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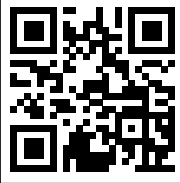
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# Aviation, tourism go hand in hand

In order to drive domestic demand, Ministry of Tourism is planning small boutique roadshows and will soon be offering Dekho Apna Desh webinars in a crisper format to put the right information across.



Nisha Verma

**Rupinder Brar**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism (MOT), has shared that right now, the Ministry is in the process of consolidating and improving on the initiatives already taken. "We are trying to make more films and generate more content on social media to be used in a big way. That's one area where we are getting a lot of response in terms of user-generated content and inter-



**Rupinder Brar**  
Additional Director General  
Ministry of Tourism

estingly, a lot of content is coming from new locations. Hence, we are very happy to see that the itineraries we

received from states, which in turn were shared with tour operators as well as circulated in local media, have resulted in people travelling to these places. Also, with the response for the Dekho Apna Desh webinars being outstanding, we are crafting snippets of these webinars," she says.

### Domestic marketing

To step up domestic demand, Brar informs that the Ministry has been working on a plan to place promo-

tional material at key airports. "We've had extensive discussions with Airports Authority of India (AAI) and will be entering discussions with private concessioners at some of the airports to look at ways to showcase the message of Dekho Apna Desh and different products of Incredible India to domestic travellers. Billboards, brochures and videos have already started coming from different regional offices.

Contd on page 10 ▶

Aviation alone cannot build confidence; a similar push for tourism & hospitality is also needed.

### Pradeep Singh

**Kharola**, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, has said that while the aviation industry is trying to come back to normal, it is time that even with the hospitality and tourism industries, something similar is done to encourage people to travel. "Aviation is moving towards normal. It has become the preferred mode of travel now. This approach of normalcy in aviation has to be brought



**Pradeep S Kharola**  
Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation

in the tourism industry and for this, we have to convince people that it's safe to travel." ▶

## Is your hotel COVID-compliant?

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is the first of its kind to be accredited by NABCB.



Tripti Mehta

**A**s year 2020 commenced, it was amply clear that the novel coronavirus was here to stay, and that the world was going to change forever. While people battled its ill-effects and governments raced to seal both domestic and international borders, COVID-19 slowly seeped into business and industry. The



**VK Duggal**  
Former DG - Tourism

most impacted was tourism and hospitality. Its very

Contd on page 11 ▶

## India offers new prospects

As a destination, India is known for its crowds, especially at popular tourist places flocked by both international and domestic visitors. But, to cater to the new-normal traveller, a country as vast as India must have alternatives, isn't it? This is what experts say...

“Given how the COVID-19 pandemic has created new demands from travel, the current travel trend is focused more on health, safety, hygiene and social distancing. Keeping these things in mind, the best-suited destinations for travellers at present would be less-crowded places like beaches, wildlife sanctuaries and secluded areas in destinations like Kerala and hill stations of India. In principle, tours close to nature and based on sustainability values and wellness should do well in the coming months.”



**Jatinder S Taneja**  
Vice Chairman, PATA India Chapter

“Destinations we prefer are the ones that are open, including Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Goa and Kerala. Everyone, from tour operators and hotels to tourist transport operators, has put in place safety SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) because of COVID, hence, I don't think there is much risk if protocols are maintained and safety standards are implemented.

Many other places are also open, but with restrictions. I believe that all facilities should be open there, including spa and the swimming pool.”



**EM Najeeb**  
Senior VP, IATO

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# TAFI plans elections in Q1 2021

After deferring its virtual convention this year, the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is now working towards having its national elections early next year. The Federation is yet to finalise the format of the election.

Hazel Jain

Sharing an update on the association's elections, Pradip Lulla, Acting President & VP, Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), says, "We have just con-



ally using a software. We are currently in talks with a couple of technology companies that can provide us with the same."

He added that the association has now postponed its plans to conduct its convention virtually. "We were planning to conduct our virtual convention in November 2020. However, we realise that people do not enjoy attending virtual events, especially when there is high possibility of technical glitches during the event. We will revisit our convention next year," Lulla adds.

**No GST refund on cancelled air tickets after Oct 1**  
Sharing an update on the ongoing discussion with the GST Council, Lulla re-

veals, "We had requested the GST Council and the Finance Ministry to review the refund of GST on air ticket refunds, and extend the

We are looking at either doing a postal ballot or conducting it virtually using a software

date applicable for refund of GST till March 31, 2021 due to the delay in total refunds by airlines. However, we have received no update on this. In fact, we even took this matter up during the APJC meeting. Unfortunately, the airlines argued that the government is not

abiding by that. So, agents who have submitted refunds after October 1, 2020 will not receive any refunds and GST will be deducted, because the airline has to pay to the government. Those who have submitted before October 1, their GST will not be cut, and will be duly refunded. The government is not willing to extend any leniency in this matter; since it is a liability to the government, they will not allow anything to agents."

Referring to the need to safeguard travel agents' interests in future, Lulla adds, "Travel agents' payments to principals is unsecured credit and we need to ensure that some form of mechanism – whether through escrow or guarantee or underwriting-based mechanisms – is in place to ensure that their money stays secure."



Pradip Lulla  
Acting President & VP  
TAFI

cluded all our Chapter and National AGMs. We are now looking to have our national elections early next year. We are still working on the modalities of it and looking at either doing a postal ballot or conducting it virtu-



## Covid SMART

### COVID prevention checklist for travel agents



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# TRAVELTALK

## VIEWPOINT

### A hybrid reality

The lines are now beginning to blur as we slowly step into the dimension of a new reality – where real and virtual marry each other to converge and give form to a hybrid entity. Enter hybrid events that have elements of a traditional as well as a virtual show or conference. Hybrid formats allow for a return of pre-pandemic days, whilst prioritising safety. In fact, November 2020 saw many such events take place around the world with venues bringing in new capabilities to enable them.

Most of these hybrid conferences and tradeshows were pilot events to trial new prototypes for safe opening of MICE, and saw many attend them live while others joined in virtually. Such a mix of virtual and in-person events brings a lot of hope to this sector which was, not too long ago, sentenced with dismal prospects.

This development is also slowly giving rise to newer (and amazing!) technology such as 3D product modelling and even human holograms! But this also means that event planners, venues, and hotels that specialise in MICE must smarten up. They need to explore this area and invest in hybrid capability to bring back their MICE business.

While hybrid events aren't a recent invention, they have taken on a new – more relevant – role during the pandemic. It has been around in some small way for many years – mostly in the tech community. But 2020 will go down as a year that brought this technological capability to its rightful recognition globally.

Of course, India is another matter altogether and we as an industry might take some time to truly apply this visionary concept to kick-start our own MICE sector. Meanwhile, it is important that we think long and hard at what this means for the travel industry, especially business travel. Is hybrid something that should be promoted in the long term regardless of whether there is a health crisis? Because making a hybrid event successful will require an incredible amount of practical experience and knowledge – and some substantial technological investment. That will be a bridge we, as a travel industry, might have to cross some time. Meanwhile, let us hope that 2021 is a year that will see at least a few conferences pop up in India in the hybrid sphere.

# RevPAR down, but investors keen

India's hospitality industry has witnessed a decline of 52.8 per cent in RevPAR during January to September 2020 over the same period last year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a JLL report.



JLL's 'Hotel Momentum India (HMI) Q3 2020' report, a quarterly hospitality sector monitor, reveals that all key 11 markets in India reported a decrease in Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) performance in Q3 2020 over the same period last year. Mumbai continues to be the RevPAR leader in absolute terms, despite the decline of RevPAR by 71.7 per cent in Q3 2020 compared to Q3 2019, whereas Bengaluru saw the sharpest decline in RevPAR in Q3 2020, with an 88.1 per cent decline compared to the same pe-

Cities	Key Hotel Market Performance		
	Q3 2020		
	Change Over Same Period Last Year		
	Occupancy Change (pp)	ADR Change (%)	RevPAR Change (%)
Ahmedabad	-40.1 ↓	-27.2 ↓	-74.6 ↓
Bengaluru	-54.3 ↓	-43.1 ↓	-88.1 ↓
Chennai	-36.5 ↓	-45.7 ↓	-76.4 ↓
Delhi	-36.0 ↓	-40.4 ↓	-70.5 ↓
Goa	-38.9 ↓	-27.2 ↓	-78.8 ↓
Gurugram	-47.9 ↓	-13.7 ↓	-73.3 ↓
Hyderabad	-47.0 ↓	-32.8 ↓	-77.5 ↓
Jaipur	-40.2 ↓	-14.1 ↓	-70.2 ↓
Kolkata	-49.0 ↓	-29.7 ↓	-82.6 ↓
Mumbai	-37.3 ↓	-42.1 ↓	-71.7 ↓
Pune	-56.3 ↓	-27.6 ↓	-86.2 ↓

Source: STR

RevPAR ↑ Increasing ↔ Stable ↓ Decreasing



**Jaideep Dang**  
Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group (India), JLL

"Investors are taking interest in exploring operational hotel opportunities both in business and in leisure locations. With the phased unlocking of the economy in the third quarter of 2020, we are witnessing gradual growth in demand, particularly in leisure markets, with weekend occupancy spikes," says **Jaideep Dang**, Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group (India), JLL.

Total number of signings in Q3 of 2020 stood at 24 hotels comprising 2,314 keys, recording a decline of 19 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Investors are taking interest in exploring operational hotel opportunities both in business and in leisure locations

riod in the previous year. According to findings of HMI Q3 2020, international operators dominated signings over domestic operators with the ratio of 53:47 in terms of inventory volume. Demand in leisure destinations began

### Branded Hotel Signings

Number of Hotels 24  
Number of Keys 2314

### Branded Hotel Openings

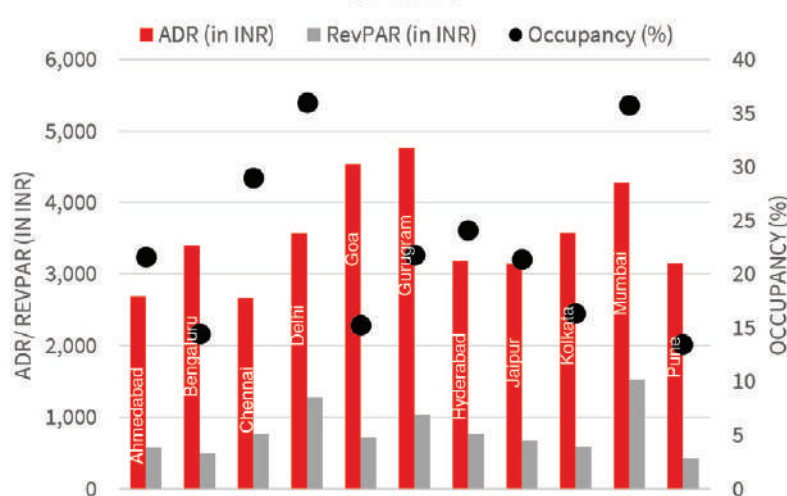
Number of Hotels 12  
Number of Keys 1067

seeing weekend occupancy spikes as the lockdown restrictions were further lifted in August. Other cities such as Pune (86.2%), Kolkata (82.6%) and Goa (78.8%) also witnessed sharp declines in RevPAR.

