,



2020 and July 15, 2020. Airlines are now incurring the deferred cost of transporting these passengers against limited or zero new revenues. IATA stated, “Whilst the issuance of vouchers helped decelerate cash burn a few weeks ago, their use will now accelerate cash burn in the coming months.” The data is based on IATA's Billing and Settlement Process.

Inputs by Hazel Jain

Air travel may not be feasible just yet

▶ Contd from page 11

other airport and get through other channels of security, immigration, lounges, transit areas, etc. It should have happened earlier, nevertheless, it's a positive start.”

Biji Eapen, President, IATA Agents Association of India, shares the same opinion as Bhatia and appreciates the government's decision to create these air travel bubbles to boost international flight operations. “It is not yet clear when a more widespread re-opening of borders will occur, and under what conditions. Air ticket prices can be brought down if India establishes bilateral air bubble arrangements with more countries, allowing more airlines to operate. After India and the UAE entered a bilateral pact for resuming international operations, ticket prices have been dropped to ₹13,000,” he shares.

Ground reality may differ

There still seems to be some amount of confusion regarding the situation. **Zahoor Qari**, Chairman, TAAI - Jammu & Kashmir Chapter, says, “It is to-

tally confusing as we are unable to understand these operations. We have not received a single booking for these flights. There has been no notification so far, and we can't say much. Either people are not ready to travel or whosoever is in France or in the US, is not ready to come to India. Currently, I don't think these bubbles will be successful, keeping in view that everybody is afraid of COVID-19. When the country is seeing the number of COVID patients increasing day by day, the government has initiated these air bubbles. Opening it to the general public is not feasible yet.”

Mahendra Vakharia, Immediate Past President, OTOAI, says that air bubbles will be a good thing for those who are stuck in these countries or want to go back to these countries. But, Air India was turning out to be a difficult proposition since it was difficult to book and the fare was also very high initially, which was reduced later on Vande Bharat flights. With more airlines opening, it'd be helpful as it will take some pressure off Air India and we will be able to facilitate bookings. We still need some clarity,” he says. ↓

A force to reckon with

She is the first Indian woman in the world to summit Mt Everest five times. Meet **Anshu Jamsenpa**, Director, Himalayan Holidays, who is also a motivational speaker. A fighter since the beginning, Jamsenpa hasn't let the pandemic pull her down and has chosen her own path by pursuing an alternative business and source of income.

 Hazel Jain

Anshu Jamsenpa is a mother of two teenage daughters from Bomdila, a remote border town in Arunachal Pradesh. But she is no ordinary woman. Apart from running an adventure travel company called Himalayan Holidays along with her husband, she has also created two world records and one national record in the field of mountaineering in 2017.

Jamsenpa is also a motivational speaker. "I have given motivational speeches at different forums and to varied groups of people, whether it is students or corporate clients. I have trained the Indian Army and the para-military forces like SSB. I have also trained young mountaineers and adventurers as a guest instructor at Himalayan Mountaineering In-

stitute (HMI) Darjeeling and National Institute of Mountaineering & Allied Sports (NIMAS) Dirang, Arunachal Pradesh. I was also one of the key speakers at TEDTalks Mumbai," she shares.



Speaking about her Everest achievement, Jamsenpa says that she has climbed Mt Everest five times already. How did she do it? "To achieve





this feat I had to go through all kinds of hardships. Despite the hurdles, I achieved all this because of my determination and consistency," Jamsenpa adds. She already has to her credit a total of 13 successful peak summits in just seven years of her mountaineering career.

Her company, Himalayan Holidays, is into culture, wild-

life, educational, inbound and outbound tours. But the main focus is, of course, adventure. Right now, she is keeping herself busy by doing gardening, enjoying music and cooking for the family. "My day starts with early morning yoga at 4.30 am and the day ends with one-hour meditation to release stress and relax my mind," she shares.


Her records

- ❖ Fastest woman mountaineer in the world to summit Mt Everest twice in 5 days
- ❖ First woman in the world to do two Double Ascents of Mt Everest
- ❖ First Indian woman in the world to summit Mt Everest 5 times

 **We cannot afford to sit and wait for long for tourism business to recover. Hence, as an alternative source of income, we have started online sessions on varied subjects** 

An alternative career

COVID-19 has badly hurt the traditional businesses, particularly travel. Jamsenpa admits that her company has also been

impacted badly. "We cannot afford to sit for long for tourism business to recover. Hence, as an alternative source of income, we have started online sessions on varied subjects like tourism courses, yoga and meditation classes, quiz, debate and essay competitions," she says, and adds, "My simple message to the travel trade and industry peers is to stay strong and use your experience and networking strength to the best of your capability and sail through this pandemic period. Most tour operators are smart people and finding a way out will not be a problem for them." 

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Some sectors could be wiped out

According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), decline in tourist arrivals will affect employment and income along the entire supply chain. The GDP and employment effects are, therefore, much greater than inbound tourist expenditure data would suggest and especially true for countries that depend heavily on tourism.

