

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

TRAVTALK[®]

Published from : ★ India ★ Middle East

Pre-COVID numbers by 2021? 08

Let positivity be your weapon 11

UFTAA seeks revised IATA rules ... 24

'Airlines need government help' 28

Scan & Share

ddppl.com

TravTalkIndia.com

Your daily
2-minute
news capsule

TRAVELTV.NEWS

Anytime & Anywhere

www.TravelTV.news

Hotels: Swanky new workspaces

Working from home has now paved the way for working from hotels, which has not only emerged as the latest trend but also as an innovative solution for hotels to earn revenue during the pandemic, as they offer special packages for corporates and have even tied up with co-working spaces. But, is this only a fad for the interim?



Rohit Chopra
Regional Director - Sales & Distribution
(India & South Asia), Accor

“The co-working space has great potential in our country, as many organisations find them cost-effective. It is also an alternative revenue stream for hotels. Amenities like high-speed Wi-Fi, 24x7 beverage and food options, on-the-go office facilities like printing and scanning, privacy, helpful team members on call and well-curated spaces are available. Some of our hotels are offering a dedicated plug-and-play office space that can be clubbed with various add-ons. This strategy of thoughtfully distributing spaces and services will go far. We are open to collaborations with co-working firms.”



Arif Patel
Regional Vice President - Sales & Marketing, Hyatt India

“We have various options to meet all possible needs of the working professional, curated with the highest standards of comfort, luxury and safety. The hotels offering the concept include Hyatt Centric MG Road Bangalore, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, Hyatt Hyderabad Gachibowli, Hyatt Regency Delhi and Hyatt Place Hyderabad. Keeping up with the current reality, a lot of people are working remotely and are looking for comfortable, peaceful and most importantly, safe places to work from. We anticipate this trend to continue, and have been able to provide guests with safe and innovative solutions for their needs.”



Sudeep Jain
Managing Director - SWA
IHG

“Hotels such as Crowne Plaza Ahmedabad City Centre, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida, Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park, Crowne Plaza New Delhi Okhla and Crowne Plaza Greater Noida are offering multiple packages. Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar, Holiday Inn Express Kolkata Airport, as well as Holiday Inn Express hotels are also offering packages. While there is potential that hotels could gain popularity as an alternate working space for corporate employees, it cannot be confirmed as a long-term change as yet.”

Contd on page 6 ►

‘My date, your rate’ for weddings

Six event experts came together during the virtual launch of ‘Har Din Shubh Hai’ to discuss and popularise the idea that all dates in the calendar are auspicious for weddings. The industry is striving to find ways to revive itself instead of waiting for a government bailout. Stakeholders also shared with MOT suggestions on promoting the sector.



Rajeev Jain
Director
Rashi Entertainment

“Finally a strategic effort on wedding tourism will see the light of day. The tourism ministry has accepted our efforts and proposal that we had submitted. I am confident that this move of the tourism department will help the entire wedding industry to generate more profit in 2021. We have submitted all recommendations for empanelment formats, incentives for interstate and international weddings, exhibition participation, etc. The Ministry will now take its own course and share it as a document for the industry's benefit.”



Shampa Dhali
Area Director
National Sales, Marriott India

“If a client books our venue on a non-saya date, the costs can come down drastically. We will definitely go back to sing the same song in order to promote this campaign from across our 135 properties in India. There is also some proactive communication we can look at. If we can all come together and give this messaging out to all our clients walking in, that itself is a good beginning. The messaging will resonate when our voices are united across the board and across brands.”



Jitendra Jadhav
Assistant Director (Niche Tourism
Division) MOT, New Delhi

MOT's take...

“MOT has been directed by Sectoral Group of Secretaries to form guidelines on weddings and therefore, inputs from industry stakeholders were sought. Rajeev Jain of Rashi Entertainment has been instrumental in providing us the detailed inputs. The proposed guidelines are under process and expected to be finalised soon by the Ministry after approvals.”

Contd on page 16 ►

LAS VEGAS



To UK and back on SpiceJet

SpiceJet has announced non-stop flights connecting Delhi and Mumbai with London's Heathrow airport. The airline is offering an all-inclusive introductory return fare starting at ₹53,555, and an equally lucrative one-way price.



Nisha Verma

The new connection, starting December 4, 2020 under the air bubble agreement with United Kingdom, will make SpiceJet the first Indian low-cost carrier to operate flights to the UK. The airline is offering an all-inclusive introductory return fare starting at ₹53,555 (GBP 565) on both Delhi-London-Delhi and Mumbai-London-Mumbai routes. The one-way starting fare will be ₹25,555 (GBP 270) on Delhi-London and Mumbai-London routes, and ₹29,555 (GBP 312) on London-Delhi and London-Mumbai routes.



Ajay Singh
Chairman and Managing Director
SpiceJet

Announcing the new route virtually, **Ajay Singh**, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "SpiceJet has chosen London as its first long-haul destination since it is one of the first international destinations that Indians aspire to fly to. It is, from our perspective, a vali-

dation of friendship between UK and India. We aspire to be the enablers of trade and commerce between the two countries, and we want to see how we can help accelerate an exchange of ideas as well as of people between

UK and India. Once SpiceJet, being an LCC, starts operations, volumes will increase." The airline will operate thrice a week to London, including twice from Delhi and once a week from Mumbai.

The flights will be operated on the new twin aisle A330-900 Neo. The Business Class cabin features 18 spacious 75" full flatbed seats and 352 Economy seats. According to Singh, the airline will add some more international long-haul destinations after London.

Also commenting on what made them launch the London flight during COVID-19, Singh said, "While COVID is a huge challenge, we have used it as a huge opportunity. It's time to build new bridges and relationships, and experiment. SpiceJet has done over 1000 repatriation flights from across the world, including Europe and London." 🇮🇳

We aspire to be the enablers of trade and commerce between the two countries

Flight Schedule

Flight No.	Origin	Destination	Departure	Arrival	Frequency	Effective From
SG 9594	Delhi	London	13:00	17:30	Friday, Sunday	December 4, 2020
SG 9595	London	Delhi	19:30	07:55 +1	Monday, Friday	December 4, 2020
SG 9597	London	Mumbai	19:30	08:45 +1	Sunday	December 6, 2020
SG 9596	Mumbai	London	12:45	17:30	Monday	December 7, 2020



The show must go Online

DDP E-connect can help your sellers connect with indian agents on its virtual platform!

Ask for a Free Demo!



For further details & best rates, please contact:

Delhi: +91 96503 99908, arumita.gupta@ddpl.com

Mumbai: +91 9619499167, harshal@ddpl.com, +91 9619499170, priyanshu@ddpl.com



Covid SMART

COVID prevention checklist for travel agents



Wear mask



Wash hands



Cough on your elbow



Use soap & antibacterial gel



Keep your distance



Regular sleep



CovidSMART Training

Your safety can be a class apart with CovidSmart

TRAVELTALK

VIEWPOINT

The answer lies within

Shiv Khera says, 'We cannot solve all our problems, but we can handle them. What I cannot change, let me accept it graciously, not grudgingly.'

Is it time that the Indian travel fraternity took a cue from these words to recall the many appeals and petitions of days past (going as far back as the first lockdown) that fell on inattentive ears? Is it time that the trade realise that the path they chose, though seemingly ideal then, has not resulted in anything of much consequence? Pondering, appealing and appealing again will not get anyone anywhere. Adaptation is the order of the day and when one repeatedly treads on a path that leads to a stalemate, it is time to change the course and look within for an answer.