### Number of keys in Q3 2020, state-wise

State/UT	Keys (Openings + Signings)
Andhra Pradesh	133
Assam	76
Chandigarh	110
Delhi	125
Gujarat	314
Haryana	263
Himachal Pradesh	58
Jammu & Kashmir	297
Karnataka	357
Maharashtra	333
Punjab	40
Rajasthan	300
Sikkim	70
Tamil Nadu	55
Uttar Pradesh	479
Uttarakhand	120
West Bengal	251

### Q3 2020 Performance Trend Chart



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# Pre-COVID level still years away

**John Koldowski**, Special Advisor to the CEO of PATA and Professor & Foreign Expert, LSU School of Tourism, Sichuan Province, China, recently spoke at a webinar organised by PATA, titled “International Visitor Arrivals in Asia Pacific in 2020 and Expectations for 2021.” He believes that a return to pre-pandemic or 2019 level is not likely before 2023.

**Nisha Verma**

Claiming that the global position from tourism’s point of view is fairly dramatic, **John Koldowski** said that the impact of COVID is that we are going to receive about 700 million fewer international tourist arrivals in 2020, year-to-date, relative to January-August. Koldowski said that a question that must be asked is, “Do we actually want to return to that level of global arrivals or is there a better way?” He said that the UNWTO has suggested that there are three pathways or scenarios through this morass. “None of them

that’s what is denoted by the solid blue line (refer to first image), which is the actual data followed by the dotted line, which are estimates for July and August. Everything is based on data, and the more data we can get, the better it is to make an estimate going forward.”

### World Economic Forum

Citing the ‘World Economic Outlook’ report, Koldowski said, “The economic sentiment is getting a little better, according to the respondents. About 19 per cent believe that the economy would still be the same but, more importantly, 29 per cent believe it’s going to get worse

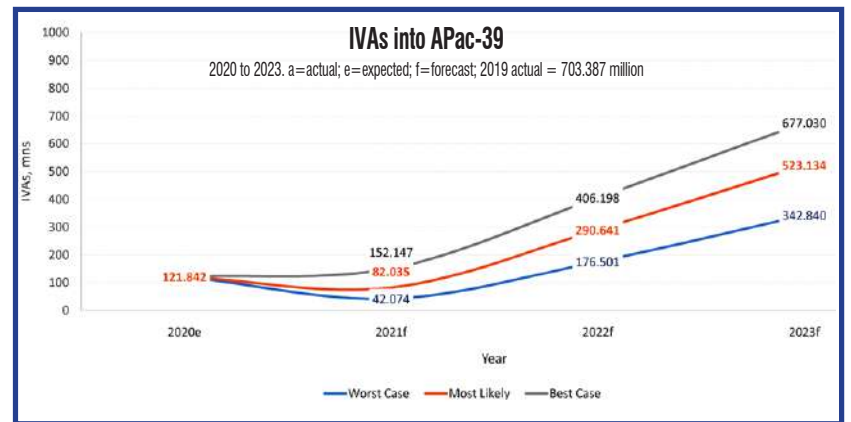


**John Koldowski**  
Special Advisor to CEO, PATA and Professor & Foreign Expert  
LSNU School of Tourism, Sichuan

starting to feel a little gloomier. Hence, even though there is gradually a growing sense that things will get better, it is not uniform across the globe.”

### IVAs, according to PATA

According to PATA, in 2019, it was a nice, steady pro-

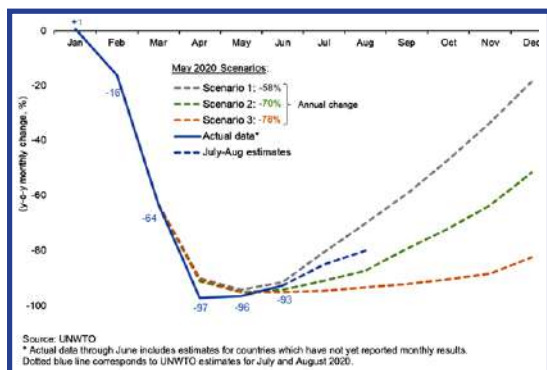


cent drop), and the numbers are really falling to very low levels in West Asia (77.1 per cent); Pacific (79 per cent); Melanesia (80.6 per cent); Oceania (78.8 per cent); and Polynesia (78.4 per cent). This is what we are getting

need to know where it is coming from. “Hence, looking just at the medium scenario, for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, the proportion of arrivals from Asia into Asia Pacific in 2019 was 64.4 per cent. In 2020, it’s going to drop substantially

### Lead indicators – air capacity changes

“We looked at the air capacity and how that is deployed to various ports around AsiaPacific and across the globe, and the source was OAG via PATAmPower,” said

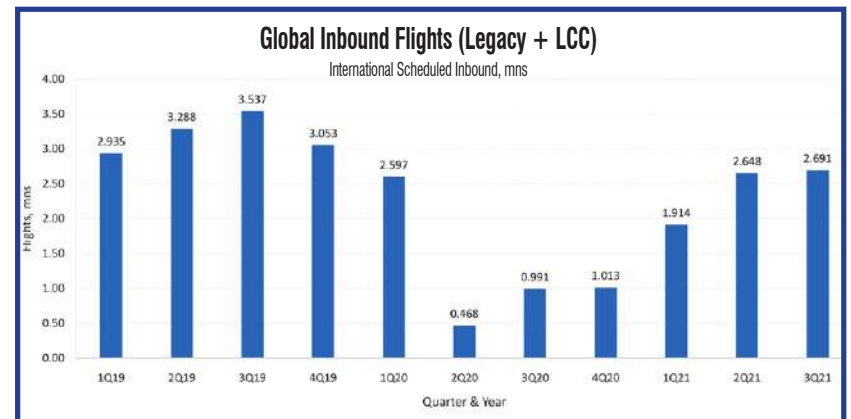


Even though there is a growing sense that things will get better, it is not uniform across the globe

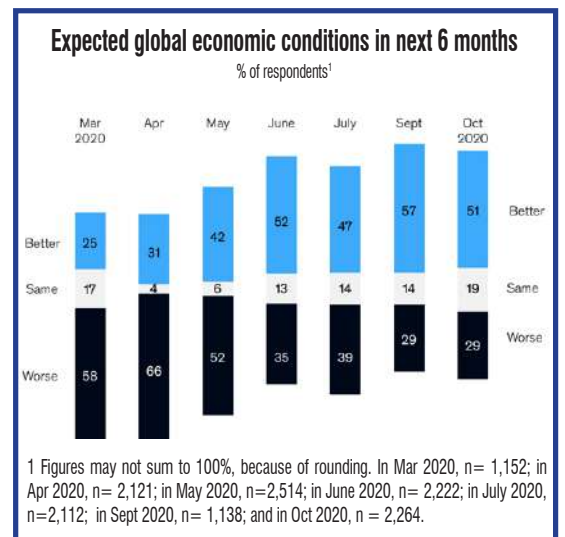
are getting above the line in this year. In fact, the third scenario, which is a loss of 78 per cent, is tracking down. These scenarios are always made on the best information available at the time of producing these scenarios. However, as new information comes to life, they need to be fed into these models and it could dramatically alter the pathways of some scenarios’ progression, and

and that has been steadily decreasing. Hence, there has been a certain sense of bullishness. However, it will not get back rapidly to what it was in 2019.” Koldowski added that in terms of regions and countries that believe it’s going to be better in six months, Greater China leads the pack, then India, then Asia Pacific, and even North America is there. In Europe, it is trending down the other way, as they are

gression upwards and then there was a drop of about 83 per cent in 2020. “Based on the latest data, in Americas, it was a drop of 69.9 per cent, in Asia it is 86-87 per cent now. In Northeast Asia, there is a stronger drop (90.3 per cent); in South Asia also a drop of 76.3 per cent; Southeast Asia (82.1 per



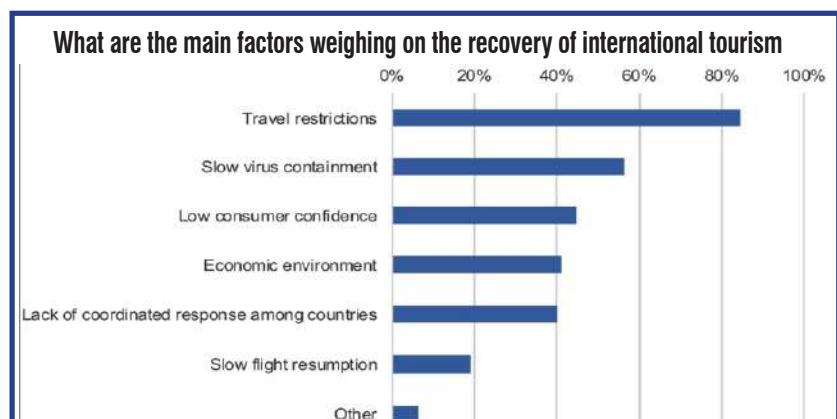
to right now and where we expect to be by the end of 2020,” revealed Koldowski. Projecting some likely scenarios for the next few years by looking at 39 destinations in Asia Pacific, Koldowski revealed, “In the worst case scenario, 2021 is going to be a bigger downturn even from what we are experiencing this year. The most likely scenario would still be down, and in the best case, we might see a little bit of growth. However, it’s not until 2022 that we start to see that curvature begin to move upwards a little more strongly. Even here, under the best-case scenario, 2023 is unlikely to get back to where the 2019 level was—703.387 million IVAs.” Pointing out that the good news is that there is expected to be some upward movement, Koldowski said that we



1 Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding. In Mar 2020, n= 1,152; in Apr 2020, n= 2,121; in May 2020, n=2,514; in June 2020, n= 2,222; in July 2020, n=2,112; in Sept 2020, n= 1,138; and in Oct 2020, n = 2,264.

to 44 per cent, a slow return in 2021 and by 2022, it’s starting to get close to where it was (61.92 per cent). This is the medium scenario. Under the lower-case scenario, it will be a lot slower, but under the best case, it will be quicker.”

Koldowski, adding, “If we look at inbound flights, a similar trajectory is seen as we saw with the scenarios. While growing nicely in 2019 it fell suddenly, now it’s a long growth back to some level of capacity, which will happen by the Q3 2021.”





# New regions receive footfalls

► Contd from page 3



**PP Khanna**  
President, ADTOI

“Hotels towards Rajasthan, before Jaipur, in cities and towns like Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Pushkar are being preferred. Since people do not trust public transport, they are taking their own vehicles. While they are looking at travelling, they are not going to Mussoorie and Shimla, but prefer small places like Kasauli that offer small resorts and hotels with only 10-12 rooms. People also prefer Jim Corbett and resorts there, which offer separate villas and cottages.”

“There is going to be a good demand for wellness tours where FITs come. Hence, wellness is going to sell well. There are some very good resorts that are good for wellness and we will definitely be pushing for good itineraries at these destinations, because they are out of the main cities and are good value for money. Another segment we will sell is jungles, because the infrastructure in jungles is very good. Our focus will be on FITs and small groups.”



**Homa Mistry**  
CEO, Trail Blazer Tours



**K Pandian**  
Founder & Chairman, Cholan Tours

“In the last three weeks, domestic tours have started. People are coming from Kolkata and Delhi for 5-6 days. People are travelling to Karnataka as well as Kerala. Regular destinations like Munnar and Periyar are already getting footfalls. Rural tourism is picking up and people are avoiding big cities like Kochi, preferring Alleppey, Munnar and Kumarakom. Same is the case with Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru, where people are landing but going to nearby destinations.”