TT Bureau

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions in the global economy. Tourism is a critical sector of the international economy. In 2019, the tourism sector accounted for 29 per cent of the world's services exports and about 300 million jobs globally. It is an important source of income and employment for developed and developing countries. The global contraction in tourism arrivals could have devastating economic consequences as some developing countries are highly dependent on tourism.

Global macroeconomic losses
Taking into account the subsectors that support the tourism industry, the incurred loss to GDP is much larger than the direct effects of the loss of tourism. Global

Country	% Change (GDP)	Country	Value Change – GDP (US\$Millions)
Jamaica	-11	United States of America	-187,038
Thailand	-9	China (inc. Hong Kong SAR)	-104,690
Croatia	-8	Thailand	-47,728
Portugal	-6	France	-47,289
Dominican Rep.	-5	Germany	-46,260
Kenya	-5	Spain	-44,119
Morocco	-5	United Kingdom	-37,096
Greece	-4	Italy	-34,324
Mauritius	-3	Japan	-30,706
Senegal	-3	India	-28,120
Ireland	-3	Republic of Korea	-22,092
Egypt	-3	Indonesia	-20,713
South Africa	-3	Canada	-18,480
Malaysia	-3	Mexico	-17,376
Spain	-3	Portugal	-13,922

Source: GTAP simulations. See Appendix table A3 for the detailed numbers.

GDP losses under the most optimistic tourism reduction scenario amount to an estimated \$1.17 trillion, about 1.5 per cent of global GDP. Extending the four months lockdown to eight and 12 months increases the losses in a fairly linear fashion, to \$2.22 trillion (2.8% of world's GDP) and \$3.3 trillion (4.2% of world's GDP), respectively. The estimated GDP losses of \$3.3 trillion are more than double the size of the interna-

tional tourism industry alone in the worst-case scenario.

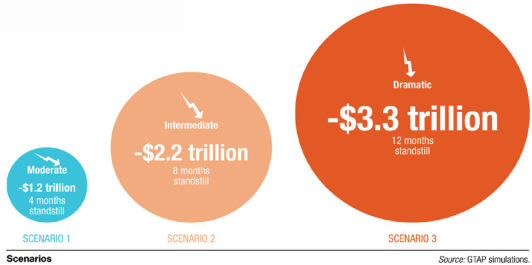
GDP losses by country
The GDP losses by country are varied. The losses are largely determined by the size of the tourism industry relative to GDP. This is also partly dependent upon the inter-sectoral linkages of supply in the tourism industry and the ability of a country to shift from tourism to other industries. In

absolute terms, the world's largest trading economies, USA and China face the largest declines in GDP. The USA incurs the highest losses with a drop of \$187 billion in GDP in the moderate scenario. Following the US, China faces a loss of \$104 billion in GDP. Major tourist destinations such as Thailand, France and Germany stand to lose approximately \$47 billion each in GDP due to the contraction in tourism. India

stands at a loss of approximately \$28 billion.

Conclusion
Using the general equilibrium model, the potential effects of the tourism shock can be quantified. A decline in tourist arrivals affects employment and income along the supply chain. Therefore, the GDP and employment effects are much greater than the inbound tourist ex-

penditure data would suggest. Many countries depend heavily on tourism and will experience dramatic effects in the labour market and national income. Loss of employment in the unskilled sector is above 10 per cent in many countries even in the most optimistic (moderate) scenario and can rise above 40 per cent in the most pessimistic (dramatic) scenario. Women are likely to be disproportionately affected due to a high share of female employment in the tourism sector. However, almost all sectors of the economies



penditure data would suggest. Many countries depend heavily on tourism and will experience dramatic effects

reliant on tourism are negatively affected due to the inter-sectoral linkages.

Let Buriram match your Vibe



The X2 Vibe Buriram Hotel in Thailand, by Cross Hotels & Resorts, is the only way you are levelling up to Buriram's vibe. An extensive menu with signature cafes and fully-equipped meeting rooms make this place irresistible. Now, who said work and play don't go together?

TT Bureau

The mind-blowing architecture of X2 Vibe Buriram Hotel will put your inner chaos to rest, since the only asymmetry allowed here is in the vogue decoration. The most fascinating detail of this place is the stunning aura of the location. The soft Buriram wind gently caressing you and the temperature melting your worries are some of

the sensations you can look forward to everyday. The motivation for that upcoming business trip is here, the eagerly-wanted family vacation is more relaxing than ever and the secret romance you wanted to kindle with your other half will have that fiery spark. It is a delightful location for sports lovers who can experiment with their adrenaline rush by regularly going out and diving into the aggression

of the games. Those with their little ones needn't frown, as the hotel provides babysitting on request. The complimentary shuttle service to Buriram is one of the hotel's ways of showing you the culture and hospitality of the region.

Buriram is too beautiful to be captured just by memories and sensations. The joy of sharing this unbelievable beauty with the world is



what will allow you to relive every bit of it, just with a click - wireless internet access in public areas is just one of the many things you

will love the hotel for. In fact, its privacy and location are also unbeatable. The private terraces are the nonchalantly scenic locations your

loved one can make even better for you. What is better to spend some quality time with your connection under the Thailand sky? Picture this - the lukewarm orange sky, the absence of any pressure or deadline, the allowance of acceptance, the luxurious glow shimmering on your skin and the comfortable passing by of time. Who says money can't buy you peace? Well, in Buriram, it can buy you peace and everything else.