The recent Leave Travel Concession (LTC) cash voucher scheme announced by the finance minister is already being criticised. But, the scheme raises some pertinent questions in today's unpredictable times: Could the LTC have been extended to a period when things **did** open up and people **could** travel? Or is the move in the right direction to put some spending power into the hands of a cash-crunched citizenry, albeit at the expense of tourism? Is it too early to predict the behaviour of a people who may or may not want to use the fund to purchase festive goodies?

Whether it is another blow or not in a series of blows to the industry, it is time that they not wait for another setback before starting to help themselves and the fraternity. Time to draw a line, we reckon.

When monies are dwindling, one instinctively dives into ones financial reserves to cope. A Good Samaritan would even go as far as helping a needy even though his own cash reserves may be falling short. Exceptional times call for exceptional behaviour, but the extent of it is at one's own discretion. That said, one thing we do advocate is to analyse what we can do ourselves to help the travel family that we belong to. **If there is no business today, there will be business tomorrow, but to see that tomorrow, one must be able to survive the present while helping others survive it as well.**

From the philatelic archives!



Gajesh Girdhar, Owner, Paryatan Holidays and Chairman - Governing Body, NIMA, shares this rare cover that was released in India on October 15, 1982 to commemorate 50 years of civil aviation. It was sent to Karachi to be stamped and cancelled at GPO Karachi, then flown back to GPO Bombay the same day and put on sale. Stamps from Pakistan are placed on this cover.



Gajesh Girdhar
Owner, Paryatan Holidays;
Chairman - Governing Body
NIMA

How to lend support to the team

Staying in the present moment can be difficult for the hotelier (or any business executive). **Scott Knepp**, Management Analyst, Horwath HTL Atlanta, shares tips on keeping the morale of your team up.

Buddha said, 'Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future; concentrate the mind on the present moment'. You probably just reviewed last week's performance reports and jumped right into your 30, 60, 90-day forecasts. That said, we also know that the most rewarding moments of the job are the in-the-moment connections that we make with our team members and our guests. With all of the uncertainty, fear and division that consume our landscape, these moments are more fragile and sacred than ever and must be navigated with thoughtful, conscious leadership. Here are five actions you can take to have a significant impact on your guest experience and the morale of your team:

Practice what you and your organisation say you are going to do

Your organisation has probably sent out an email outlining all the safety measures to keep people safe while they are guests in your hotel. You have signs in the lobby, plexiglass over the desks, payment screens pushed back. Those elements make a guest feel safe. The moment one employee does

them half-heartedly or doesn't ensure that other guests are complying, that trust is gone and might not be rebuilt. Your front-line team members didn't write the script, but they will determine its success.

Your team members won't do it if they don't see you doing it, or if they don't understand why

Author Simon Sinek stresses the importance of ensuring employees have a clear understanding of why they are doing something. Just telling them what to do is a great way to see it not, or begrudgingly being done. "Wear a mask in guest areas and the break room" and "We all need to wear masks because we all have a commitment to show our guests, our employees, and you that we are making every effort to ensure your safety." These statements will elicit different levels of compliance. Do not assume people know.

Put on a good show

This is one of Disney's operational standards. A good show used to mean that housekeeping should be invisible, as if the property were always immaculate. Times are different. People

are eager to see that surfaces are being cleaned regularly, by everyone, and if they can't see it, they want evidence of it. Also, give your employees a script of what it sounds like to approach a guest who is not following the standards and let them role play with you. Rehearsals make for better performances.

Define and provide space for when it is ok to loosen on requirements

I bet the first thing you do when you get to your office is to take off your mask. Your housekeepers are no

employee's goals (finding a time to take a break from the mask), the more empowered your team is to meet expectations.

Keep conducting your team meetings, one-on-ones, and lobby walks

Circumstances and safety measures may dictate that you do this differently, but find creative ways to maintain connection, even at a six-foot or more distance. People are scared—for their health, for their job, or even their civil liberties. While we must give some of our attention to past performance and future projections—all we really have control over is what we are doing in the present moment. What we do today as conscious leaders will determine if our guests and employees will keep coming back.

Your front-line team members didn't write the script, but they will determine its success



Scott Knepp
Management Analyst
Horwath HTL Atlanta

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



Vikramajit
Chairman
SanJeet
Editor & Publisher

Editorial
Devika Jeet
Nisha Verna
Manas Desai
Tripti Mehta
Desk Editor

Advertising
Nikhil Jeet
Director
Harshal Ashar
General Manager
Priyanshu Wankhade
Manager Advertising

Advertising (Mumbai)
Sachin Saran
Branch Manager
Arumita Gupta
Senior Manager
Gaganpreet Kaur
Manager
Susan Eapen
Sr. executive - Sales & marketing
Vikas Mandoria / Nitin Kumar
Advertisement Designers
Design: Nirayand Mira
Sudhir Mudgal
Production: Anil Kharbada
Circulation: Ashok Rana

DDP is a publication of DDP Publications Private Limited. All information in DDP is derived from sources, which we consider reliable and a sincere effort is made to report accurate information. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. The publisher regret that he cannot accept liability for errors and omissions contained in this publication, however caused. Similarly, opinions/views expressed by third parties in abstract and/or in interviews are not necessarily shared by DDP. However, we wish to advise our readers that one or more recognised authorities may hold different views than those reported. Material used in this publication is intended for information purpose only. Readers are advised to seek specific advice before acting on

information contained in this publication which is provided for general use, and may not be appropriate for the readers' particular circumstances. Contents of this publication are copyright. No part of DDP or any part of the contents thereof may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system or transmitted in any form without the permission of the publisher in writing. The same rule applies when there is a copyright or the article is taken from another publication. An exemption is hereby granted for the extracts used for the purpose of fair review, provided two copies of the same publication are sent to us for our records. Publications reproducing material either in part or in whole, without permission could face legal action.

The publisher assumes no responsibility for returning any material solicited or unsolicited nor is he responsible for material lost or damaged.

This publication is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific product or services offered. The publisher reserves the right to refuse, withdraw, amend or otherwise deal with all advertisements without explanation.

All advertisements must comply with the Indian and International Advertisements Code. The publisher will not be liable for any damage or loss caused by delayed publication, error or failure of an advertisement to appear.

MUMBAI:
504, Marine Chambers, 43, New Marine Lines,
Opp. SMDT College, Mumbai - 400 020, India.
Ph.: +91-22-22070129; 22070130

MIDDLE EAST:
Durga Das Publications Middle East (FZE)
Z1-02, PO Box: 9348, Saif Zone, Sharjah, UAE
Ph.: +971-6-5528954; Fax: +971-6-5528956

DDP is printed, published and edited by SanJeet on behalf of DDP Publications Pvt. Ltd., printed at Modest Print Pack Pvt. Ltd., C-52, DDA Sheds Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110020 and published at 72, Todarmal Road, New Delhi - 110 001
Ph.: +91-11-23234177

CIN: U22210DL2012PTC230432

'Take cue from the Kerala model'

Lally Matthews, Director, Vacations Travels & Tours, believes it would take at least a year or two more for tourism to come back to pre-COVID levels and that in the interim, the government and associations should take a cue from the Kerala model to boost business.



Nisha Verma

Lally Matthews believes that nothing much will happen for tourism before 2021. "Domestic tourism may start a bit with people driving to nearby resorts. However, to come back to what we were doing until March 2020, it can take at least a year or two," he says.

Although he still hasn't opened office, he claims that unlike many others, he is not diversifying into other businesses. "This is what I have done all my life. Once things are conducive, I plan to do it



Kerala is a good example, where associations convinced the government to do something

again, even if it would be on a smaller scale. Not just inbound, but travelling abroad isn't easy since things are not very good in other countries as well. That said, I am positive that things will work out, but we will have to wait," he shares.