“There are two perspectives—domestic and inbound. For domestic, it’s a different scenario for holidays because people will go for shorter vacations and I am sure they will look for places which are not very crowded and are remote. I think, players who are in the domestic market should promote such places and properties. For inbound, they will not use larger properties, and instead opt for smaller guest houses, homestays or boutique properties.”



**Ravi Gosain**  
MD, Erco Travels



**Deepak Bhatnagar**  
MD, Aamantaran Travels

“It’s right that people are looking for non-crowded places. However, with the size of our population and most of the tourist attractions located from the inbound perspective, this would be challenging. However, I would say that cities like Khajuraho, Mahabalipuram, Hampi and some of the cities in Rajasthan would be ideal. We must make completely different packages showcasing our rural and ethnic side.”

Inputs by Nisha Verma

## Tourism Breaking News

- Buyers from 59 countries attend Gulf Travel Show
- Global aviation organisations call for flexible slot rules
- The Fern opens 45-room hotel in Noida
- KTM Virtual 2020 postponed, to take place in Q1 2021
- UK offers testing for int’l arrivals including Indians
- 25% businesses will shut by end of this FY: FHRAI
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# Are we ready for Buddhist tourism?

**Lajpat Rai**, Chairman and Managing Director, Lotus Trans Travels, believes that Buddhist tourism in India has huge potential and that it is time the government play its part in making the country a world-class Buddhist destination supported by state-of-the-art infrastructure and good connectivity.



Nisha Verma

**Lajpat Rai** believes that with the COVID-19 situation in India is getting worse, India is going to be the last destination for foreign travellers because after America, we rank second in the highest number of cases in the world. "I am still hopeful that the Buddhist circuit may start because it's a religious destination, but that will also start when there are scheduled flights. I think business would only start from October 2021, and actual bookings would begin from October 2022."

Rai also believes that as of now, the government should focus only on the perception



**Lajpat Rai**  
Chairman and Managing Director  
Lotus Trans Travels

of the destination they want to promote. "Hence, if they want to highlight only Buddhist pilgrimage sites, they must come forward and make the destination world-class. Currently, the Buddhist circuit is in a pathetic condition. This is the time when there is no business, and the government should start focusing on the cleanli-

ness, hygiene and upkeep of places. Today, in Bodhgaya, there is no sewerage system. As a tour operator, I would like that they should create some basic facilities because after COVID-19 settles down, you must travel to the Buddhist circuit."

He adds that today, with the help of private entrepreneurs and friends, people have created good accommodations. "However, destinations should flourish outside the hotel as well. Buddhist circuit has a great future. In India, for the Buddhist circuit, 95 per cent people travel by road. Thanks to National Highways Authority, some roads are very good, but the State highways are still in a

pathetic condition. Patna to Gaya is 110 kilometres and it takes 4-5 hours, which is unlike anywhere else in the world. International visitors would calculate 110 kilome-

tes of travel as a 1-2 hour drive, but here it takes 4-5 hours. These are the basic things needed," he suggests.

Rai has been advocating for Buddhist tourism for the last 30 years. "I have given presentations to the standing committee of tourism of the parliamentarians and highlighted all points, including roads, airline routes and what's needed to be done. Bodhgaya to Kushinagar is 400 kilometres and takes 12 hours, with not tourist facility and wayside amenities during the journey. Now, thanks to the Central government, Kushinagar is being developed as an international airport. Once the airport comes, maybe the connection would also come. As a private entrepreneur, I have done my bit and my friends have done their bit by building hotels and offering trans-

port facilities. However, we can't do what can be done by the government, like widening roads, putting up electricity and maintaining hygienic conditions. After that happens, people would love to go there and will not be hesitant. Once the state governments encash Buddhism, they will forget other industries."

port facilities. However, we can't do what can be done by the government, like widening roads, putting up electricity and maintaining hygienic conditions. After that happens, people would love to go there and will not be hesitant. Once the state governments encash Buddhism, they will forget other industries."

#### Tie-up with IHG

Rai has a tie-up with IHG for his properties at Buddhist destinations. He added, "Currently, there is no other international or known hotel chain in Bodhgaya and this is going to be the first five-star hotel there. We already had a lot of business," he added.

Once state governments encash Buddhism, they will forget other industries

## 'More focus-driven campaigns'

▶ Contd from page 3

They are already doing small boutique events with local trade partners and different stakeholders, carrying forward the engine of domestic tourism," she adds.

#### Other engagement with trade

Brar reveals that MOT is planning small boutique roadshows, some of which will be led by the Minister, while others will be led by senior MOT officials or regional directors. "The idea is to do events which will have around 35-40 or maximum, 50 people. This would include the trade,

hoteliers and media, and we hope to showcase new itineraries. With this, we are hoping to drive domestic de-



**Rupinder Brar**  
Additional Director General  
Ministry of Tourism

mand and create confidence. We will also seek to address issues and learn about good practices, especially innova-

tive ideas on employing digital technology. We will do all this while making sure social distancing is maintained and lead by example in terms of doing events in the future. The events may also involve citizens, as some of the roadshows will have city-walks. While some roadshows have already started at regional-director level, we are hoping that the Minister will kick-start the same in early December. We will begin from Ahmedabad and go to Kevadia," she informs.

#### International marketing

MOT's international promotional strategy is still under construction, says Brar, adding that the emphasis this time will be on short-haul flights, countries and destinations from where people can actually travel in times to come. "We are also going to be more focused on ensuring the right products are promoted in a particular

market. There will be more focus-driven campaigns this time. It's an ongoing exercise as we keep getting more inputs from our trade

Itineraries we received from states and shared with tour operators have resulted in people travelling to these places

partners. We will also be focusing on South Asia and Southeast Asia, as well as on tapping some new markets.

Apart from that, there will be emphasis on the Indian diaspora interested in travelling back home."

The ADG claims that there is a lot of improvement in terms of infrastructure and flight connectivity in these times, hence, the Ministry will focus on countries from where there are direct flights to India and/or to different cities of India. For this, MOT is working with Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA).

#### Development of Buddhist regions

Commenting on India not pushing enough as a Buddhist destination, Brar points out, "The kind of heritage we have of Lord Buddha, right from him attaining enlightenment and the first sermon he deliv-

ered, to his *pari nirvana* (nirvana-after-death), is a matter of pride for us and a pity at the same time that we have not leveraged on it. It's only recently that the government has begun thrusting on an integrated development to leverage the legacy of Lord Buddha in India, and MOT being the nodal ministry is looking at bringing this story forward not only for Southeast Asia where there are a large number of Buddhists, but also to other parts of the world where there are a lot of practitioners of Buddhism. Hence, there is a lot of focus on developing infrastructure for roads, rail and airports. We are working very closely with other ministries to make sure that we showcase India as the 'Land of Buddha', as it's indeed a matter of great privilege for us."

#### India Tourism Mart

"Initially, we were trying to do it in December, but in a mixed format. However, it was becoming more virtual than physical, and hence the idea was to push it back a little so that the component of physical attendance could increase. We are still awaiting a final closure on the date, but the plan is to do it between January and February."

— Rupinder Brar

The sixth meeting of the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee produced a commitment to create a new UNWTO Committee on Common Safety Protocols to increase confidence in international travel.



# Accreditation that builds trust

► Contd from page 3

essence had been shattered! Finding a solution to a global pandemic of this scale and ruin was no easy task! With the hospitality industry having witnessed a decline in revenues to the extent of 60-70 per cent as compared to 2019, it was predicted that almost 50 to 60 per cent of the total jobs that the indus-

protocols, it is difficult for the smaller ones (including apartment hotels, other rental accommodation and



**Rajesh Maheshwari**  
CEO  
NABCB

banquet halls) to compete on that ground. Thus comes in the QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme.

### What is QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme?

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is a certification that assures patrons of the respective



India. It aims to provide an objective assessment of the preventive measures adopted by hotels to mitigate COVID-related risks and hazards. The scheme is based on guidelines by World Health Organization (WHO), Ministry of Tourism, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI),



**Manoj Virmani**  
Hospitality Consultant and former  
VP, ITC Hotels

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and other government organisations.

### How does it work?

The QualSTAR certification process broadly involves three crucial stages.

**Stage 1:** Registration for the QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is an online process that is available free of charge.

facilitates submission of the self-assessment form leading up to the site audit.

**Stage 3:** The site audit and subsequent COVID Compliance certification forms the final stage of the process. Once all criteria are diligently met, the certificate is issued for a period of two years. As many as four surveillance-audits (mandatory inspections) are conducted by the

day, to win the confidence of a guest, safety and hygiene are a priority. Getting the right message across to them through authentic-certification is the means to do it. The QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is meant to do just that."

**Rajesh Maheshwari**, CEO, NABCB, says, "NABCB is the national accreditation body in India for accreditation of

recognition, as the competence of the accredited body has been independently assessed as per the standards/regulations/schemes specified in the scope of accreditation granted by NABCB. Accreditation provides an assurance to the clients or the users, on the accredited conformity assessment (certification / inspection) results for the products and/or services they use."

Win the confidence of a guest; QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme is meant to do just that

—VK Duggal

try provided could be lost if it was not revived. Gradually, hotels were allowed to operate (some of them even as hospitals in the beginning), but under strict guidelines that called for only a limited number of rooms to be occupied at a time; regular sanitisation of public areas, surfaces, etc., shooting up operating costs with revenues still at an all-time low.

So, how could the industry recover at a time when people were afraid to step out of their homes? Numerous studies conducted across the globe suggest that for the industry to recover, building traveller confidence is paramount. To achieve that, it is imperative to assure prospective customers and clients of the strict adherence to safety and hygiene guidelines. But, merely following set protocols is not enough; it is important to put a stamp on these measures, so customers can differentiate between a COVID-safety-compliant and non-compliant enterprise. While customers easily trust branded hotels and believe in their adherence to safety

Accreditation gives assurance on the accredited conformity assessment results for the product

—Rajesh Maheshwari

hotel's or accommodation provider's strict adherence to COVID-safety guidelines. It has been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) that falls under the umbrella of Quality Council of India (QCI), an undertaking of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of

### Where to register

Register today on <https://qualstar.co.in/> and give your customers the assurance of safety and hygiene, so they book with you worry-free!

Systems verified by a national body with int'l affiliation are a progressive stance adopted by QualSTAR

—Manoj Virmani

**Stage 2:** The next stage is completion of documents to gain access to the guidelines incorporated into the COVID compliance standard. This



QualSTAR team to ensure continual adherence to a 200-point checklist.

### The QualSTAR advantage

QualSTAR COVID Safety Compliance scheme has been formulated by industry experts with years of extensive experience behind them, and founded under the patronage of Shree **VK Duggal**, former Governor of Manipur and Mizoram; former Director General - Tourism, Government of India; and former Union Home Secretary. He says, "To-

certification and inspection bodies, and is established by the government as one of the constituent Boards under the Quality Council of India. NABCB accreditation programmes are internationally recognised by being signatory to the international multilateral mutual recognition agreements / arrangement (MLAs / MRAs). The accredited certificate or report issued by a certification body or inspection body under NABCB accreditation will have international acceptance,

**Manoj Virmani**, Hospitality Consultant and former VP, ITC Hotels, says, "Systems built on quality and subsequently verified by an accredited national body with international affiliation, in my opinion, are a progressive stance adopted by QualSTAR to bring credibility to the process of certification which to date remains unregulated the world over." Virmani is an empanelled auditor for QualSTAR, executing audits as Lead Auditor for various hotel properties. ↩





# **VIRTUAL SPANISH TRAVEL SHOW**





**2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
December, 2020**

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# Ireland's safe and spacious offerings

Tourism Ireland is showcasing some of its fantastic accommodation offerings, amazing landscapes, uncongested and open spaces, and activities that can be enjoyed by visitors on the island of Ireland. It will conduct an informative webinar for the trade on December 7.