We are open!

X2 Vibe Buriram Hotel has already begun operations after its temporary suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Other Cross Hotels properties to have resumed operations are: X2 Koh Samui - A Spa Retreat, Away Chiang Mai Thapae, X2 Vibe Chiang Mai Decem, Away Koh Kood and Away Kanchanaburi Dheva Mantra.



Jalesh preps for Sept

Jurgen Bailom, President and CEO, Jalesh Cruises, shares details of the cruise line's preparedness for its September 2020 sailings. It has already conducted several workshops for its trade partners.



Hazel Jain

Q Is Jalesh Cruises conducting training workshops for trade, to ready them for your upcoming itineraries?

Yes, we had recently conducted a series of webinars for travel industry specialists over 10 days, and they were attended by more than 2,000 attendees from India and GCC countries. The brand took the opportunity to connect with its global audiences, narrating the testimony



Jurgen Bailom
President and CEO
Jalesh Cruises

of India's rich heritage and culture. Market insights around the tourism industry were discussed by industry experts and the opportunities offered by Karnika – India's first multi-destination cruise line. Jalesh was pleased to have the support of attendees like Avinash Jadhav (Riya Travels), Dharmin Desai (Akbar Travels), Amit Jain (Gem Travels), Ishita Ghoshal (Zenith Holidays), and Sanjoy Bose (Orchid Global) who participated in the webinars.

Q What did the webinars focus on?

The sessions were designed keeping the end customers' questions and perspectives in mind. The webinar showcased endless possibilities of Incredible India in the coming months and factors to be kept in mind while planning travel.

Q Tell us about the measures Jalesh Cruises will take if someone falls sick on the ship.

Our Pandemic Preparedness Plan (PPP) includes the adoption of several measures and initiatives that are in line with the general recommendations of World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) USA, Healthy GateWays (EU) and IMO. These measures are evaluated daily and reviewed whenever justified by our team, which permanently monitors the evolution of the epidemic outbreak.

Be EventReady with Hilton



To address safe group travel practices and evolve today's event experience, Hilton has launched a global cleanliness and customer service programme - Hilton EventReady with CleanStay – specific to meetings and events. Its key tenets are cleanliness protocols, book-to-billing flexibility, and safe & socially responsible solutions.

Dream Cruises re-starts



Special guests attend the Dream Cruises inaugural ceremony held on-board Explorer Dream in Keelung, Taiwan, recently to celebrate the re-start of cruise service with the launch of its new 'Island-Hopping' voyages.

'Risk to tourism is ₹15 lakh cr'

Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH), along with cause partner AIRDA, has further revised upwards its value at risk to Indian tourism, pegging it at ₹15 lakh crore from the earlier ₹10 lakh crore. 'Tourism now needs a fiscal and monetary structured package coordinated among all arms of governments,' it says.



TT Bureau

The first guidance calculated by FAITH, which was shared with the government in March 2020, had put tourism's economic value at risk from this pandemic at ₹5 lakh crore. The association revised this further during the quarter as the situation deteriorated, and the value at risk was put at ₹10 lakh crore. Now, this has been revised again to touch a value at risk of up to ₹15 lakh crore in terms of the economic output of tourism in India.

A statement released by FAITH says, "Given the way the virus is progressing, tourism supply chains have broken down in India across all its key inbound, domestic and outbound markets, and are not expected to recover for the next five months, making the total impact to a minimum of nine months starting from March this year."



The document highlights that the direct and indirect economic impact of the tourism industry in India is estimated at 10 per cent of India's GDP. "This roughly puts the full year economic multiplier value of tourism in India at ₹20 lakh crore. Minimum three quarters of tourism will be fully impacted. This value covers the whole tourism value chain from airlines, travel agents, hotels, tour operators, tourism destinations restaurants, tourist transportation, tourist guides. Each of these segments of tourism is non-performing or under-performing and will stay that way for many months of this year," the statement continues.

According to FAITH, this trend is evident across all segments of tourism. "Pending refunds

The cumulative job losses for the full year both in organised and unorganised category of tourism could go as high as ₹4 crore

for travel agents, shut down or vacant hotels and restaurants, empty or locked down conventions and meeting or wedding halls, no order pipelines for tour operators, tourist transport lying locked in parking lots, laid off or leave-without-pay staff, managers, the summer domestic and outbound holiday season gone, no visible bookings for the peak

October-March season, meetings shifted to virtual Apps, non-essential travel closed and so on. Be it leisure (inbound, outbound, domestic) corporate travel, heritage, adventure, meetings and incentives, exhibitions and events religious, spiritual and in upcoming high value niche tourism products such as sea & river cruises, camping, rafting, golf film tourism, jungle tourism, agri-tourism and many more across all states, this will be the worst performing year for tourism in a century," the release states.