McKinsey predicts that by 2050, extreme heat could ground 23 times more airline passengers than today. Extreme heat already disrupts global air travel, grounding about 4,000 to 8,000 passengers per year today.

On how the government dealt with the situation, Matthews says, "It's unfortunate that the government has not done anything. It wasn't expected and we had hope. The situation with the travel fraternity and my colleagues is that

they are having a tough time and finding it hard to survive. We thought that with FAITH and all the associations going full throttle at the government to do something, steps would be taken. Unfortunately, nothing was

done. In fact, governments and associations at the state level have done much better. Kerala is a good example, where 36-37 associations got together and formed a confederation and successfully impressed upon the

government and convinced them to do something for the travel fraternity, which they did. Hats off to Kerala! I hope more states follow the same procedure and do something similar." He also believes that the least the government can



Lally Matthews
Director, Vacations Travels & Tours

do right now is release the SEIS payment. 🐦

HOSPITALITY

Talk

To get the latest **trends and updates** on the hospitality industry, subscribe to **Hospitality Talk** today





Give your brand the showcase they deserve!

For more details & best rates, please contact:

Delhi:
Irwin: irwin.kainth@ddppl.com, +91-9999989190

Mumbai:
Harshal: +91 96194 99167, harshal@ddppl.com
Priyanshu: +91 96194 99170, priyanshu@ddppl.com

Trade condemns LTC cash voucher scheme

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the LTC cash voucher scheme, under which government and private sector employees can use their Leave Travel Concession tax-free benefit for various types of purchases subject to certain conditions. FAITH, however, has denounced the scheme and has expressed disappointment for the Indian travel and tourism industry, saying that LTC funds of government employees will be redirected to buy consumer goods. FAITH claimed that the travel and tourism sector was pinning hopes on the festival season for people to travel.

In a statement, the Federation said, "The Government redirecting the LTC money of government employees to buy consumer goods would dry up those funds for the

travel sector. Additionally, it would also send a vote of no-confidence to the tourism, travel and hospitality



Jyoti Mayal
Vice Chairman, FAITH

industry, which was looking to get back on its feet after 'Unlock'." Additionally, **Jyoti Mayal**, Vice Chairman, FAITH, has said, "The tourism industry, instead of being bailed out is now being deprived of the LTC fund. Our industry is dying and our employees are losing jobs in every avenue, but the Prime Minister has forgotten our existence, the backbone of India."

A revenue stream to save the day

► Contd from page 1

“Lords Hotels and Resorts offers packages in which stay at the hotel and access to office infrastructure are bundled with meals. Our 39 hotels across 10 states and two countries offer work-from-hotel facility. Working spaces with a work desk, uninterrupted Wi-Fi, in-room dining, and facilities like printing and scanning can be availed. Customised packages are available for hourly, daily and monthly usage. Since companies are extending work-from-home indefinitely, this culture will stay post-COVID as well.”



Rishi Puri
Senior Vice President
Lords Hotels and Resorts



Pradipta Mohapatra
Assistant VP (Sales & Marketing)
MAYFAIR Hotels & Resorts

“Although on a smaller scale, we have offered work-from-hotel options to some companies, consequent to their request. For us, the experience of it was promising as it offered an alternative source of revenue at a time when traditional sources of revenue are drying up. Our 12 properties are adequately equipped to cater to the demand in this category. However, when demand picks up, it will be a tricky territory to manage as every hotel has limited space. From a revenue perspective, events and weddings are any day more rewarding.”

“As of now, two of our hotels are part of the ‘Work From Here’ programme, WelcomHeritage Ayatana in Coorg and WelcomHeritage Inderpura Resort in Udaipurwati, considering the easy accessibility from key metro cities. ‘Hybrid hospitality’ could be an additional source of income for the hotels. Underperforming areas within the building can be optimised from a revenue and income perspective. From an investor’s perspective this could be an appealing concept and may become a permanent new form of hospitality in the future.”



Abinash Manghani
Chief Executive Officer
WelcomHeritage



Nikhil Sharma
Area Director Eurasia
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

“Wyndham-branded properties will handle requests such as these at the hotel level and on a case-by-case basis. Our Wyndham Easy Book initiative gives businesses a range of properties to choose from, and we are looking forward to introducing more options. It’s difficult to say which trend will stick post COVID-19, but I do feel that this culture of offering work-spaces in hotels could be one that evolves. We are seeing an uptick in digital and remote work, which could result in an increase of people and businesses using hotels.”

Inputs by Nisha Verma

FAITH puts forth post-COVID vision

Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) recently organised an ‘India Tourism Vision Day’ with the theme ‘For Indian tourism to thrive tomorrow, it has to survive and revive today’. The event saw in attendance Presidents of all 10 member associations of FAITH.



Nisha Verma

In his inaugural address, **Nakul Anand**, Chairman, FAITH, said that there needs to be a COVID-19 fund set up by MOT where interest-free funds are given to support employees and the operating costs of tourism companies. “We believe, like the way GST Council is structured, Indian tourism needs to be structured through a constitutionally empowered legislative body - a national tourism council headed by our PM with the presence of all chief ministers. This will enable fast-track Centre and state-level tourism decision making and work on a ‘One India, One Tourism’ approach,” he explained.

Captain Swadesh Kumar, President, ATOAI, said, “Our vision is to get at a respectable market share of 5-10 per cent in the adventure tourism market. We must have a sustainable and responsible development plan for each vertical of natural heritage tourism. There should be robust hub-and-spoke, all season, inter-modal connectivity across air, rail, road and water.”

Listing his vision, **PP Khanna**, President, ADTOI, said, “There’s a need to make income tax exemption on travelling within India. Indian citizens can get income tax credits for upto ₹1.5 lakh when spending with GST-registered domestic tour operators, travel agents, ho-



teliers and transporters. GST on tour operators should be 1.8 per cent with full set off.”

Hotels and restaurants across India need to be declared as an industry, demanded **Gurbaxish Singh Kohli**, Vice President, FHRAI. “Tax and GST concessions will make our hotels and restaurants truly cost effective and will stimulate demand. E-single window clearance at a national level must be enabled through Hospitality Development Promotion Board,” he said.

MP Bezbaruah, Secretary General, HAI, said that hotels must be declared as social infrastructure. He added, “Our hospitality PPP models need to be standardised across the country, export of tourism taxes should be stopped and SEIS scrip rate must be enabled at 10 per cent for all future period.”

Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB, shared, “We need to create a global MICE bidding fund with a corpus for ₹500 crore. There is also a need to incentivise Indian corporates to undertake domestic MICE and to prevent Indian MICE events from going abroad. We need to offer a 200 per cent weighted income tax expense benefit to Indian

companies undertaking MICE in COVID India.”

Sharat Chandra, Treasurer, ITTA, said there is a need to standardise all interstate road taxes and make them payable at a single point. He also demanded “complete waiver from payment of interstate taxes on tourist transport vehicles for a period of one year.”

For **Gajsingh Jodhpur**, President, IHHA, “There is a need to create a heritage restoration fund and set up a corpus of at least ₹1000 crore. Our depreciation policies, property and other municipal taxes need to be accommodative. Heritage buildings restored into hotels should be made tax-free.”

Pronab Sarkar, President, IATO, shared that SEIS rate should be 10 per cent for the next 10 years, and should be payable immediately on the financial year 2019-20. “In-bound tourism needs to be treated on a par with merchandise exports and needs to be zero-rated on GST,” he said.

For **Jyoti Mayal**, President, TAAI and VC, FAITH, “TCS makes Indian travel agents uncompetitive by 5-10 per cent via their global counterparts. We hope to see a competitive GST regime for agents being rolled out soon.”