Hazel Jain

Tourism Ireland will be hosting a special webinar for the travel trade from India and the GCC to showcase a lot of



**Siobhán Naughton**  
Marketing & Trade Executive  
Middle East & Asia, Tourism Ireland

Siobhán Naughton, Marketing & Trade Executive, Middle East & Asia, Tourism Ireland, says, "We would like to showcase some of the fantastic accommodation offerings, amazing landscapes, uncongested and open spaces, and activities that are waiting to be enjoyed. We want to target the entire travel trade community that is interested in learning all about what the island of Ireland has to offer as a world-class tourist destination." This webinar will be hosted on December 7, 2020 at 4.30 pm IST and 3 pm UAE time.

the amazing things that visitors can indulge in on the island of Ireland when the time is right to travel again. Siob-

Naughton adds that a 14-day quarantine is still required when travelling to Ireland. However, Tourism Ireland

will update the travel trade once there is any change to this. "The travel trade in India is extremely important to us; they can ensure that the Island of Ireland is always front of mind as an amazing

I would recommend a week to 10 days to explore the island. We also have special promotions and incentives

– Siobhán Naughton



**Huzan Fraser Motivala**  
India Representative  
Tourism Ireland

destination for their clients to travel to when the time is right," she adds.

During the webinar, the travel trade will also learn about the COVID safety measures that have been put in place by the Irish travel and hospitality industries to ensure that visitors can enjoy their visit to the island of Ireland in a safe

One of the best ways to experience Ireland is self-drive

– Huzan Fraser Motivala

and secure manner. "I would recommend a week to 10 days to explore our beautiful

island. We also have special promotions and incentives for them. The winners of a quiz which will be a part of the webinar will win some lovely prizes from the island of Ireland!" Naughton adds.

Huzan Fraser Motivala, India Representative, Tourism Ireland, says, "One of the best ways to experience Ireland is through self-drive. Indian visitors to Ireland will increase in 2021-2022."

## Ireland webinar on December 7

To educate the travel trade on Ireland's products and COVID safety guidelines, Tourism Ireland will conduct a webinar on December 7 at 4.30pm IST. It will have an interesting line-up of Irish suppliers including hotels, attractions and tours. To sign up, contact Jaspreet Kaur at [jaspreet.kaur@ddpl.com](mailto:jaspreet.kaur@ddpl.com) or 9650196532.

## All jazzed up with TBO Group



In an effort to rekindle the relationship with Indian trade members, Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO Group and MD, Nijhawan Group, hosted a gathering at Estella, Mumbai. Keeping in mind the current situation due to COVID-19, the event saw an entourage of 60 trade partners amidst an ambience of jazz vibes.

## APAC's 1<sup>st</sup> int'l tradeshow

Singapore hosted TravelRevive – APAC's first international travel tradeshow that saw close to 1,000 attendees on-site. The pilot hybrid event brought to life Singapore's vision for safe and innovative events.

TT Bureau

TravelRevive, powered by ITB Asia and Singapore Tourism Board (STB), re-

collaboration under the Emerging Stronger Taskforce (EST)'s Singapore Together Alliance for Action (AfA) on Enabling Safe and Innovative Visitor Experiences.

take place physically in Asia Pacific during COVID-19, with both local and foreign attendees and exhibitors. Close to 1,000 local and international attendees came together on-site for two days to exchange ideas, bridge knowledge gaps, and reimagine the future of travel. Alongside TravelRevive, STB, International Association of Exhibitions and Events (IAEE), and the Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (SACEOS) also co-organised the IAEE Asia Hybrid Forum and SMFX x MICE Connect Forum.



cently concluded on November 26, 2020 at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre. TravelRevive was the first pilot tradeshow to trial the newly developed 'hybrid event' tradeshow prototype for safe business events, safe itineraries, and digital enablers in Singapore. This was part of a public-private

TravelRevive is the first international travel tradeshow to

## Singapore launches platform to shape future of travel

SingapoReimagine will kick off with a series of forums around the world to start discussions on how to reshape global travel. Global partners will be invited to share knowledge and exchange ideas, with the first one to be held in Singapore next year.



# Travel gains momentum in India

In its latest study titled ‘Rethink Travel Global Survey – India insights 2020’, Amadeus decodes ways to re-ignite traveller confidence, while addressing the biggest concerns they have right now, to ultimately ensure that travel continues to be a key driver of global progress, positivity and prosperity.



By the end of October 2020, India surpassed 8 million confirmed cases of COVID-19. The impact to the country has been devastating, resulting in millions of job losses, many of those jobs in travel, tourism and hospitality. Given its role in the travel community as a global provider of technology to the travel industry, and knowing it requires a community response to get the world travelling again, Amadeus has been engaging with its customers and industry partners to rethink travel.

## Biggest concerns about travelling

The predominant concern for Indian travellers (39%) was the increased risk of catching or transmitting the virus. Indian respondents

cerned about the increased risk of catching and transmitting the virus (26%) compared to those who have travelled just for leisure in the past 18 months (43%). However, concerns over losing money due to trip cancellations ranked similarly between the two groups, at 16% and 17%, respectively.

More respondents who have travelled on a long-haul flight in the past 18 months noted that being stranded in the destination if travel options are cancelled or changed was one of their biggest concerns about travelling in relation to COVID (31%), in comparison to those who have travelled on a short-haul flight over the past 18 months (27%). Similarly, more respondents who have been on a long-haul flight in the last 18 months noted that the gov-

points was the ultimate factor that would need to be fulfilled for Indian respondents to feel comfortable travelling (40%). This was followed by the need for effective test, track and trace programmes to be in place to contain infections (40%); visibility to and assurance of sanitisation, hygiene and safety measures in hotels and accommodations (39%); and limiting the number of passengers on planes to reduce contact (38%).

Looking at flexible change and cancellation policies and payment terms to avoid penalty or losing money, business and leisure travellers had similar sentiments. Three in 10 (30%) of Indian travellers who have just travelled for business in the past 18 months noted that this condition would



also cited the safety and cleanliness of public transport (37%) and government-imposed quarantine at either end of the journey (35%) as one of their biggest concerns about travelling in light of COVID-19.

ernment imposing a quarantine at their destination or upon return home was one of their biggest concerns (39%) compared to short-haul flyers (34%).

## Conditions that would make respondents feel comfortable travelling

Access to technology that reduces human contact, queues and physical touch-

need to be fulfilled for them to feel comfortable travelling and a third (33%) of those who have only travelled for leisure in the past 18 months noted that this condition would need to be fulfilled. It's interesting to note that only 23% of Gen-Z said this would make them feel comfortable to travel.

Passengers who have travelled on a long-haul flight in the past 18 months were more likely to require mobile boarding than those who have travelled on a short-haul flight in the past 18 months (62 per cent versus 53 per cent, respectively).

## Top 3 technologies that would increase confidence in travel

- ❖ Mobile applications with on-trip notifications and alerts: 56%
- ❖ Contactless payments: 54%
- ❖ Mobile boarding passes: 51%

## Regional perspectives

### North India

Travellers would like to see technology that will help them reduce the environmental impact of travel

### East India

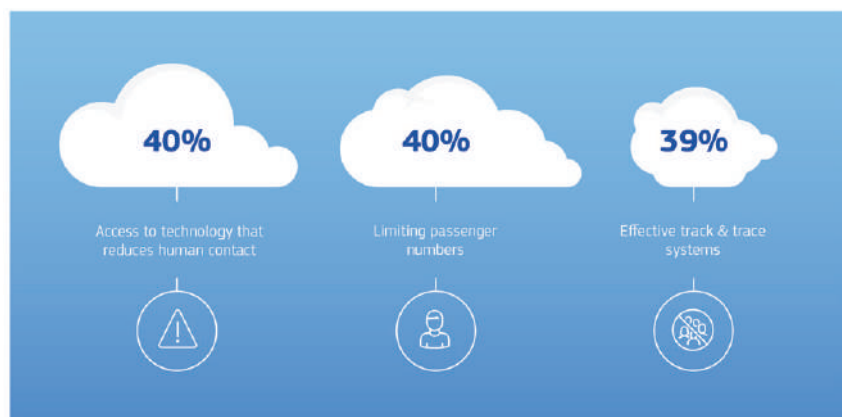
Travellers are expected to make fewer trips over the next 12 months due to lack of confidence regarding safety of travel in light of COVID-19

### West India

The ability to wear a mask comfortably throughout the journey is a condition that would need to be fulfilled for people to feel comfortable travelling

### South India

Increased risk of catching or transmitting the virus is one of the biggest concerns



❖ 50 per cent of respondents who have just travelled for leisure in the past 18 months noted that contactless payments would increase their confidence to travel in the next 12 months, compared to 47 per cent of respondents who have just travelled for business.

The survey demonstrates that there is a continued appetite for travel, however, it is evident travellers are looking for their concerns to be addressed.

The positive news for the industry is that many of these concerns and preferences can be addressed with

technology that is available today, whether it is to provide better access to information, ensure social distancing, reduce physical content or more.

In travel & tourism, technology offers huge potential to rethink how we experience the world.



Revising its outlook for airline industry performance in 2020-2021, IATA has said that deep industry losses will continue into next year, even though performance is expected to improve over the period of the forecast.



الإتihad  
ETIHAD

# committed to sustainability

'Sustainability will play an even bigger role in a post-COVID-19 world, and Etihad Airways remains at the forefront to pioneer new and effective ways of mitigating aviation's environmental impact to reduce carbon emissions and create cleaner and more sustainable transportation,' says **Adrian Gane**, Director Sustainability & Industry Affairs, Etihad Airways.

The sustainability strategy of Etihad Aviation Group is aligned to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. While commercial aviation still only represents around two per cent of global human-made CO2 emissions, the airlines and infrastructure that support



navigation service providers and governments all need to come together to create a long-term solution for the benefit of the planet. For us, sustainability remains a priority and we are committed to being 'Greener Together'. Some of our initiatives on this forefront include:

#### Zero net carbon emissions by 2050

Etihad has committed to a minimum target of zero net carbon emissions by 2050 and halving of our 2019 net emission levels by 2035. These ambitious environmental targets will be achieved through a mix of optimised fuel manage-

ment, internal initiatives, collaboration with industry partners and adoption of a comprehensive programme of relevant carbon offsets, to be developed with specific focus on the requirements of the UAE and markets served by the airline.

#### Sustainability-focused partnership with Boeing

In November last year, Etihad and Boeing signed a groundbreaking global strategic partnership, centred on the Boeing 787 'Greenliner' to test cutting-edge technologies and explore 'blue sky' opportunities to improve airspace efficiency, reduce fuel burn, and cut CO2 emissions and

noise pollution. We have been sharing knowledge, experience and resources to continuously improve the Boeing 787 Dreamliner, and reduce aircraft carbon emissions, a major challenge across many industries today.