FAITH, based upon its industry estimates, believes that each rupee spent on tourism could have an economic multiplier of upwards of 3-4 times more for India given its most globally



unique natural and cultural heritage spread across the Indian hinterlands. The cumulative job losses for the full year both in organised and unorganised category of tourism could go as high as ₹4 crore.

For over five months, FAITH has been requesting that for revival of

any demand in tourism, survival of tourism businesses in India shall be a priority. Listing immediate steps critical to maintaining the survival of tourism businesses, FAITH says that there is a need for a tourism fund, which can be used by tourism enterprises in India for taking care of their employees.



A JLL survey to understand COVID-19's effect on the development and opening of new hotels as well as support required for sustenance reveals that only 20% operators believe their hotels could return to 2019 RevPAR levels in 6-12 months.

ADTOI expects a better MDA aid

Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) has proposed an improved MDA scheme for domestic operators to Ministry of Tourism, and awaits an order that would benefit the sector. In other news, ADTOI continues to host webinars for its members on MOT-approved schemes and has tentatively postponed its election to January 2021.

Nisha Verma

PP Khanna, President, ADTOI, believes that the MDA scheme for domestic tour operators may get a boost soon. Speaking on the subject, he says, "We have proposed to Ministry of Tourism (MOT) regarding improvement in the MDA scheme and have received affirmation from them regarding the same.

According to what is proposed, they are currently working to increase it from what it is currently. This scheme would only be extended to domestic tour operators, who have been approved by MOT and the respective state tourism board."

On the Association front
ADTOI has regularly been organ-



PP Khanna
President
ADTOI

ising webinars for its members. "We recently organised a webinar with MOT on the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Programme (IITFC), for our members. It was a good webinar and we are planning to organise a few more on MOT-approved programmes with the ministry," adds Khanna.

The Association, which had its biennial election due in August,

has now postponed it. Khanna says that in the last General House Meeting the issue of election was discussed with members, and it was suggested that ADTOI postpone it to March. "However, we thought that was too late. Hence,

This scheme would only be extended to domestic tour operators, who have been approved by MOT and the state tourism board

as per the General House consensus, we have decided to postpone it till January 2021 and then we will take a decision on further course of action. Even if the lockdown has been lifted, we



have around 400 active members and we cannot have all of them together at one place at this time for voting. Although we did consider the option of electronic voting, but since it has not been mentioned in our constitution, we have dismissed the idea as of now. In fact, we now have amended the constitution as well, and it has been submitted to the society."

Multiple travel norms

Khanna says that owing to different quarantine laws in

different states, there is a lot of confusion among members as well, with regard to what is open and what is not.

"None of the states have clearly stated their quarantine laws, and they keep changing them because the situation is dynamic. When we make a package, the rules are different and when people travel, they might just change, which leaves us with not much scope to do business. While so much is being said about domestic tourism, not much is happening in this regard. We need to know, who is allowed to travel to a particular state or UT, and also the guidelines in place at the destination and the hotel. Hence, I have written to all hotel

chains that they tell us which of their properties are open and will not close down in the near future, as well as the guidelines we need to adhere to," says Khanna, adding that while they cannot guarantee not closing the hotels, they have agreed to share the guidelines.

"This would allow us to share these details with our members, so that they can plan domestic trips with ease. It is a risk still to travel and for us, to get our money stuck with hotels if they close down after taking the booking and the money in advance from us. In such a situation, everyone suffers and one can't blame the other for anything that goes wrong," he concludes.

CWT has introduced two new data-powered solutions - Return to Travel dashboards and CWT Travel Essentials search - to guide companies and travelling employees on resuming travel.

What's Tweeting in travel?



From burning issues of the industry to instances of kindness, people from the travel trade are increasingly taking to social media to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas. So, we bring to you some of the latest Tweets that have been doing the rounds in the travel industry.

Sunil B Satyawakta
@satyawakta

On contacting ARTO Enforcement, Mr. Siddharth Yadav clarified that the said licence is for the travel agents who are into car and bus rentals. The air and rail ticketing agents do not come under his purview.

Sunil B Satyawakta @satyawakta · Jul 18

With no prior clue Travel Agents and Tour Operators in UP have been warned by RTD through newspaper to obtain license within 10 days or face action. Interestingly Registration of TAs & TOs is a part of Tourism Policy of UP which is yet to see the light of the day @uptourismgov

ट्रैवल एजेंसियों को दस दिन में बनवाने होंगे लाइसेंस

एनबीसी खबरें, सचमुच : राजधानी रहित राज्य में खबरें, ट्रेवल एजेंसियों के लाइसेंस को बुकिल करने वाली ट्रैवल एजेंसियों को दस दिन में लाइसेंस लेना होगा। बिना लाइसेंस वाले ट्रैवल एजेंसियों के बिना राजधानी प्रवासी ने करेक्ट को चेक करने की है। अधिकारियों के अनुसार लाइसेंस के बिना चल रही एजेंसियों निम्नलिखित की भी अपेक्षा करती है। ऐसे में कोई लाइसेंस होने पर खर्चों का जबरन जुटाने में काफी दिक्कत होती है। इसका ही नतीजा कोविड-19 की माइक लाइसेंस का भी पता चल रहा है। सचमुच के एजेंसियों प्रवासी सिद्धार्थ यादव ने बताया कि राजधानी के सभी ट्रैवल एजेंसियों को दस दिन में लाइसेंस बनवाने की शिफारश दी गई है।

Aditya Thackeray
@AdityaThackeray

As an avid photographer, Uddhav Thackeray ji has supported forests and forests guards through medical camps for them and equipment in the 50s and 2000s. Now as the Chief Minister, he leads the way in tiger protection and wildlife conservation, also encouraging eco tourism.