Pradip Lulla, Acting President and VP, TAFI, welcoming the judgement on refunds, said, “We have worked long and hard for it.”

Dubai's

'Road' to recovery



TT Bureau

Preventive measures taken by Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) to combat the outbreak of COVID-19 have gained international recognition from the Norwegian DNV. GL – an international entity for infection prevention and management of associated risks. The recognition follows a field survey and a comprehensive assessment undertaken by the company to examine RTA's health and preventive measures taken to protect public transport riders and service beneficiaries as well as employees. It also cements the standing of Dubai as a safe global destination compliant with the advanced preventive measures of coping with the virus.

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

Best practices

Al Tayer expressed his delight at obtaining the certificate from a reputed international specialist entity, which reflected the effectiveness of RTA's pre-

ventive measures since the outbreak of COVID-19 in various transit means and affiliated facilities.

He said, "In implementation of the directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President, Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and follow-up of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Dubai Crown Prince, Chairman of the

RTA adopted top global practices; our aim was to nurture a safe and healthy environment

– H.E Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer

Executive Council, RTA adopted top global practices in coping with the virus. Our ultimate aim was to nurture a safe and healthy environment for all."

Al Tayer added that RTA measures were focused on three elements - protecting the health of all employees through the provision of a safe working environment, ensuring the safety of all facilities and transit means to ensure the continuity of services, and supporting efforts of Dubai Government in tackling the outbreak of COVID-19. "For



His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri, DG, Dubai Tourism and His Excellency Mattar Mohammed Al Tayer, DG, Chairman - Board of Executive Directors, RTA, receiving the award

instance," he noted, "during the National Disinfection Programme, RTA sanitised each metro train at the terminal station and sanitised the entire fleet of trains (79 trains) by the end of the working day. The 47 stations witnessed daily sanitisation as well."

He also said that RTA managed to keep all services on the go, thanks to the migration to smart services provided through four digital channels and a website.

It enhances the readiness of Dubai to receive tourists & ensures a memorable experience

– H.E Helal Saeed Al Marri

"Meanwhile, construction work continued in strategic projects as planned, thanks

ernment. Dubai has now reopened for tourists and trading activities under specific

asures against COVID-19. This compliance boosted the confidence of global travellers and the public in Dubai as a safe, must-visit destination."

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

Communication

RTA will fix posters bearing the logo of the Infection Prevention of COVID-19 certificate on all mass transit means (metro, trams, buses, marine transport means) and their stations in addition to customer happiness centres. RTA has fulfilled the Infection Risk Management Maturity Assessment along with other health and preventive measures needed for obtaining this certificate by the end of last August. This certificate will raise the security and satisfaction level of public transport riders. It will also enhance Dubai rallying to attract more visitors and tourists from all over the world, shortly.

to the implementation of a project management policy responsive to risks and challenges," added Al Tayer.

preventive measures, and is moving ahead towards full recovery. Various public and private entities were keen to implement preventive mea-

Beating the virus

Handing credit for beating the virus for efficient co-operation between Dubai's various departments and entities, Al Marri said, "The achievement is credited to the cooperation of various entities of the Dubai Gov-

Digital branding

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

Three-pronged approach

- ❖ Protecting the health of all employees through provision of a safe working environment
- ❖ Ensuring safety of all facilities and transit means to ensure continuity of services
- ❖ Supporting efforts of Dubai Government in tackling the outbreak

Tourism Breaking News

- Mandarin Oriental, Oberoi Group announce strategic alliance
- Hotel signings pick up: HVS ANAROCK
- Sentiment in Asia-Pacific about tourism remains positive: PATA
- Now book train tickets on Amazon
- Concession agreement signed for work to begin on Noida airport
- No 7-day quarantine for tourists in Nepal with COVID-19 negative
- AAI to develop greenfield airport in Arunachal Pradesh's Hollongi
- IATO Gujarat leads #JanAndolan to adopt safety precautions

Pre-COVID numbers by 2021?

Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, believes that while domestic civil aviation operations may cross pre-COVID levels by first quarter of 2021, a final decision on international travel bubble arrangements up to the said period is still under consideration.



Nisha Verma

Government of India currently has air bubble arrangements with 16 countries that include the USA, Canada, France, Germany, UK, Maldives, UAE, Qatar, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Japan, Nigeria, Kenya, Iraq, Bhutan and Oman, says **Hardeep Singh Puri**, adding that discussions are ongoing for similar arrangements with countries like Italy, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan and Ukraine among others.

Commenting on whether these travel bubble arrangements would continue till March, he says, "Currently, it is purely in the realm of speculation if the travel bubble arrangement will continue till



Hardeep Singh Puri
Union Minister for Civil Aviation

March. To bring international civil aviation back to pre-COVID levels, we need three things: firstly, domestic civil aviation must cross the 50 per cent mark because international flights do not come to smaller cities, but to bigger cities, which may allow passengers to get connectivity across the country. This, we have achieved. Second, the behaviour of the virus

will define the entry conditions which are imposed by countries. Hardly any country in the world today has totally opened borders, and that too only on conditions. Then, whether it happens by March, April or June would also depend on whether

there is a readily available vaccine, because countries will feel more confident when frontline warriors or others will have access to the vaccine."

Puri adds that they may soon increase capacity of domestic operations to 75 per cent, and that it may cross pre-COVID levels in the first quarter of 2021. "I had earlier said that pre-COVID domestic numbers will be achieved between Diwali and New Year. Now I am confident that by the first quarter of next year, we will be able to surpass pre-COVID numbers," he says. Currently, capacity is around 65 per cent.

Privatisation of airports

"Recently, paperwork was done for Jewar Airport

between the concerned authorities in Uttar Pradesh and the Zurich airport," says Puri, adding, "We have now moved to the next round of privatisation for six more airports that will be developed under the PPP model."

On allowing international carriers to continue operations into India, he comments, "The issue is not about allowing foreign carriers in or not. We are all for foreign carriers operating here. But, I think the time has come for the message to go out loud and clear that it will not be done at the expense of Indian carriers under the regulated (air bubble) arrangements. We are not insisting on total parity, even near parity will do."

When it happens would also depend on whether there is a readily available vaccine

'Sanitised for your safety'



Radisson Blu MBD Noida is all set to welcome guests and patrons with enhanced guest experience and redefined safety protocols. Services including room operation and F&B facilities (banquets, all day brasserie, patisserie and bar) are now operational in accordance with the safety precautions and guidelines issued by the authority for the hotel industry.

Odisha silently seeks help



On World Tourism Day this year, members of EKTTA (Enterprising Knot of Travel & Tourism Associates), Odisha chapter, silently brought to the country's notice the plight of the industry amid loss of jobs and business. They held placards and banners that pleaded 'Save Tourism', while encouraging onlookers to explore the state.

More power to Schengen

The mandatory enforcement of the Schengen entry-exit system by early 2022 is predicted to be the next frontier of border control, as 26 European countries embrace smart technologies.



Manas Dwivedi

Dedicated to improving the quality and security in government services, travel and border control, multinational technology firm Vision-Box hosted a two-day webinar bringing together some of the aviation and travel industry's leading experts as well as government figures to identify the opportunities and challenges for the implementation of EU Smart Border systems for air, land and sea border crossing points within the Schengen area.

The Schengen entry-exit system is predicted to be the next frontier of border control as 26 European countries embrace state-of-the-art technologies and improved operational means to protect national borders in compli-



Jeff Lennon
VP - Head of Global Sales & Strategic Partnerships, Vision-Box

ance with the new EU regulations. The panel discussions offered insightful analysis on the implementation of Smart Borders and its wider impact on the EU border control ecosystem.