#### Support for the ecoDemonstrator programme

In August 2020, Etihad and Boeing worked together on the seventh iteration of the ecoDemonstrator programme to test innovative technologies in the air, building on the core innovation and sustainability tenets. This year's programme evaluated four projects to reduce emissions and noise and enhance

the safety and health of passengers and crew. This is Etihad delivering on its commitment for its Boeing 787 Dreamliner to be a testbed to accelerate technology development making aviation safer and more sustainable now and into the future.

#### Sustainable biofuel

Exploring the use of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) has been at the core of Etihad's business for the last decade with the airline a key partner of Abu Dhabi's Sustainable Bioenergy Research Consortium, along with Boeing, and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. In fact, Etihad's first flight using plant-based fuel was back in 2012, while in 2020 Etihad used 50,000 gallons of a 50/50 blend of sustainable aviation fuel on the final flight of the ecoDemonstrator 787-10 flight tests between Washington DC and Abu Dhabi. We continue to learn about sustainable fuels with the aim of making them

less expensive and more widely available.

#### Reduction of single-use plastic by 80%

On Earth Day last year, Etihad was the first Middle Eastern airline to operate a flight without any single-use plastics, from Abu Dhabi to Brisbane, one of the longest sectors in the network. We remain committed to the goal and promise of reducing single-use plastic usage by 80 per cent as compared to April 2019 not just in-flight, but across the entire organisation by the end of 2022.



**Adrian Gane**  
Director Sustainability & Industry Affairs, Etihad Airways

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

Sustainability remains a priority and we are committed to being 'Greener Together'

them and can adapt to meet the needs of a sustainable, carbon-neutral operation are those that will survive and lead the future of flying. To ensure this brighter future, airlines, airports, suppliers, aviation regulators, airspace

## Travelling in the festive season

'Year 2020 has been full of twists and turns, and could not have been more disorienting for holidaymakers who were not able to satiate their wanderlust, at least for the most part of the year. But, the grand Indian festive season has given them an opportunity to step out,' says **Arpan Srivastava**, Head of Product, Zoomcar.

After a sudden lockdown that lasted for several months, many Indians flocked to holiday destinations when they got a chance. The work-from-home policy across organisations and superior internet penetration further supported them in this pursuit. It ultimately gave birth to a novel concept that is now being called 'work from anywhere', 'work-vacation', or, more popularly, 'workcation'. In a workcation, people enjoy an immersive experi-

ence of their holiday destination. It enables them to work in a traditional format. However, they get to delve deeper into the neck of the woods and explore the location post their working hours. The mode of transport becomes vital in such scenarios, more so in the current dynamics. Today, people prefer personal mobility over other public alternatives. Therefore, we have received strong demand for self-drive cars at Zoomcar. It includes both regular rentals as well as long-term shared

subscriptions. We have now observed a similar demand in the ongoing festive season.

Key cities with maximum bookings included Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad

Both regular vacationers and 'workcations' are driving the figures, thereby enjoying superior flexibility and safety during their respective vacations.

In terms of holiday hotspots, hill stations have dominated the overall landscape as compared to other popular tourist destinations. More holidaymakers are travelling to hilly regions such as Ooty, Mahabaleshwar, Lonavla, Nainital, Mussoorie, Shimla, Manali and so forth. We have also seen groups

travelling towards north-eastern states like Assam, Sikkim and Meghalaya.

A revival of demand for religious destinations is also being observed with mass visits to Kedarnath, Shirdi, Amritsar, Mathura, Ajmer, Ujjain and Pushkar amongst others. For us, the key cities with maximum bookings included Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. A lot of people even booked cars for visiting friends and family during the festive period.

As arduous as this year has been, it has made us cherish even those aspects of life that we earlier did not give much importance to.



**Arpan Srivastava**  
Head of Product, Zoomcar

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





# Digital Offerings



## Webinar Partners



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**Mumbai:**

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Priyanshu: +91 9619499170, priyanshu@ddppl.com



# Education: An alternate vertical

Kazin Education has signed a contract with ISM EduTech that owns and operates universities specialising in MBBS programmes in Almaty, Georgia, Dushanbe and Barbados. **Rohit Shorey**, Founder Director, Kazin Education, says they will now appoint channel partners in various states of India.



Manas Dwivedi

**A** new education and travel consultancy firm, Kazin Education has entered the industry with the aim to empower travel agents in the new business vertical, and also promote and enrol students in leading foreign universities and support them in their travel needs. The company has partnered with ISM EduTech that owns and operates four universities, including Kazakh Russian Medical University (KRMU) in Almaty, Kazakhstan; Georgian American University (GAU) in Tbilisi, Georgia; Avicenna Tajik State Medical University (ATSMU) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan; and Bridgetown International Uni-



**Rohit Shorey**  
Founder Director, Kazin Education

versity (BIU) in Bridgetown, Barbados. Bollywood celebrity Sonu Sood is the brand ambassador for ISM EduTech.

According to **Rohit Shorey**, the new venture will soon appoint channel partners in various states of the country. Sharing his vision and plan, he says, "Our motive is to

engage our travel trade partners in an alternate field, thus creating a secondary source of income. In fact, I believe that this may well become a primary source of income for our preferred partners, as our pay-outs and incentives to our channel partners will be quite handsome. I believe, never let a crisis go to waste. COVID gave me an opportunity to think about the future of the business of tourism, which led to education. The CIS region is our core area of business, and education in the field of medicine is very popular and economical. I believe that every deserving person has the right to pursue their dreams and our universities allow them exactly that, but at a frac-

tion of the cost of pursuing doctorate as compared to other countries."

Shorey feels that this new venture is more relevant than ever for the travel trade

and the agents, especially keeping in mind the current pandemic when the industry is facing challenges. "Our travel trade partners will be able to synergise their existing knowledge of tourism with education," he says. All MBBS courses will be in English, with access to Indian faculty.

Sharing targets, he adds, "Our intention is to allow access to affordable but state-of-the-art education to young Indians wishing to pursue a career in medicine, especially from Tier-II and Tier-III cities. Initially, our target audience will be from India; later, we will move to neighbouring countries. We will be providing end-to-end facili-

tation to students. This will include interviews, admissions, visa facilitation, flights, accommodation, etc. Our local team in each country where our universities are located will overlook day-to-day welfare of our students, while our PSA partner in each state will facilitate post facilitation between students and parents."

One key PSA will be enlisted for each state. These PSAs will engage channel partners in that state, thus creating a network of opportunity both for Kazin's partners and students alike. "We have already finalised PSAs in certain states, while for other states we are still on a lookout," Shorey says.

Our motive is to engage our travel trade partners in an alternate field, creating a secondary source of income

# TAT launches season-4 of Golf Pass

The fourth season of activities under the Thai Golf Pass programme will see a number of roadshows pan India, a promotional event in India, and two events in Thailand. A survey of Indian golfers, a photo contest, and a quiz will also form part of the promotions supported by Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT).



Manas Dwivedi

**S**ea-son 4 of the Thai Golf Pass, a loyalty programme supported by Tourism Authority of Thailand to offer Indian golfers a seamless golf experience in Thailand, has been

campaigns. The organisers also announced SOTC as travel partner for the season.

The inaugural season of the initiative, launched back in 2017 as the first-ever loyalty programme for a country, saw the website launch, two

travelled to Thailand under Thai Golf Pass.

**Vachirachai Sirisumpan**, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) New Delhi Office, commenting on the launch, said, "Golf is one of the most important segments

Destination diversity and vast choices of golf courses attract visitors coming to play golf in Thailand

— Vachirachai Sirisumpan

portunity and look forward to welcoming all Indian golfers to have their first tee-off in Amazing Thailand once the situation improves."

**Anil Dev**, Managing Director, SLW, said, "More than 250 quality service providers and a number of golf courses, resorts and hotels are on

We support all golf tourism initiatives and are sure that this will encourage golf travel

— Rajan Sehgal



launched. Dignitaries joined each other for the curtain raiser in New Delhi. For Season 4, activities began in October 2020 with social media

promotional events in India and one in Bangkok, 83 loyalty partners, as well as 2,307 membership registrations. A total of 522 golfers

which we focus on, continuing to promote Thailand as a favourite destination for Indian golfers. In fact, destination diversity and vast choices

of golf courses throughout the country are key factors attracting the large numbers of visitors coming to play golf in Thailand. I am happy to work closely with SLW to launch 'Thai Golf Pass – Season 4', and would be more excited to see all golfers joining the programme. I would like to take this op-

More than 250 quality service providers and a number of golf courses, resorts and hotels are on board as partners

— Anil Dev

board as partners. We are gearing up to make Thailand the destination of choice."

**Rajan Sehgal**, President, Indian Golf Tourism Association, said, "Our association welcomes this move which is a programme unique to India. We support all golf tourism initiatives and are sure that this will encourage golf travel."



# 'We will not disappoint'

In his report shared at the 76<sup>th</sup> AGM of IATA, **Alexandre de Juniac**, outgoing Director General and CEO, IATA, spoke about sustainability, partnership with the travel trade and his stepping down from the position after a tenure of five years.

 Nisha Verma

**S**peaking at the 76<sup>th</sup> AGM of IATA, **Alexandre de Juniac** shared that international passenger travel was down 89 per cent, while domestic had reduced by 43 per cent. "The result is that airlines will lose \$66 for every passenger carried this year, and a total net loss of \$118.5 billion. This loss will be reduced sharply by \$80 billion in 2021, but the prospect of losing \$38.7 billion next year is nothing to celebrate," he shared.

## How can aviation truly restart?

De Juniac said that a multi-layered approach for safe travel, called Take-off, had been established to keep passengers and crew safe. It was published in record time with the combined efforts of industry stakeholders, public health authorities and IATA, under the leadership of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). "The good news is that 86 per cent of people currently travelling report that they feel safe with the new measures," he added. However, according to him, three challenges still continue



Alexandre de Juniac  
Director General and CEO, IATA

to exist: first, implementation of the multi-layered approach being far from universal; second, the need for universal compliance

 **A targeted effort by IATA avoided about \$20 billion of infrastructure charges and service fees** 

wearing masks; and lastly, undertaking the mammoth task of reactivating infrastructure and personnel.

Detailing these challenges one by one, de Juniac said, "Airlines and airports must continue to do their part, and we must bring govern-

ments on board, focusing on harmonisation. Second, we need universal compliance with mask-wearing. It reduces the potential for on-board transmission to rival the risk of being struck by lightning. It is important that governments give us the support to enforce this community responsibility. We must plan carefully with regulators how to safely ramp-up operations. Reactivating thousands of grounded aircraft, managing the qualifications and readiness of millions of licensed personnel, and dealing with a major drain of experienced workers will be key to a safe re-start."

## Being sustainable

De Juniac informed that owing to the historic Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), aviation's net carbon emissions from international operations will not grow beyond 2019 levels. "Amid the cri-

 **Airlines will approach 2021 hobbled and on life support** 

sis, IATA worked with our industry partners through the Air Transport Action Group to map the way to our 2050 goal of cutting our net emissions to half of 2005 levels. We will, of course, need the support of our partners in government. They must not invent new taxes. Instead, now is the time for them to invest in an energy transition to sustainable aviation fuels (SAF)," he suggested.