144 Retweets · 628 Likes

Singhifying
@Singhifying

There is a lot of anxiety about what the #futureoftravel will be like. Let me share that I encountered people full of kindness, gratitude and patience on my repatriation flights last month.

When travelling with my two toddlers, I'm not the most liked per...



Shashank Nigam posted on LinkedIn: There is a lot of anxiety about what the #futureoftravel will be like. Let me share that I encountered people full of kindness, gratitude and patience...

@LinkedIn.com

TAAI
@TAAI1951

Travel Agent Members are bound to charge service charges for providing additional services to the travellers, like providing consultation on regulations, visas norms, updating on procedures etc. over and above the ticket fare.

@MoCA_Gol @DGCAIndia @TourismFaith

Air India @airindia · Jul 29

#FlyAI: Passengers booking our tickets for #VSM flights through Travel Agents, may please note that they should not pay more than the fares mentioned on our website. Passengers facing any issue of overcharging by Travel Agents may kindly write to us on groam@airindia.in.

3:44 PM · Jul 29, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

16 Retweets and comments · 13 Likes

Makash @GAMakash · Jul 30

Replying to @TAAI1951 @MoCA_Gol and 2 others: What about providing chair, AC/fan, water etc. when the customers wait?

Hardeep Singh Puri
@hardeepshpuri

Taking the domestic connectivity further, I was delighted to inaugurate the RCS UDAN Route for Dehradun-New Tehri-Srinagar-Gauchar along with CM Uttarakhand Shri @tsrawatsjp ji, under @PawanHansLtd today. With this we have added 6 more routes & 2 heliports at New Tehri & Srinagar



6:59 PM · Jul 26, 2020 · Twitter for Android

VFS Global starts safe and secure

As lockdowns across the world lift and borders slowly reopen, VFS Global's Visa Application Centres are resuming operations across the globe once approved by the Central government, Embassies/Consulates as well as the local authorities. It has taken a slew of measures to ensure adherence to WHO and local government guidelines.



Body temperature checks

Body temperature checks will be conducted at the entrance of all centres to assess visitors' health conditions. Customers exhibiting any of the COVID-19 symptoms, including high fever, cough and difficulty in breathing, will be redirected to the nearest medical centre, and their appointments rescheduled. Sanitisers are also available at all the centres.

Physical distancing

With physical distancing being a vital precaution, markers have been placed across queueing and seating areas at the centres to ensure customers are at a safe distance from each other and the staff.



Trained staff

All VFS Global employees are formally trained by its in-house training experts in safety and hygiene measures as per World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.



Contactless services

With physical distancing set to become the new normal in the post-COVID world, travellers will look at limiting what they touch and prefer online or contactless services while planning their travel. VFS Global's doorstep visa services, and/or courier services for passport returns, are available for customers for respective destinations.



Safe employee contact

Employees, too, are taking the precautions necessary to stay safe and keep customers secure. Apart from keeping face masks on at all times, they have been instructed to sanitise their hands regularly, and disinfect high-contact surfaces periodically.



Regular sanitisation

All customer and staff contact surfaces across VFS Global's Visa Application Centres are cleaned and sanitised several times daily.



Safe handling of documents

Documents are handled and transferred with the utmost focus on safety and hygiene measures, ensuring the customer has no qualms in taking over the document and the transfer is safe and secure.

Boulevard of Ruby-peaked views

We bring to you the third and final leg of the three-part series on Nevada's Cowboy Corridor – a road trip teeming with museums, art galleries, guest ranches and a lot more to do with the great 'Wild West' heritage and culture. While we have already covered the first two legs of the road trip from Reno to Elko, the third leg is just as adventure-laden.



TT Bureau

From Elko to West Wendover, a mystical stretch of Nevada that spans approximately 172 kilometres, keep your eyes peeled for mule deer and mountain goats as you fish or explore the trails around Angel Lake, an alpine lake in the East

Humboldt Range and an extension of the Ruby Mountains. It's about an hour's drive from Elko and when visiting the region, be sure to plan ahead to include a trip to Ruby Mountain Brewing Co. and take an appointment to visit. The brewery is about a 20-minute drive from Angel Lake or a 30-minute drive south of Wells.