Jeff Lennon, VP - Head of Global Sales & Strategic Partnerships, Vision-Box, said, "One of the most interesting talking points were the equal calls for collaboration across air, land and sea border crossing points and the

need for involvement from all stakeholders. By the time 2022 arrives, the industry, all travel operators and the Schengen member states will be in the best possible

Member states will be in the best position to deliver an efficient travel experience like no other

position to deliver an efficient travel experience like no other and enhance GDP growth of each Member State."

Digital Offerings



Webinar Partners



For further details & best rates, please contact:

Delhi:

Arumita: +91 96503 99908, arumita.gupta@ddppl.com

Mumbai:

Harshal: +91 9619499167, harshal@ddppl.com

Priyanshu: +91 9619499170, priyanshu@ddppl.com

Air India to expand int'l network

Rajiv Bansal, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India, talks about the journey of the national carrier through the pandemic and their expanding reach under the Vande Bharat Mission. He adds that while they have been able to reach their target of 50% of last year's capacity, times still remain challenging and revenue is not much.



Nisha Verma

Air India has seen a calibrated growth in 2020, says **Rajiv Bansal**, beginning with the evacuation exercise that started with Wuhan in January, to commencement of the Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) on May 6 and domestic operations on May 25. "Around the same time, we started the air bubble arrangements. I can happily say that owing to VBM and the travel bubble arrangements, we have carried almost 5.5 lakh passengers into India and transported about 3 lakh passengers out of India. This means that we have been able to transport around 8.5 lakh passengers in such challenging times," he says.

With the evacuation exercise, Air India was able to add a number of destinations to its charts, Bansal claims, adding, "We used to operate internationally to about 45 destinations. In the last very-challenging six months, we added another 40 destinations to which Air India or any Indian carrier has never flown before. We added Cebu in Philippines, Hanoi in Vietnam, Phnom Penh in Cambodia, Dublin in Ireland, Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, Dushanbe in Tajikistan, Boryspil in Ukraine, Minsk in Belarus, etc." Similarly, the travel bubble arrangement, currently with 16 countries, helped Air India provide a schedule of operations on a sustained basis. "Now, we have a schedule open for bookings



Rajiv Bansal
Chairman and Managing Director
Air India

for passengers right through the winter months - for some countries up to December and for some even up to March," he shares.

The Indian flag carrier now plans to expand its international reach further. "We added 40 destinations and we'll continue to add. Last month we flew to Ningbo in China. We plan to start operations

to Addis Ababa, which would provide a gateway to Africa. We realise that for a country of our size, geography and populace, we cannot operate these flights from every point in India, and hence we

We plan to start flying to Addis Ababa, which would provide a gateway to Africa

are trying to add connectivity for both outgoing passengers as well as incoming pas-



sengers. We are traditionally a hub-and-spoke carrier, but we have added flights like Kochi to London and Kolkata to London. The idea is to provide convenience to passengers and a range of options so that they have the certainty of travel," Bansal says.

Sharing details on revenue projections, he says, "We did an assessment of how our revenues and operations will pan out during 2020-21, and estimated that the

first half of the year would be very challenging. We expected that our revenue for H1 (April-September) would be about 25 per cent. In Q3, we expected that our operations will be about 50 per cent, and in Q4 they would be around 75 per cent of pre-COVID levels. Domestic operations have ramped up and we are on a par with our target of 50 per cent of last year's capacity. That's not to say that it's not challenging."

G20 nations commit to inclusive tourism

Tourism ministers of the G20 nations have committed to stepping up their efforts to place sustainability and inclusion at the heart of tourism recovery and future growth. The implementation of the World Tourism Organization AIUla Framework for 'Inclusive

tourism, we must live up to our responsibility to ensure that tourism's benefits are shared by all. I congratulate the Saudi Presidency for placing inclusive community development through tourism at the heart of the G20 agenda, and I invite G20 countries to follow this vision and embrace tourism as an effective means for inclusion and sustainability." Calling for a model of tourism development based on Public-Private-Community (PPC) partnerships, the Framework includes a set of concrete programmes and initiatives based around four pillars of action - empowerment, safeguarding, prosperity and collaboration. It further defines the key areas of measurement for the impact of tourism in the communities in line with the Measuring Sustainable Tourism Initiative, led by UNWTO.



Community Development Through Tourism', presented on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting, was welcomed by the G20 tourism ministers as a tool for achieving a fairer and more inclusive sector.

UNWTO Secretary-General **Zurab Pololikashvili** said, "As we join forces to restart

Earn as you learn with **travelbullz** destination management company

The TravelBullz Sales Representation Program is the latest initiative introduced by TravelBullz Academy this year. It aims to empower individuals who want to stand up against the adversity of the pandemic and turn it into an opportunity.



Manas Dwivedi

Founded with a sole aim - to revolutionise and redefine the wholesale business in the travel trade- TravelBullz successfully completed 10 years of serving the industry in 2020. Its advanced technology makes it a one-of-a-kind online B2B travel products and services provider, and one that aims to share this success with the travel community.

Taking this legacy forward, the company has introduced the TravelBullz Sales Representation Program to help train and support individuals in the industry who lost their jobs or got furloughed. Sharing more details, **Dilshaad Buhariwala**, General Manager- Singapore, TravelBullz, says, "We aim to keep the experienced individ-



Dilshaad Buhariwala
General Manager - Singapore
TravelBullz

uals dedicated to the tourism industry and we hope to entice the next generation of fresh talent, straight out of college, to be interested in the industry and to learn and grow with us. Our programme helps current and future manpower stay within the industry, keep themselves updated and educated, learn about current and future travel technology and best of all, earn as entrepreneurs while they learn from us." The first batch successfully completed

their certification between July and August. "We are pleased to announce the second batch of 'TravelPreneurs' who wish to go through a rigorous training of four weeks on destinations, products, the fulfilment process and account management. The second batch begins on October 19, 2020," she adds. TravelBullz will offer

support by appointing them as account managers for a set of agents, training them on destinations, products and sales, and helping them acquire more such agents. They earn as the agents make bookings on travelbullz.com.

How to register

Registration can be done at www.travelbullz.com/agent-registration.asp. Ideal candidates should be from travel, airline or hotel background, junior to mid-level managers either furloughed or without a job, willing to build their own destiny with support from TravelBullz. The programme is free of cost for existing travel industry professionals. For new members not from the industry, there is a nominal charge of ₹3,999 per person.

It helps current and future manpower earn as entrepreneurs while they learn from us

Let positivity be your weapon

'Let us not overrate this crisis and threat, and let us not underrate our strength to fight and win,' are the words of renowned author and orator **Shiv Khera**, who virtually addressed members of the trade on October 7 through a webinar titled 'Turn Setbacks into Comebacks', organised by IATO and TRAVTALK.



Tripti Mehta

Keen to learn ways to cope with the current crisis and not lose themselves in its wake, members of the Indian travel trade fraternity tuned into the motivational session conducted by renowned author and orator **Shiv Khera** on October 7, 2020. The session, organised by TRAVTALK and IATO, was moderated by **SanJeet**, Managing Director, DDP Publications. Attending alongside him, and among the thousands of eager attendees from across the country, were **Subhash Goyal**, Secretary General, FAITH and immediate past president, IATO and **Rajiv Mehra**, Vice President, IATO.

threat, and let us not under-rate our strength to fight and win," he asserted. Khera added that it was only solutions-focused people who could come out of the crisis successfully. He questioned, "How come under the same set of circumstances, some people break records while others break themselves?" According to him, the answer can be summed up in a simple phrase, "The greatest masters in life were the greatest disasters in life."