## On re-opening borders

"A vaccine is the permanent solution we need. Recent news on progress

is encouraging, and IATA is working with WHO, UNICEF, Gavi and others in the COVAX initiative. This will ensure that aviation is prepared, literally, to deliver. Borders must be open for distribution, cold-chain logistics facilities need to be available with trained

economic recovery will be compromised without the catalyst of aviation. This is not passing the buck to governments and asking them to solve our problems. Airlines worked hard and cut costs nearly in half. And a targeted effort by IATA avoided about \$20 billion of infrastructure charges and service fees," he said.

Still, airlines will lose \$118.5 billion this year, feels de Juniac. "Year 2021 is likely to see a \$38.7 billion loss. Airlines will approach 2021 hobbled and on life support," he said, adding, "Get-

ting our aircraft because we have demonstrated our ability to adapt and to ensure the safety of our customers and our people, and we know they want to fly with us. They have been denied the freedom we provide not by a virus, but by a disjointed political response and the restrictions put in place by certain governments who have failed to adapt and to adopt the sensible measures that would have allowed almost normal air services to continue. As Alexandre has said, the building blocks are now in place for our industry to get back to business and we should be confident in our ability to succeed."



tensions because everybody in the system was short of cash. It was difficult without strong cooperation. It doesn't exclude that sometimes there is a disagreement, but we are able to successfully maintain the system. We have a lot of other contacts with the travel

## 'My style will be different'

"My style will be different to what has gone before me. I, too, am a businessman. I, too, understand how governments operate, but I am even more unhappy with and more critical of how they get things done or, more importantly, in many cases how they have failed to get things done. I have spent more than 40 years in this business. About half of them were at the pointy end as a pilot, and the other half at the blunt end as a CEO. I know what it takes to succeed. In those 40 years I have seen first-hand the numerous challenges and significant crises that we have faced and that we have overcome. I have a pas-



Willie Walsh  
Director General Designate, IATA

sion for this industry and a passion for IATA. We need, more than ever, an effective industry body to serve and represent our interests. We have continued to provide vital services and, in many cases, we were the key link in getting critical safety equipment to health services. The virus did not stop our customers board-

ing financial support from governments and doing everything in our power to re-open borders with testing - this will be at the very top of IATA's agenda."

staff, and security measures must be air-tight. On top of that, passenger operations with belly capacity must be scaled-up. This will be the largest and most complex logistical exercise ever. The world is counting on us, and we will not disappoint," he said.

## Supporting finances

Saying that IATA sounded the alarm early, de Juniac shared that governments came to the table with \$173 billion of critical financial support this year. "A full

Relationship with the trade On how united the industry is with respect to the travel trade, de Juniac said, "We are cooperating on a day-to-day basis on what we call the BSP-ISS network.

During this crisis, we had to ensure that this system, which is strong, guarantee that all the

## On stepping down

Speaking on his succession, de Juniac said, "It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve the global air transport industry—the business of freedom—in this capacity. I will continue to proudly lead IATA until I handover to my successor. He will inherit a team he can count on." 

## Losses to continue till 2021

- ❖ Passenger revenues are expected to fall to \$191 billion, less than a third of the \$612 billion earned in 2019. This is largely due to a 66% fall in passenger demand (measured in RPK). International markets were hit disproportionately hard with a 75% fall in demand. Domestic markets, largely propelled by a recovery in China and Russia, are expected to perform better and end 2020 49% below 2019 levels.
- ❖ Passenger yields are expected to be down 8% compared to 2019 and a weak passenger load factor, which is expected to be 65.5%, down from the 82.5% recorded in 2019, a level last seen in 1993.
- ❖ Passenger numbers are expected to grow to 2.8 billion in 2021. That would be a billion more travellers than in 2020, but still 1.7 billion travellers short of 2019 performance. Passenger yields are expected to be flat and the load factor is expected to improve to 72.7% (an improvement on the 65.5% expected for 2020, but still well below the 82.5% achieved in 2019).



*Tourism in Nepal has now started with proper safety measures and social distancing in place. The devastating impact of COVID-19 had, like in all other countries, stopped all tourism-related activities.*



# ATF: A fuel for growth

'I am a sharp critic of airline commercial policies and believe they definitely need to be strongly regulated so interests of the distribution industry are also recognised and protected,' asserts **Seema Luthra**, Founder, Travel Metrics.

Advocating the interests of the distribution industry is a path I will pursue in good times and bad, however, we live in peculiar times now and other issues concerning the greater good of all are playing on my mind. I am speaking about the uncompetitive cost structures in Indian aviation that probably drive airlines to become self-centred at the cost of their distributors and passengers. Air transportation plays a key role in enabling travel & tourism activities. The multiplier effect of travel & tourism has been stated in many studies worldwide and is established beyond doubt. In India, the percentage of tourist arrivals by air is 79.8%. In 2019,

aviation supported more than 40 million jobs within the tourism sector, and through this contributed approximately 800 billion euros to the world's GDP. Aviation

Jet fuel's inclusion in GST would allow airlines to take ITC on GST paid, reducing cost

supports \$3.5 trillion in world economic activity (4.1% of global gross domestic prod-

uct). Providing these services creates 11.3 million direct jobs and directly contributes \$961.3 billion to global GDP.

Air transport is also a driver of global trade. Currently, about 86% of e-commerce deliveries are transported by air at some stage. For sustainable low air ticket prices and freight charges, it is imperative that the cost of providing air transport is globally competitive. Isn't it ironical that in our country where we allow foreign equity up to 100% by means of automatic approvals pertaining to establishment of Greenfield airports, up to 74% by means of automatic approvals pertaining to existing airports, up to 49 per cent of foreign equity by

means of automatic approvals pertaining to domestic air transport services and up to 100 per cent of NRI investment by means of automatic approvals pertaining to domestic air transport services, we have the most draconian cost structures to operate air transport services? In a post-COVID era, I wonder where India ranks in terms of preference for an international airline to commence flights for leisure travel given our high cost structures for airlines. The highly taxed fuel costs may well be a key deterrent for tourism to India, and governments in key tourism gateways like Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Kerala and Rajasthan are responsible for this penny wise and pound foolish situa-

tion. A UT like Delhi has built an Aerocity and seemingly recognises the potential of air travel for business and tourism, but look at the mind-blowing taxes imposed on ATF. These governments are doing a disservice to the nation by their rigid irrationalism and refusal to allow ATF

cal for state governments to urgently facilitate the aviation and tourism sectors to lower their cost structures significantly to stay afloat and be able to cater to the demands of the proportionately larger segment of leisure travellers. Since corporates are likely to spend less on air travel and it is impossible to determine the necessity and purpose of travel in any case, it would be advisable to lower the GST on airline tickets and disallow ITC as this would allow states and UTs to retain the tax while lowering the price of airline tickets for the Indian corporate as well as leisure travellers, so the larger economy can benefit from it.

Governments are doing a disservice to the nation by their refusal to allow ATF under GST

under the GST regime. ATF makes up for almost half of the cost of an airline and rates vary from state to state depending on local VAT. Jet fuel's inclusion in GST would allow airlines to take input tax credit (ITC) on the GST paid, thus bringing down the effective cost to a great extent. Now, it becomes criti-



Seema Luthra  
Founder, Travel Metrics

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

## Travel trade in Dubai on CEO Fam



In a bid to strengthen awareness of the city's efforts in combating the global COVID-19 pandemic, Dubai Tourism hosted the first CEO Fam for top CEOs from leading travel companies in India. The delegation got to learn about safety and hygiene measures taken up as a precaution to combat the pandemic and ensure the well-being of residents and visitors alike.

## Virtual MoU connects airlines



EL AL Israel Airlines and Etihad Airways have signed a virtual MoU which covers scope to introduce joint codeshare services between Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv, as well as on the global flight networks beyond the two carriers' hubs. The MoU was signed by **Tony Douglas**, Group CEO, Etihad Aviation Group and **Gonen Usishkin**, CEO, EL AL Israel Airlines.

## Agents need IATA-like body

The pandemic might just be the jolt that the travel agent fraternity needs to wake them up from the inertia that has set in, and force them to think about safeguarding their interests.

Hazel Jain

Amidst the mass outcry about astronomically high IATA fee, **Sunil B Satyawakta**, Former Chapter Chairman for Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand, TAAI, shares his views about why the B2B community needs to start thinking and taking action now.

He says, "Renegotiating IATA fee is indeed a need of the

hour and it is good that UFTAA has initiated to negotiate with IATA, but why only the BSP



Sunil B Satyawakta  
Former Chapter Chairman  
Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand, TAAI

tions is reached. Agents need a parallel international body to look into their interests and protect them from IATA which is only for the airline."

He adds, "We must take stock of how many travel agents have surrendered their IATA membership post COVID-19 due to the exorbitant fee structure. Not everyone has received the invoice. IATA is releasing it area-wise. We have received an alert message from IATA that its Annual Revalidation exercise mandated by Resolution 812 has commenced from October 27, 2020. The first batch will be to agents in the state of Maharashtra followed each successive week with communications to agents in other states. This exercise will continue until the first week of December 2020."

Agents need a parallel international body to look into their interests and protect them from IATA

agreement? United Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA) being the association of travel agents' associations should act as protective for travel agents as IATA does for airlines.

UFTAA should ensure that no arbitrary moves favouring the airlines are made by IATA unless a mutual consensus with all travel agents associa-



# BE PART OF THE **FUN**





# A much-needed weekend in Alibaug

Mehernosh Colombowalla, Director of Beyond Borders Travel Management Company, along with some industry friends made his way to Alibaug in the first week of October and had a safe and fun getaway after months. They also experienced the RORO – the new boat that ferries passengers and their vehicles from Mumbai to Alibaug within an hour.

We left our homes and followed our hearts! We had to overcome the fear of catching the virus ourselves before we could coax our clients to start travelling. And so, in the first week of October, a few colleagues from our trade and I were off to Alibaug for the weekend, with the excitement of experiencing the RORO – the new boat that ferries passengers and their vehicles from Mumbai across to Alibaug in just one hour. A normal drive is over three hours by road.

Of course, we took precautions – loads of sanitiser sprays (which was not really necessary) and booked a villa just for ourselves. This was the beginning of



a new travel trend where travellers, after being cooped up at home for more than six months, wanted to get out and travel, and book an entire villa for their families. These particular villas we stayed at range from two to six bedrooms, with private pools and an in-house chef who can cook up the most sumptuous gourmet meals for you.

The morning we left, we felt like birds being let free (happens to seasoned and regular travellers). We were pleasantly surprised that the departure at Mumbai port was handled flawlessly, with cars moving in order. We managed to get onto the boat within minutes. The seating on the open deck was beautiful and plentiful, and the air-conditioned space

inside was large with ample seating and social distancing in place. Passengers could buy coffee and eat while sailing. We reached Alibaug in an hour. Disembarking was equally easy, swift and well-handled by their team there. It took us only 10 minutes to get our car off the ferry.

Our villa was beautiful, lush green and spacious, and ev-

A first-hand experience is always the best way to influence your clientele and regain confidence

er colleague's birthday and we celebrated her day in this beautiful villa. Our pictures on various social media platforms have encouraged our clients, friends in the trade and out of it to start venturing out of their homes to take their well-deserved city breaks! A first-hand experience is always the best way to influence your clientele and regain confidence.

ery room and common area was well-sanitised. Our chef whipped up some amazing dishes as per our requests. Cleaning and sanitisation of the pool was done every morning. We felt safe and were convinced that it was okay to travel as our hospitality partners were taking utmost care to ensure our stay be safe. It was also a



**Mehernosh Colombowalla**  
Director, Beyond Borders Travel Management Company

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

## yatra witnesses uptick in demand

The Yatra.com festive survey indicates an uptick in demand for travel as almost 75 per cent of respondents, compared to 61 per cent in 2019, said they were willing to go on a holiday during the festive season. The online travel portal has also witnessed an increase of about 36 per cent in booking inquiries as compared to initial COVID levels.