West Wendover

As you continue east on Interstate 80 for about one hour, you get to West Wendover. It is a great base camp while visiting other regional gems, including the Historic Wendover Airfield, a repository of World War II history. There's also Blue Lake, a hot springs-fed lake that is



popular with scuba divers and is about a 30-minute drive from West Wendover. If your journey continues east on Interstate 80, you'll come upon the Bonneville Salt Flats, formed when ancient Lake Bonneville dried up. The flat landscape, covered with a crust of salty soil, is home to the Bonneville Speedway, where numerous land speed records have been set.

Wendover Will

Snap a photo with the beloved Wendover Will on Wendover Boulevard. You can't miss him — he's a 63-foot tall neon sign that got his start in 1952, welcoming guests to one of the area's casinos.

If scheduling allows, catch a show at the Peppermill Concert Hall or venture to the Goshute

Mountains, where Hawkwatch International operates a migration monitoring station to study raptors as they migrate through the Intermountain Flyway.

So, if you want to travel safe with your family and are planning some road-trippin' fun, drive through Nevada, USA's, Cowboy Corridor for adventure and sights! 📍

EVENT TALK

Media Partners:



AUGUST 2020

TAT India Together Thailand Campaign	1 pm	5
IATA Webinar on Business Process & Digitisation	4:30 pm	5
JATA Online Travel Mart	TBA	6-7
TRAVTALK Digital Conclave	3 pm	7
Amazing Thailand Webinar for UAE	12:30 pm	10
Time Travels Webinar Series on Big Cats	TBA	10-Sept 13
Korea Tourism Webinar for India	3 pm	13
Digital Travel Summit APAC 2020	Sentosa	17-19
Korea Tourism Webinar for Bangladesh Travel Trade	11:30 am	18
Korea Tourism Webinar for Nepal Travel Trade	12:15 pm	19
CAPA India Webinar	5 pm	21
IBTM China	Beijing	26-27

For more information, contact us at: talk@ddppl.com

IAAPI seeks to involve ministries

The amusement industry is not amused by shutdown, as its stakeholders led by IAAPI seek advice on how they can involve the different ministries and government authorities to gradually re-open their doors.



Hazel Jain

The 17th webinar conducted by the Indian Association of Amusement Parks & Industries (IAAPI) titled 'Rebuilding Amusement Industry Post Covid-19' focused on steps that need to be taken to initiate the process of re-opening amidst the lockdown. Anuj Sarin, Training Chairman, IAAPI, moderated the session that had Vinod Zutshi, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, answering a few questions by the members.

Some of the questions that Sarin took up during the webinar included steps on getting a letter from the Home Ministry to de-bracket amusement industry from cinemas and entertainment, how indoor amusement centres can promote themselves in Tier-I and II cities, and attracting FDI in the tourism sector. Re-



Vinod Zutshi
Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
Government of India

plying to the last question, Zutshi said the sector is eligible for 100 per cent FDI with a five-year tax holiday on the FDI.

He discussed some of the SOPs that global amusement park companies and attractions such as the ones in Florida and Shanghai have been following since re-opening. This, he said, will be useful for the Indian companies who can then replicate some of these protocols. "Getting guests to keep physical distancing was a bigger challenge

for many of these attractions in Florida than taking care of the infrastructure. Our first target should be to get the attractions re-opened. We must convince the government to do this. We must first convince the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home, and the Ministry of Tourism, which is our



and guidelines to be endorsed by the government. "These are some of the action points we must look at in order to get the lockdown lifted. The focus should be on the domestic market. Keeping this in mind, we must analyse data on health safety of destinations where parks are located. Then we must launch a progressive promotional campaign to build consumer confidence about their health safety," he suggested.

Zutshi also recommended that the amusement industry must be incorporated into the new policy which is still in the draft stage.

The focus should be on the domestic market. We must analyse data on health safety of destinations where parks are located

gateway for all these sectors. We must present our case to them," Zutshi added.

In the meantime, he said, we must start formulating SOPs

IATTE launched online

Indian Association of Travel and Tourism Experts (IATTE) is the first-ever travel platform to be launched online, on July 24, born out of the need for uniting tourism's varied verticals.



TT Bureau

IATTE is the brainchild of Naveen Manchanda, Founder, Tour Passion, who is the President of the association and has an experience of 25 years in the industry. The association took shape after social media exchanges between Manchanda and Veena Robinson, with the idea to bring various verticals of the Indian travel industry together with selected people from the travel trade. The concern that led to its establishment was that Indian tourism professionals felt helpless due to the current situation and felt the need for a



Naveen Manchanda
President
IATTE

body that brought the different tourism verticals together. They all understood the need for responsible and sustainable tourism and until now,



a total of 91 meetings have taken place. "The travel trade is going through tough times, but we must focus on creating op-



The travel trade is going through tough times, but we must focus on creating opportunity in adversity. Pessimism leads to weakness, optimism to power

portunity in adversity. Pessimism leads to weakness, optimism to power," says Manchanda.

For the first financial year, 2020-2021, no fee is applicable for new memberships.