Set your priorities straight

According to Khera, the buzzword till now had been 'globalisation'. However, with the current crisis changing behaviour of industries and people across the world,

ample, he elaborated, if one were to ignore exercising on a regular basis, it could suddenly create an urgent health crisis for us. "In life, direction is more important than speed. People have to take a step back and re-evaluate their priorities. They must

The greatest masters in life were the greatest disasters in life

question if they had been running in the right direction all this while," Khera said.

Cash is King

The pandemic has probably made most of us realise the importance of having money in the bank for a rainy day. Khera said, "Now we understand the meaning of 'Cash is King', which means that it is better to have money in the bank than have 50 shirts in your closet." But, now that the problem exists, how does one solve it? According to Khera, problem is a sign of life. So long as we are alive, we shall have problems. He added, "We cannot solve all our problems, but we can handle them. What I cannot change, let me accept it graciously, not grudgingly. People who are successful, they do make mistakes in life. But, remember, making a mistake once in a while does not make anyone a failure. Repeating the same



mistake again and again is what brings failure. So, what really is success? A series of positive choices in life is called success and a series of negative choices in life is called failure."

Convert downtime to uptime

Khera asserted that this is the ideal time for one to be productive. How do you do it? For him, a question once put to Nelson Mandela resonates to this day. When Mandela came out of jail after 27 years, somebody asked him,

A good book gives you wisdom of age in a capsule form

"How did you survive 27 years in jail?" To this, Mandela said, "I was not surviving, I was preparing." Sharing his point of view, Khera said, "If you do not come

out more upskilled, more knowledgeable and healthier from this crisis, you cannot say that you did not have the time. Almost 85% of millionaires and billionaires today are first generation. When asked how they achieved this financial success in such a short time, they said that they would read 50 books a year. When asked what kind of books they read, they answered - only self-help books. Why is that? It's because one good idea is worth a million dollars. A good book gives you wisdom of age in a capsule form."

Build relationships

Khera asserted that one must understand the meaning of relationships - personal, professional and social. "Look at your client base for the last seven years and check who has not done

business in the last four. Some may have left for reasons unknown. Pick up the phone and call them, but don't ask for business. Ask them if they could help you understand where things went wrong. Create a bank right now, and the moment the crisis is over, you will make a jumpstart," Khera shared.

Shiv Khera's favourite books

- ❖ **Think and Grow Rich** by Napoleon Hill
- ❖ **Psycho-Cybernetics** by Dr Maxwell Maltz
- ❖ **I'm Ok - You're Ok** by Thomas A Harris

Khera began the session by saying that the crisis has affected people in three ways - by impacting their life, their livelihood and their lifestyle. "The hospitality and travel industry has been impacted much more than others. Will the crisis finish before the money or will the money finish before the crisis, is a question that has often been raised by many. But, let us not overrate this crisis and

We cannot solve all our problems, but we can handle them

the buzzword is suddenly 'localisation'. Khera explained, "Till now, production was 20,000 miles away from consumption. Now, all of a sudden, a consuming country has realised that a producing country can put you out of business in less than five minutes." This may call for a more self-dependent outlook to life, wherever and whenever possible.

Khera added that one could make the most of this time to introspect and act on it. He said, "Whenever we ignore what is important, it always converts into urgent." For ex-

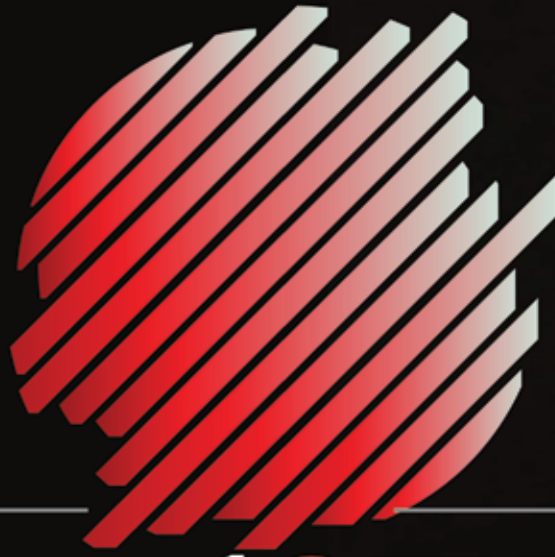
A series of positive choices is called success and a series of negative choices is called failure

How to stay positive when no one is willing to help?

"It's a crisis to all of us. Just as our body needs food every day, we need positive thoughts every day to stay positive. Our mind does not just need thoughts, it needs positive thoughts. Your willpower and positive mental attitude are your muscles. Exercise your mind every day."



Shiv Khera



QualSTAR
COVID COMPLIANCE

In accordance with ISO/IEC 17065:2012

**The only Accredited
COVID Safety
Compliance
certification Body
in India**



NABCB Accreditation

India's first NABCB Accredited certification
Body for Hotels COVID Compliance

NABCB constituent board of QCI (Quality Council of India) an autonomous body of DIPP, Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India

+91 98187 67141, info@qualstar.co.in

Are you
COVID
SAFE?



'Time to play strategic, not tactical'

Kapil Kaul, CEO, CAPA India, presents a strategic way forward for the revival of India inbound, outbound and domestic tourism. To drive his point home, he recommends structural changes to the tourism apparatus, including establishment of a tourism council on the lines of GST Council.



Nisha Verma

Kapil Kaul suggests that the Indian travel and aviation industry can utilise the crisis for undertaking structural changes and not play tactical. CAPA India, through its webinar, has made some recommendations in this regard as to why the tourism industry should have strategic and long-term changes rather than press for tactical changes. "The idea behind the webinar is to push for strategic change, making sure that businesses are re-invented," Kaul said.

He also pointed out that they have included outbound travel in their analysis, because without a large outbound, airlines would not be able to invest in the kind of connectivity that has been witnessed in the last 30-40 years. "Outbound is a critical enabler to ensure that air connectivity, both domestic and international, continues to grow. Stronger the outbound market, stronger would be the Indian as well as international carriers," he commented.

Here are some key highlights and comments from the analysis:

Contribution of tourism

The economic contribution of travel and tourism is much higher than other industries and segments of the economy. The investment, mostly through private capital be it for airports, hotels or tourism infrastructure, is roughly about \$25 million and is not fully recognised when we talk about infrastructure spend. "Tourism promotes soft power and if done well, it

can connect our new generations to our glorious traditions and history," Kaul said.

Reality check: There's no bailout

It became apparent around March-April that the government is unlikely to use taxpayers' money to bailout rich promoters with poor business, Kaul pointed out. "This message has been very clear. The government can create an enabling environment and liquidity measures to make sure that the industry has access to capital, and people can go to banks and institutions to raise money, but no bailout will be there. According to me, this is the



Kapil Kaul
CEO, CAPA India

saving most of the industry, which may be plagued with inefficiencies, unproductivity and wrong business models, is a meaningless exercise."

He shared that instead, CAPA India is focusing on strategic revival and development of a long-term framework, which will have strong fundamentals

and realistic, as you need to know what you are aiming for."

Cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata can be promoted as London, New York or Buenos Aires

and realistic, as you need to know what you are aiming for."

The second step, he said, is to develop a comprehensive tourism plan. "We need a planning system which is robust. The processes for creating such a master-plan need a very different structure. This plan can be updated every 4-5 years and shall include hotel infrastructure capacities across categories, airport capacity and locations, multi-modal transport infrastructure, conventions and events infrastructure, civic infrastructure, carrying capacity, as well as environmental and sustainability considerations. This plan must be institutionalised at national, state, city and district levels as 'One India, One tourism mission'," he recommended.