Manas Dwivedi

Leading online travel portal Yatra.com conducted its annual festive survey amongst 5,000 respondents, highlighting what travel trends look like in the new normal. The survey revealed that the trend of advance booking continues with 39.3 per cent of respondents plan-



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

ning leisure trips more than one month in advance to rest, relax and recuperate.

Safety and hygiene take priority while planning a holiday as travellers look at the number of cases in the vicinity, sanitisation measures adopted, government guidelines and amenities in case of an emergency among other factors. The

survey revealed that about 52.5 per cent of respondents are seeking medical/travel insurance for the sake of security and more than 50 per cent of respondents said that they would prefer ordering room service rather than visiting restaurants and bars.

Taking extra safety precautions, about 72.1 per cent of respondents said that they will be going through sanitisation processes followed by monuments and tourist spots before planning a visit to them. This assurance is important as about 48.2 per cent of respondents are planning their holiday with the family. Interestingly, beating beaches as a preferred location for holiday goers, 37.9 per cent of re-

spondents said they would like to visit the hills to escape the monotony and stress brought by the pandemic. Budget travel continues to

Travellers are being extra cautious as they are planning their trip with families

see a spike as 35.4 per cent of respondents are keeping ₹10,000-25,000 per person as set targets for their budget during vacations.

Commenting on this survey, **Sabina Chopra**, Co-founder

### Other highlights

- ❖ 82.9% respondents are keen on opting for online travel portals to plan their complete trip.
- ❖ Only 31.8% respondents have agreed to visit remote locations to work during the festive season.
- ❖ About 37.8% respondents would like to switch off from their social media completely while travelling.
- ❖ About 13.1% respondents would like to stay in homestays.
- ❖ Preferred vacation time to unwind is a week for about 58.7% respondents.

and COO, Corporate Travel & Head Industry Relations, Yatra.com, said, "Consumers are looking at stringent safety and sanitisation processes followed at every touchpoint of travel. According to our survey, travellers are being extra cautious as they are planning their trip with families. In terms of location, accommoda-

tion or mode of transportation, travellers are ready to pay extra while ensuring all safety measures are in place. We have witnessed an increase of 36 per cent in booking inquiries compared to initial COVID levels, which we expect to increase gradually as we move deeper in the festive season."

### Top domestic destinations

- ❖ Himachal Pradesh
- ❖ Goa
- ❖ Uttarakhand
- ❖ Northeast
- ❖ Kerala
- ❖ Rajasthan



# Russia is just a click away

Russian Expo Days (RED) is an online exhibition for travel professionals from India, to be held from December 7-11. The event will focus on e-visa to Russia and tax-free shopping. It will highlight St. Petersburg, Murmansk, Kamchatka, Tula, Vladimir, Amur, Krasnodar, and Samara regions.



Nisha Verma

Organised by Profi. Travel, Russian media holding for B2B travel audience, and the Russian Information Center in India with support from Federal Agency for Tourism of Russia, RED would allow visitors of the exhibition together with the leading Russian travel business

experts to discuss the most relevant topics: e-visa and tax-free shopping in Russia, reception of Indian tourists in Russia's regions, as well as possibilities of industrial tourism, seasonal trends and tendencies among others.

"India is currently one of the top-priority countries in terms of increasing the tourist flow. We would like to see

as many Indian citizens as possible discover the unique natural and cultural wealth and diversity of Russia. In addition, the implementation of the electronic visa system throughout the Russian Federation from the beginning of 2021 will create an additional incentive for the growth of inbound tourist flow from India," says **Demyan Smilevets**, Head of Department for International Cooperation, Federal Agency for Tourism of Russia.

The event will focus on eight regions of Russia –St. Petersburg, Murmansk, Kamchatka, Tula, Vladimir, Amur, Krasnodar, and Samara. Each of these regions will present its opportunities for tourism. According to Profi. Travel, the online event will be extremely useful for at-



opportunity to issue electronic visas to enter Russia. The potential for development is enormous," says **Alexey Vengin**, CEO, Profi. Travel media holding. Each participant will also stand a chance to receive a Russia Specialist Certificate or win one of the prizes (that will be announced later).

## Networking opportunities

At RED 2020, visitors can get contacts of tour operators, hoteliers and other representatives of the Russian tourist business, communicate with experts directly on the site, and even sign contracts with new partners. Furthermore, virtual stands of the exhibiting regions are already available on the exhibition website. There visitors can find basic information about each of Russia's regions, download useful catalogues with a selection of hotels and restaurants for Indian tourists, get contacts of travel organisations and companies in these regions, and watch beautiful videos and photos of Russia. ↴

## Business sessions

There will be 12 live sessions with representatives of Russian travel business, TAFI, Federal Agency for Tourism of Russia, Russian Information Center in India and Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects. Participation is free and registration is available right on [russiadays.travel/vr/n8YgGmg](https://russiadays.travel/vr/n8YgGmg)

**December 7:** Session with Federal Agency for Tourism of Russia on how to apply for e-visa and get tax-free refund.

**December 9:** Agency for Strategic Initiatives to Promote New Projects of Russia will hold a special expert session on one of the most rapidly developing types of tourism - industrial tourism.

tendees. They have also organised a networking section where each participant can choose a travel business representative from Russia and start communication, ask a question and even sign partnership contracts as a result. Virtual stands will be a substitute for offline stands,

and live sessions will give participants a great chance to learn the latest news from the most experienced and trusted partners in Russia.

"Inbound tourism in Russia is about to face serious changes due to the fact that 52 countries now have the

# '67% flyers feel air travel is safest'

**Vinod Kannan**, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara, recently shared results of their latest survey, revealing that at least two out of three (almost 67 per cent) customers believe that flying is the safest way to travel from one place to another. With business picking up, Vistara hopes to operate its complete pre-COVID domestic fleet by April 2021.



TT Bureau

**Vinod Kannan** shares that while 67 per cent customers feel flying is the safest mode of travel today, only 13 per cent disagree. The survey titled 'Flyer behaviour and trends in the times of COVID-19' also reveals that customers' confidence to fly is increasing, with lesser fear of exposure during the journey or fellow Pax not following protocols.

This was the second Vistara survey that gauged passengers' sentiments about flying in current times. The first one was released in June 2020. The survey also highlighted that 63 per

cent of respondents were hopeful of taking their next flight by February 2021.

The fear of flying is reducing, Kannan shared, adding that according to their first



survey, 32 per cent of respondents said that they do not fear exposure on-board an aircraft. However, in the second survey, the number increased to 49 per cent.

**Domestic is near, international not too far**  
Revealing that domestic



**Vinod Kannan**  
Chief Commercial Officer  
Vistara

travel will rule the roost, the survey stated that almost 84 per cent of Vistara flyers would travel within India on their next flight. On the other hand, only 16 per cent of customers of the airline shared that they would travel international. In fact, 26 per cent of Business Class passengers said that their next flight would be outside the country. By

August 2021, customers would like to take an international flight, and the top five destinations on their list are Singapore, Dubai, US, UK and Thailand. "We have been seeing a steady rise in demand for domestic travel since the resumption of operations in May 2020, and the increased passenger confidence further makes us hopeful of better times to return soon," Kannan said.

## VFR traffic up during festivals

The survey highlighted a rise in the number of people visiting friends and relatives starting October 2020. There was also a spike seen in leisure travel booked for 2021. It indi-

cated that travelling by air for business and returning to a place of work/home continues to be the main purpose of travel in the last few weeks for nearly 45 per cent of the respondents. The survey further stated that visiting friends and relatives is expected to rise during the festive season, a trend that will continue

through February 2021 for an average of 25 per cent of the respondents.

## High on optimism

Kannan also shared that they are expecting to operate 100 per cent of Vistara's pre-COVID domestic passenger flights by April next year. Right now, they have around 55 per cent of their pre-COVID scheduled domestic passenger services. "I think, we will hit pre-COVID levels in terms of capacity alone somewhere in March or April of 2021. Again, it is going to be a function of how things progress through Diwali and the year-end period because that is going to be quite material," he stressed. ↴

The passenger confidence makes us hopeful of better times to return soon



# EVENT TALK



Media Partners:



## DECEMBER 2020

Date	Event	Time
1	WTTC Webinar on Tourism Recovery	06:30 pm
1-3	X-Festival Travel 2020	2:30 pm
1-3	Asian Tourism Research Conference	09:00 am
1-4	Routes Reconnected	01:30 pm
2-3	Virtual Spanish Travel Show	02:00 pm
3	PATA Year-end Wrap-Up Webinar	1:30 pm
5	MOT's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar	11:30 am
7	Ireland Tourism Webinar	04:30 pm
7	PATA & TCEB Hybrid Event	1:30 pm
7-11	Russian Expo Days (RED)	12:30 pm
8-9	Digital Travel Virtual Summit	06:30 am
9	CAPA Live- Asia Agenda	11:50 am
10	UNWTO-Google Tourism Acceleration programme	1:30 pm
11	IATO Interactive Members Meet	04:00 pm
15-16	IATO Workshop on Future Communication	05:50 pm
15	UNWTO Asia Pacific Executive Training Programme	12:30 pm
17	CAPA India Webinar	4:00 pm

For more information, contact us at: [talk@ddppl.com](mailto:talk@ddppl.com)

# Festive season brings relief

Aditya Agarwal, Head of Corporate Strategy, Cleartrip, shares data on travel trends in the domestic market, including where Indians are heading within the country, effects on fare and change in booking trends.



Manas Dwivedi

## How have booking volumes changed?

Due to the pandemic, booking volumes are around 50 per cent of last year. However, booking volumes have doubled since July-August. The easing of restrictions and arrival of the festive season have spurred volumes. There is significant amount of pent-up demand that is coming back to the market, and we expect this to continue into this quarter and spill over to the next.

## What are the top flight routes and preferred destinations within India?

Top routes being booked for travel between November 9 and 16 reveal that custom-



Aditya Agarwal  
Head of Corporate Strategy, Cleartrip

ers preferred to travel back home and spend time with family during Diwali and other festivals. The day-wise top 10 routes were dominated by those originating in business centres such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune, heading towards destinations in East and North India such as Patna, Jaipur, Kolkata, Varanasi and Lucknow to name a few. As dates approached closer to

Diwali, these routes replaced traditionally-busy routes between Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi. Additionally, we have seen Mumbai-Goa route feature prominently

Top destinations are Delhi, Goa, Mumbai, Patna, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Varanasi

na, Goa, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow and Varanasi.

## What are some of the booking trends?

One-way trips accounted for 76 per cent of the trips between November 9 and 16. This indicates that most customers prefer to have flexibility in travel plans and re-booking closer to the date of travel. About 55 per cent of the bookings have been for travel within two weeks of Diwali. This share could have likely gone up closer to the date of festivities and couple of days after that.

## Has there been a change in air fares?

Fares this year are lower than last year by around 10 per cent, but this is likely to change.