Leased aircraft impacted

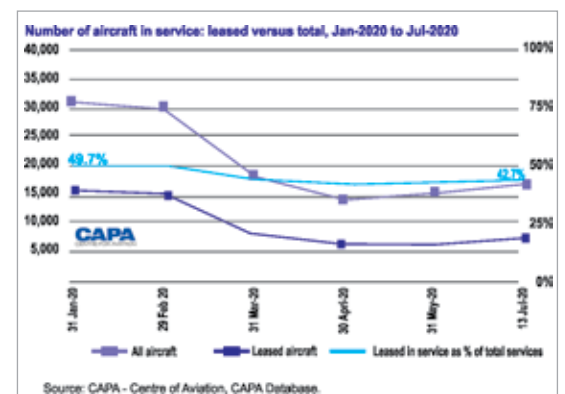
Analysis of the CAPA Fleet Database shows that the COVID-19 crisis has had a proportionately bigger impact on number of leased aircraft in service than on the total fleet in service.



TT Bureau

There were approximately 31,000 commercial aircraft in service around the world on January 31, 2020. Just over 16,800 of these – almost 50 per cent – were leased. By the end of April 2020, the total number had fallen by 55 per cent, to just under 14,000, whereas the leased number had slumped by 62 per cent, to approximately 5,800. Numbers have picked up a little since then, but are still far below their pre-crisis levels.

As of July 13, 2020, the CAPA Fleet Database records a little more than 16,500 aircraft in service in total, a 47 per cent reduction on the end-January 2020 figure; and just under



7,100 leased aircraft in service, still 54 per cent below the January 2020 number. Of all aircraft, 46 per cent are now in service, but 43 per cent of leased aircraft. The total number of aircraft in service as a proportion of the entire global fleet, including those inactive, was 86.4 per cent at

the end of January 2020. This fell to 38.8 per cent at the end of April 2020 and has risen a little to 46 per cent at July 13, 2020 (broadly in line with global seat capacity for the week commencing July 13, 2020, which is at 44 per cent of 2019 levels, according to OAG/CAPA data).

Team IATTE

National Advisor: Subhash Verma

President: Naveen Manchanda

General Secretary: Veena Robinson

Joint secretaries: Gaurav Khandelwal & Jatin G Mehta

Treasurer: Aanal Dabhi

EC Member: Nischay Manchanda



UNWTO has strengthened its partnership with Telefónica, a Spanish multinational telecommunications company, to advance market intelligence to help accelerate the sector's recovery from the impact of COVID-19.



BE PART OF THE FUN



IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES

GMR GROUP – SERVICES BUSINESS

New Delhi

Ashwani Lohani, Former Chairman & Managing Director, Air India and Chairman of the Railway Board, has joined as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for GMR Group's Services Business (which includes railways). Lohani had recently joined as the Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Tourism Board. The latest move could be good news for GMR, as it was looking to expand its wings in the Railways sector by showing its interests in the private train project, station redevelopment plans and dedicated freight corridors (DFC).



THE LEELA PALACES, HOTELS AND RESORTS

Mumbai

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed **Amandeep Sarna** as Vice President, Information Technology. He brings with him over two decades of extensive experience in information systems and technology. Sarna's last assignment was with Kerner International – Dubai, where he was leading the technology function in the capacity of Vice President – Global, Application Development.



NGAGE HOSPITALITY

Mumbai

Roubal Khorana has been appointed as Assistant Manager Research at Ngage Hospitality. With an MBA in Infrastructure Management and PG from the University of Petroleum & Energy Studies (Dehradun), Khorana holds over five years of experience in the research industry. He has contributed to hospitality, healthcare, and real estate sector through his work. This includes exposure in market and industry performance assessment, data analytics, and strong client engagement.



CONCORD EXOTIC VOYAGES (INDIA)

New Delhi

Rohit Walter will serve as Vice President – Sales & Operations at Concord Exotic Voyages (India), which is part of the expansion plan of Concord Exotic Voyages for leisure inbound business based in Delhi. Established three decades ago, Concord Exotic Voyages (India) is accredited by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and IATA, while also being an active member of IATO. Along with his dedicated team, Walter aims to take CEV to greater heights. The company will be operating from home till end of August due to the pandemic.



ASCOTT

Chennai

Anup Kumar has been promoted to Director of Sales – Chennai at Ascott India. He will be responsible for driving sales and distribution strategies for the 187-unit Somerset Greenways Chennai and the 269-unit Citadines OMR Chennai. Kumar has been with Ascott since 2012 and has been instrumental in implementing various initiatives to drive revenue and occupancy for Ascott's properties in Chennai. With a career spanning over 15 years, Kumar has also worked with other reputed brands like The Park Hotels and Lufthansa.



MELUHA, THE FERN AN ECOTEL HOTEL

Mumbai

Parimal Sawant has joined Meluha, The Fern an Ecotel Hotel, Mumbai as the Director Culinary. Prior to this, he was working with The Lalit Mumbai as an Executive Chef since May 2017. Sawant has 25 years of experience and has worked with Kamat Hotels, Renaissance Mumbai and Courtyard Ahmedabad before he joined Meluha, The Fern in 2013 in his earlier stint. His areas of expertise include planning menus, cost control, kitchen hygiene, etc. In the new role, Sawant will be leading a team of chefs from Meluha and Rodas, an Ecotel hotel in Mumbai.