Next in line is a policy and regulatory framework. "We have a policy framework which can be released anytime. We have seen the drafts, but without a long-term projection and a national masterplan that in-



tegrates with local and city plans, a policy and regulatory framework can't be created. After that, to enable this policy framework, we need to know what kind of fiscal incentives as well as ease-of-doing-business reforms are needed. This is because regulatory costs on hotels, travel and aviation are massive," Kaul shared.

"In fact," he continued, "we may have to recast Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI) into it with a larger balance sheet and a different set of expertise. Also, India must have a tourism research centre which documents and digitalises this history of thousands of years, which can be made available for future generations. We must also have a

If institutional foundations must be set up, the industry should have a very different style of working

plan for skill upgrade across every segment and to create these institutional changes. To build experience, investment in skill is critical."

Leadership and governance


To achieve these objectives, leadership and governance will be essential. Kaul said, "Since tourism is going to be so dynamic going forward, we may require a specialised Tourism Administrative Service which has policymakers on the lines of IAS. Since tourism covers so many aspects, unless

we have policymakers who specialise in tourism, institutional foundations can't be fed. There is also a need for a legally empowered tourism council on the lines of GST Council, which can comprise union minister of tourism, state tourism ministers, secretaries and all other experts whose job should only be focused on policy and regulatory effectiveness, competitiveness, ease of doing business, financing, education and training."

He also suggested that there should be a national tourism board which will have state and city tourism boards integrated into it. The role of this legally empowered tourism council should be to look at all strategic issues and inputs that are meant for implementation.

He further said that there was also a need to relook at the advocacy structure for tourism. "We have multiple associations and there is a need for streamlining the industry to create an institutional foundation. FAITH, which is a multiple body framework, has done an effective job. The government may not recognise hundreds of associations, and only one association shall work with the tourism council, MOT and state tourism ministries on strategic issues. If institutional foundations must be set up, the industry should have a very different style of working," he asserted.

Leverage the potential

Concluding, Kaul said, "According to me, India is a unique and intellectual adventure. Cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata can be promoted as London, New York or Buenos Aires, respectively. We need to make sure that we unlock this value, which is only possible if we have institutional foundations." 

As growing number of countries around the world ease restrictions on travel, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has launched a new Tourism Recovery Tracker to support global tourism.



Here, surrounded by wind-sculpted sandstone,
our minds open. Here, tracing ancient layers of
sediment, we feel hopeful for our future. The desert
is a land of contrast and contradiction. Within its
desolate beauty, our spirit is renewed.

HERE, WE HEAL



VISITUTAH.COM

LIFE
UTAH
ELEVATED

Tech that won't break your bank

StreetGooser has revolutionised the cloud-based hotel management software domain by curating dynamic yet easy-to-use technology solutions that have helped accommodation providers expand their visibility, marketing reach and business, all while reducing costs.



Hazel Jain

A lot of hoteliers around the globe are joining the 'cloud' which has been one of the most emergent hospitality tech trends for the past few years and has now gained even bigger traction since the global lockdown. Causing a major disruption in this arena is StreetGooser with its unique hotel management software and an interesting ideology – 'we want to change the Neighbourhood into a Destination'. With more and more travellers keen on visiting unexplored locations and opting for cosy homestays that minimise the risk of crowds, StreetGooser seems to have hit the jackpot with its bespoke technology platform.

Explaining the system, **Shakthivelu M**, Managing Director & Co-Founder, StreetGooser, says, "Our main focus is on small to mid-sized properties. We want to provide them with technology that won't break their banks. Most technology providers focus on big hotels and they are quite expensive for smaller hotels. It also may have features they don't really need. There is no such thing as a technology that fits all; we tweak our technology based on the clients' needs."

All they require is a computer, laptop or mobile and a steady internet connection. The centralised dashboard offers a state-of-the-art, built-in front-desk management



Shakthivelu M
MD & Co-Founder, StreetGooser

system, channel manager, POS functions, housekeeping supervision, rate shopper, reputation management, website builder, payment gateway, booking engine, reports, analytics and more. Accommodation providers can manage multiple properties, operations, business relations, guests, travel agents and corporate clients from anywhere 24x7.

StreetGooser
we tested.world approved.

If you can
use Facebook,
then you can
easily use our
technology

Metros as well as tiered cities

Shakthivelu adds, "The majority of the providers who signed up with us are those who are stuck with using the manual method. Our technology offers independent hoteliers the freedom

to control, manage and automate their daily tasks so they can focus on other things. Everything now works online so you should be able to work remotely using our technology. Most importantly, our technology is very user-friendly, keeping in mind that many hoteliers are from Tier-IV and V cities. If you can use Facebook, then you can easily use our technology!"

Why focus on tier cities? Shakthivelu explains, "Not only in India but worldwide people will start travelling to destinations with

fewer people. Land travel is increasing in small towns where hygiene is a priority for travellers. Our product works not only in main destinations but also in tiered cities. They can also speak with our StreetGooser expert to know more about our product and how we can help them grow their business."

Meanwhile, the company has already been conducting training webinars for its international hotel partners and its GSAs who are in turn educating their respective regions. "Our technology offers solutions. We are just a year old in the market and we are open to collaborating with different hotel associations as well," he says.

Bookings plummet in European hotspots

As countries shut their borders to protect their citizens from the pandemic, global tourism virtually stopped. This was very apparent in Europe's leading tourist destinations which were also the hardest hit by the pandemic. According to data presented by Stockapps.com, at the height of the lockdowns in Europe, France recorded 99 per cent less bookings compared to the same period in 2019 due to lockdowns. Spain, on the other hand, experienced a 97 per cent decrease in reservations on popular accommodations sites Airbnb, Expedia and Booking.com compared to 2019. In the UK and Italy, where the situation had not improved to the same level as France and Spain, the summer period fell well

below 2019's numbers. Even at the UK's lowest percentage of decrease during their summer period, week 31 recorded a staggering 51 per cent decrease compared to 2019 numbers. Italy recorded its lowest percentage decrease in week 30 at 44 per cent.

Even the traditionally high summer period was not spared from the wrath of the virus. While the numbers did bounce back from the early days of the pandemic, numbers were still below 2019 levels as the world adjusted to a 'new normal'. During the height of the summer period for most European tourist hotspots, Spain recorded only a 16 per cent decrease in week 26 while France recorded only a 13 per cent decrease in week 27.

► Contd from page 1

"Let's say a wedding is worth ₹1 crore and a hotel gives them a discount of 30 per cent on a non-peak day, which is ₹30 lakh. This ₹30 lakh will get you on a compounded basis, if you double every seven years, in 28 years, that will be equal to ₹2.40 crore, which means the family can sponsor the wedding of your grandchild just by shifting a date. It's simple: your date, my rate; my date, your rate! If we can fill those valleys with consistent occupancies, it helps the hospitality industry."



Arif Patel
Regional Vice President
(Sales & Marketing), Hyatt India



Manish Tolani
VP & Commercial Director
Hilton India

"In my opinion, we can support this drive through multiple ways. Hotels can be significant partners in this initiative and contribute immensely. Hilton's social messaging for our brand followers is already very strong and loyal. Our social media channels are very active, and this is something we can leverage. There can be no better way to engage customers for this than social media, especially in today's times when almost everyone is online. Our wedding specialist team at our hotels can add this campaign to their signature panels."

"I am a very strong supporter of this tagline – 'Har Din Shubh Hai' – and I have been promoting this in some way or another all this while. Just last December I had requested a client to book on non-wedding dates to bring his costs down. He immediately agreed and got phenomenal budgets from us. So ultimately, it's all about demand and supply. We can now create special packages for you so that it's a win-win for all of us. This movement will not work until our clients believe in it as well."