## In Memoriam



BM Gupta

**BM Gupta**, Whole Time Director, Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI), left for heavenly abode on November 27. A true professional whose contribution to hospitality and banking sectors was phenomenal, he had more than 42 years of experience in the industries. He rose through the ranks at TFCI, and it was in January 2019 that he became a Whole Time Director at the Corporation. He had a bachelor's degree in commerce as well as an MBA from University of Delhi. His contributions to the industry cannot be forgotten. We wish for strength to his family to bear this loss.

# A bit of everything in Vietnam

With a stunning waterside location overlooking Van Lang Lake, innovative and stylish design, a fine-dining restaurant, a spa, a fully-equipped fitness centre and state-of-the-art corporate meeting facilities, X2 Vibe Viet Tri Hotel, by Cross Hotels & Resorts, is sure to delight all guests.



TT Bureau

Situated in the city of Viet Tri in Phu Tho province of Vietnam, X2 Vibe Viet Tri Hotel, by Cross Hotels & Resorts, is less than 60 kms from Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport. Phu Tho province was the first kingdom of Vietnam with two cultural features recognised as treasures of world heritage by

UNESCO: the Worship of Hung Kings, and Xoan Singing performing arts.

Located in close proximity of a myriad of charming attractions with deep historical roots as well as vibrant dining and nightlife venues, X2 Vibe Viet Tri has everything a guest would need, from drinks and dining at the 4K Café overlooking the waterfront and Kafeen for a wide selection of



that last-minute work lined up). The 60 sqm Studio room offers stunning views of the lake and its lush scenery, and has its own living area.

Guests can also make the most of extra-special events in delightful settings such as The Hub and M Room, or en-

drinks and Vietnamese coffee, to the rooftop bar ViBar for open-air relaxation and cocktails with urban views.

The property offers three room types to choose from – Standard (24 rooms), Superior (18 rooms) and Studio (18 rooms) – each with its own comfortable interiors and modern amenities. While the Standard room features a stylish 24 sqm layout along with a queen-sized bed and walk-in rain shower, the Su-



perior room offers 45 sqm of space with a separate living space and workstation (should you have some of

hance their business meetings experience with X2 Vibe Viet Tri's stylish design and latest technology.





**Is your  
covid certificate  
authenticated  
by the  
national board  
of the country?**





## ACCOR

### Paris

As part of its new organisation in line with its asset-light model and its strategic priorities, the Sales, Marketing, Distribution and Loyalty expertise is the responsibility of **Patrick Mendes**, appointed to the role of Group Chief Commercial Officer. He will be in charge of increasing revenues and accelerating the development of innovative services and powerful solutions. Mendes joined Accor Group in 2005 to head Global Sales.



## CHALET HOTELS

### Mumbai

Chalet Hotels has promoted **Rajneesh Malhotra** to Chief Operating Officer. He has been instrumental in driving operational strategies for the company in his previous position of Vice President - Operations & Asset Management. Having joined the company in April 2019 and with over 25 years in hotel operations, in the new role, Malhotra will focus on driving operational excellence while continuing to report to Sanjay Sethi, MD and CEO of Chalet Hotels.



## NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

### Singapore

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) is strengthening its sales force in Asia with the appointment of **Nicholas Lim** as the company's new General Manager Sales Asia. In his new role, Lim will work on maximising the cruise line's existing sales efforts in the region, while simultaneously developing new business strategies to further grow NCL's footprint in Asia. Prior to this, he was President (Asia) of Trafalgar Travel and Managing Director of The Travel Corporation.



## ADAMO HOTELS

### Mumbai

**Ameet Wagh** has joined Adamo Hotels as its Corporate Sales, Revenue & Marketing Manager. He has 20 years of experience in marketing, strategic alliances, revenue management, online sales including managing, improving and marketing SEO, and SEM for the brand website and marketing communications. Wagh was previously with Sarovar Hotels & Resorts, based in Mumbai. In the new role, he will be responsible for the sales, revenue and marketing of Adamo Hotels.



## HYATT REGENCY HOTEL & RESIDENCES

### Pune

Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences has appointed **Thomas Abraham** as General Manager, in addition to his role of AVP for Hyatt Hotels, Central India. Abraham brings with him 27 years of experience in the hospitality industry and has spent over 13 of those years with Hyatt. He moves from Park Hyatt Hyderabad, in the same capacity, to guide the hotel to a similar stature. Abraham will focus on strengthening the operational strategies of the hotel.



## SAYAJI HOTEL

### Indore

Sayaji Hotel Indore has appointed **Dev Thakur** as the Director of Food & Beverages. A passionate hospitality professional with over 15 years of experience in the world's finest hospitality brands, he brings to the table his expertise in fast-paced environment and high-volume operations with multiple styles of service. Thakur has previously been associated with multinational chains like Marriott, The Leela, Hyatt, Hilton and Accor.



# Much-needed optimism in travel

Times have been tough, but every dark cloud does indeed have a silver lining. These positive statements by experts in the global travel and tourism circle will surely lead the way to some Christmas cheer for all of us. As long as we have hope, we have direction and the energy to move forward.



**Olivier Ponti**  
VP Insights, ForwardKeys

“People are making travel plans and there are clear trends. Leisure travel is holding up much better than business travel, and bookings are being dominated by the Christmas holiday period. People are booking at even shorter notice than usual, wary of travel restrictions being imposed without warning, and fares are consistently on the low side, with airlines trying to tempt travellers.”

“My sense is that people were getting increasingly comfortable with how safe air travel and hotels are—the precautions that the industry has been taking—and the numbers [of bookings] have been creeping up as a result. A shift in consumer confidence doesn't happen overnight, but it's been steadily rising. That is a good sign, any day. This is a good sign, any day.”



**Peter Kern**  
CEO, Expedia



**John Pagano**  
CEO, Saudi Red Sea Development Company

“Amid the current global despair, there is a sense of emerging optimism, and I believe the tourism industry will recover fast once borders reopen. Recent cruise line bookings and hotel occupancies suggest there is a strong desire to travel. But, we must use this opportunity to rebuild something that is far more sustainable than what we've had in the past.”

“India's travel industry has started to show green shoots for recovery in the past months, and the aviation minister recently suggested that domestic passenger traffic could reach pre-COVID levels by the end of the year. Access to technology that reduces human contact, queues and physical touchpoints was the ultimate factor for getting Indian people travelling again.”



**Cyril Tetaz**  
Executive VP of Airlines, APAC, Amadeus

## Panel of Experts UNWTO

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) foresees a rebound in international tourism in 2021, mostly in the third quarter of 2021. However, 20 per cent of experts suggest



the rebound could occur only in 2022. Travel restrictions are seen as the main barrier to recovery of international tourism, along with slow virus containment and low consumer confidence.

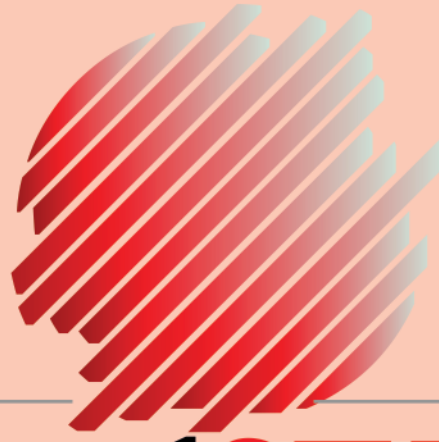
“While there was progress over the course of the summer, re-introduction of tighter travel restrictions in many countries is clearly having an impact on demand. The good news is that consumers' desire to travel remains incredibly resilient, and that pent-up demand bodes well for the industry in the long run.”



**Steve Kaufer**  
CEO, TripAdvisor

Inputs by Hazel Jain





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# FIT, luxury travel for Spain

While MICE and weddings have always been a focus in the past for Spain Tourism, it will zoom in on FIT leisure and luxury travel from India going forward. To connect with the trade, it is hosting the Virtual Spanish Travel Show from December 2-3.

 Hazel Jain & Nisha Verma

**T**he Tourism Office of Spain – Mumbai will organise a two-day virtual roadshow for the very first time on December 2-3, 2020 with 20 Spanish suppliers. The Virtual Spanish Travel Show will see a mix of regional tourism boards, hotels and DMCs. **Elisa**

ing of product presentations and videos in the auditorium, plus some interesting panel discussions and several contests and quizzes with prizes to be won.

**FIT leisure and luxury travel**  
The Tourism Office of Spain in India is still studying the situation to plan its strategy for 2021-22. “I can assure you that this market is important for us, and that is the

reason we organised this virtual travel show. MICE and destination weddings have always been our focus and we will continue to promote them as soon as the crisis situation improves. Of course, FIT leisure and luxury travel will continue to be our focus segments for the India market,” she says. 



**Elisa Robles-Fraga**  
Director, Tourism Office of Spain (Turespaña)  
in Mumbai, India

 This market is important for us, and that is the reason we organised this virtual travel show 

**Robles-Fraga**, Director, Tourism Office of Spain (Turespaña) in Mumbai, India, says, “In normal circumstances, I would have had the pleasure of meeting everyone face to face during our roadshow, but due to the pandemic, we are meeting online. The focus is on restarting tourism post COVID into Spain from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.”

The show will have individual private meetings between buyers and sellers, stream-

## Tourist visas subject to EU regulations

**R**aul de la Rosa Machado, Counsellor, Embassy of Spain, New Delhi, discusses a possible change in documentation and re-establishing air connectivity.



**Raul de la Rosa Machado**  
Counsellor  
Embassy of Spain, New Delhi

of the low per capita infection rate here. Hence, negative PCR test certificate is not needed currently for Indian residents who arrive in Spain.

### Are there any chances of air connectivity soon?

We hope that as soon as the situation is normal, some air connection is re-established – possibly Air India’s Delhi-Madrid-Delhi flight and an air bubble can be formed. Currently, it’s the Indian authorities who do not allow international commercial flights except through air bubbles. Between the embassy in Delhi and the Consulate General in Mumbai, the total Schengen visas issued in 2018 were around 61,000 and 68,000 in 2019, which was an increase of almost 11 per cent.

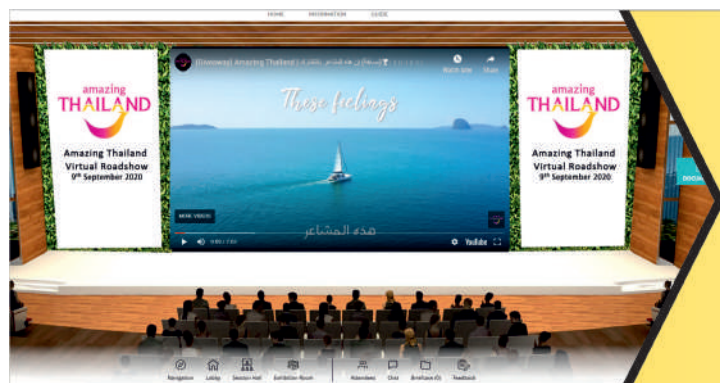
### Will there be any change in documentation for Indian passport holders?

Not much has changed in terms of procedures and documents as of now. Unfortunately, India is not among the countries allowed to visit Spain for tourism. But, as soon as the situation improves, more countries will be added to the list and I am sure India will be back.

### Is there a need for health certificate for tourists?

That might be an option, as the EU might ask for some

additional health requirements. However, currently, the health requirements as they were before are still in place. This also covers having new decisions contained in the international health regulations, which includes COVID. Another thing is the requirement of RT-PCR tests, which is a national-level decision and Spain has recently introduced that only for higher risk countries. India is not among those high-risk countries because



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