The new currency in tourism

Such a life-changing event as the COVID-19 pandemic brings with it new behaviours and threatens to alter world views. Travel is no exception as health, customer confidence, and disaster management in times of crises will take precedence and emerge as the new currency in travel.



Hazel Jain

Trust and confidence

Confidence among travellers has been one of the casualties of the pandemic. Countries, airlines and airports are now finding ways to restore this by not only promoting the strict protocols they are putting in place but also getting safety 'stamps' and certificates approved by global authorities.



Sturdy insurance

Insurance companies will have to scramble to create a new insurance policy that will cover COVID-19 as well, whether it is booking cancellations or health safety while travelling. This event is also likely to bring about a drastic change in the percentage of people buying travel insurance.

Flexibility in bookings

In the absence of a vaccine, flexibility in bookings whether it is air or hotel, has become one of the most important factors for travellers while buying. In turn, higher flexibility could allow providers to charge a higher premium and reflect bookings which offer more safety and trust for customers.



Health and bio safety

Bio-safety measures, especially for cross-border travel, introduced by airlines and airports will be key in safely restarting international travel, the same way security took precedence after 9/11 attacks. This COVID-19 will likely bring long-lasting changes in order to avoid any other virus attacks in future.

Emergency response

Disaster management and how a country has responded in times of emergency such as this has become a priority after many travellers were left stranded in another state and country. Travellers will likely pick that destination to visit which has its emergency protocols in place now.



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Communicate with customers

At PATA India Chapter's webinar 'Tourism, the economic PowerHouse in an evolving landscape', **Mario Hardy**, CEO, PATA, assessed the potential risk that opening of air travel bubbles could pose to the citizens of the destination, while also sharing a useful tip for agents.



Nisha Verma

Mario Hardy is of the opinion that while travel bubbles and green corridors are a great idea, there is a lot of complexity involved in setting them up. It is not a simple task! "There are bilateral agreements involved between the two countries. It's not only the immigration department involved, but also health departments and ministries of health of the respective destinations. However, the two countries need to agree to have enough trust in the healthcare system of the other to allow people to travel

Information regarding protocols is important to be shared with travellers by tour operators. If you don't, you will lose potential travellers to your competitor

across their borders. For any head of the country, the first duty is to protect its citizens, hence, not risk bringing people from overseas into their country to infect and overflow their

own healthcare system. It's as much of a health crisis as an economic crisis. The question is: health over economic sustainability or go the other way? Thus, opening a bubble is a question of assessing the risk for travellers as well as citizens," he explained.

Roadmap to restart

Hardy claims that there are innumerable discussions happening not just across different sectors within the tourism industry but also within different international organisations. "At the very start of the crisis, a collaboration or cooperation between all the international or-

ganisations had begun. Every Monday, over 20 travel and tourism organisations, including W T T C ,



Mario Hardy
CEO, PATA

IATA, ICAO, CLIA, PATA, European Travel Commission, Airports Council International, etc., get on a call and update each other on their respective activities, agree on certain standards of the protocols moving forward, and how to approach respective governments and constituent members," he shared, adding, "Information regarding protocols is important to be shared with travellers by tour operators. They apply to everyone, and if you don't share that information with the potential traveller, you will lose them to your competitor who has that information."

Way forward for India

Hardy suggested that the most critical thing for the country is to have the situation under control and be able to reduce the number of daily cases of COVID-19. "Bringing it to a bare minimum number would allow people to tolerate the risk. Then the country must apply protocols. Once that is achieved, one can start rebuilding confidence by promoting how protocols are in place to ensure that people travelling to India will remain safe through their journey," he shared.

Recovery is far, but not too much

While travel trends globally are on a decline owing to COVID-19, **Olivier Ponti**, VP Insights, ForwardKeys, speaking at the PATA India Chapter webinar, shared that some markets in South Asia are opening, while others are still struggling to manage the number of COVID cases and hence are not in the travel radar yet. Going by recent analysis by ForwardKeys, South Asia has been significantly less impacted and most of the countries in the region are, on an average, 50-60 per cent behind 2019 levels. However, with most countries in the region still in lockdown has created an issue for the travel ecosystem as a whole because it also means that the number of key source markets for other destinations have not opened for business either.



Olivier Ponti
VP Insights
ForwardKeys

on the international travel front in India, focus is on the domestic market. "There were some positive signs in the Indian domestic market which started to bounce back in the beginning of May, that were neither spectacular nor linear. It is around 10 per cent of 2019 levels, which means that there are people flying again," he shared.

Domestic India leads

According to Ponti, since there is little to expect at the moment

travel restrictions are mostly in government hands, the tourism sector, apart from lobbying, cannot do much," said Ponti, adding, "In a situation where every travel business is

In a situation where every travel business is short of cash, there is a need to invest money in the right place at the right time. Data can help make the right decision

short of cash, there is a need to invest money in the right place at the right time. In such a situation, data can help make the right decision by making good use of information."

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For further details, please contact:

Delhi:
rakesh.kashyap@ddppl.com, +91 96503 99910

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