Rohit Chopra
Regional Director – Sales & Distribution India & South Asia, Accor

"According to me, when we speak about costs, in the end it is all about demand and supply. But, I believe that if we can, as an industry, come together and promote this campaign and urge our customers to book weddings even on non-peak wedding dates, it will benefit all of us eventually. For us, all days are auspicious and everyone needs to understand that as far as commercials are concerned, it is all about the date and the rate on that date."



Atul Bhalla
Area Manager – West, ITC Hotels
and GM, ITC Maratha

Inputs by Hazel Jain

'All dates are auspicious'

No relief for travel trade anywhere

Simon Waldron, a Travel Consultant at Travelserv based in the UK, says that his fact-finding tour earlier this year showed that the travel market was in chaos and the best thing to do at the time was to temporarily close down. He adds that while the interest for travel to India from the UK might have increased in the past, presently, there's barely any demand.



Hazel Jain

You have made a conscious decision to close down shop for this year. Tell us why?

We returned from a fact-finding tour (visiting a number of new potential partners we had met at PATA Travel Mart 2019) of Malaysia, Thailand and Qatar in mid-February to find the market in chaos. When we saw how many other travel companies and independent travel advisors were struggling to keep up with the demand for changing and cancelling trips for their clients (often a significant cost in time and lost commissions), it quickly became evident that it would not be cost-effective to continue operating. We were

lucky that we did not have too many clients booked for trips in 2020 and were able to change/cancel their bookings relatively easily.

When do you plan to restart your business? Do you see some green shoots of travel in the UK?

We are hoping to restart business in early 2021. But at present, the signs are not good that the travel industry will be able to deliver the holidays that people want, to destinations that they want to go to, due to continued effects of the pandemic and the limitations on travel to different countries changing day by day.

Currently, we do not see any green shoots of travel be-



Simon Waldron
Travel Consultant
Travelserv

ing restored and although a number of travel advisors have posted fairly positive reports on their own experience of short-haul travel on specialist Facebook groups, they report many destinations do not have all the facilities (restaurants, bars, tourist attractions) open. That, coupled with having to wear face masks in a large number of places, including on flights, does not make the

idea of travelling to get away from it all seem attractive.

Are the travel associations speaking to the government to extend some help?

There appears to be no support from travel bodies in the UK, such as ABTA, making

any representations to the UK Government on the problems faced by the travel industry, despite numerous calls for help and support. Many of the low-cost airlines are still refusing to give refunds to customers, which is also making more work for travel agents.

not seem to have any recognition or support for the travel industry, which is creating hardship for those employed in the sector. What would be nice to see is:

❖ Continuation of the furlough scheme to support businesses, as I believe they have done in Germany.

❖ Better policing of grants to small businesses/independent travel advisors to help them stay in business. The current system appears to be open to fraudulent applications denying money to those who really need it.

❖ A voucher scheme where clients are given a voucher to make a booking through a travel agent. 📌

The government has done nothing to help the travel industry. We made a plea to the UK government to recognise the travel industry. The UK had a scheme for restaurants in August where government would pick up 50 per cent of the bill, but there is no support for the travel agents.

What would you like the government to do for the B2B travel distribution channel?

The UK Government does

At present, the signs are not good that the travel industry will be able to deliver the holidays people want

Philippines 'Safe' for travel

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) has given the Department of Tourism (DOT) Philippines a 'Safe Travels' stamp in recognition of its adoption of global health and hygiene standardised protocols.



TT Bureau

The 'Safe Travels' stamp from WTTC will ensure safe travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Philippines is the 100th destination to receive the Safe Travels stamp from World Travel & Tourism Council. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Secretary, DOT Philippines, says that DOT shall continue to uphold sustainability and safety in its programmes and projects geared towards the tourism industry's recovery. "The Department has also intensified the accreditation of establishments, continuing thorough inspection and assessment, to ensure that only those accredited with the Department of Tourism, and issued with a Certificate of Authority to Operate, are



Bernadette Romulo-Puyat
Secretary, DOT Philippines

allowed to open and receive guests. These efforts made us confident to pursue our application to use WTTC's Safe Travels stamp, compelling us to align with WTTC's health, safety and hygiene global standardised protocols. This will further restore tourist confidence and serve as an assurance to our guests that it is safe to travel in the Philippines. The way forward to our recovery is marked by strengthened partnerships with the private

sector, our stakeholders and with other national government agencies," she shares.

Only those accredited with DOT and issued with a Certificate of Authority to Operate are allowed to open

As a user of the stamp, DOT Philippines will have the opportunity to assume the role of a 'Safe Travels' ambassador to stakeholders, advocating the implementation and full compliance of protocols. 📌

Virtual workshops by Atout France



Atout France India continued with its annual tradition of organising its flagship B2B showcase called 'Explore France' in September with two virtual workshops. Adding their signature style to this, the NTO organised a virtual photo-booth for participants as well as an online interactive baking session with Chef Pooja Dhingra for Indian buyers.

Guideline engages with agents



Mumbai-based Guideline Travels has been couriering delicious goodie bags to its agent partners across India and then meeting them virtually to engage with them city-by-city. The informal meetings are called 'Chaifully Yours'. Pradeep Saboo, Partner, Guideline Travels, says, "We hadn't met them in a long time and this was an effort to have tea and just chat."

Any business is good business

Davinder Juj, General Manager at Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place, shares how they sailed through the pandemic and the steps they are taking to revive business, including liaising with travel agents, especially in a scenario when fear rules the minds of travellers.



Nisha Verma

How has Eros Hotel New Delhi dealt with the pandemic?

We utilised the lockdown period to prepare ourselves for the reopening, which included revisiting existing SOPs and modifying them as per new safety and hygiene norms, controlling operational costs, etc.

We kept engaging with our team members to know of their well-being, to keep them motivated and to support them through difficult times. We stayed in regular touch with our guests and kept informing them about all the protocols we adopted to keep everyone safe at the premises. We

conducted useful trainings for our team members, pertaining to their skill development and preparedness for post-opening challenges.

During this difficult period, we came forward and joined hands with various NGOs to help and feed the needy. We provided hygienically prepared packed food to NGOs for distribution.

What changes were made to cope with the new normal?

For us, safety and well-being of our team members and guests remains top priority, and to ensure that their health is not compromised at any stage, we introduced our #EROS CARE initiative. Under this, we have implemented a stringent yet



Davinder Juj
General Manager
Eros Hotel New Delhi Nehru Place

comprehensive outline of safety measures, which include screening of guests and team members at the hotel entrance, highest level of cleaning and sanitisation practices, touchless soap dispensers, sensor taps and automatic sanitisers to avoid contact, PPE in all relevant areas, self-declaration forms during check-in to assess guest's medical and travel

history, staggered seating in restaurants and guest areas, glass shielding at reception desk, sanitisation of guest luggage at the entrance, strict protocols for holding events and conferences, markings and queue manager placements to encour-

age safe distancing, digital/contactless payments, adequate display of various dos and don'ts in all guest and back areas, dedicated Hygiene and Safety Manager, trainings and mock drills for team members to prepare them for any emergency situations, etc.

our social media platforms that talk about the health and safety measures being practised at the hotel to instil the trust and confidence of existing and potential customers.

How are you engaging with travel agents now?

Since the reopening, we have been getting a good amount of business through travel agents and online channels. Hence, our flexibility with travel partners will help us gain a fair share and leverage the strength of our relationship with them. Apart from that, we have also redesigned our product offerings to tap alternate streams of business through travel agents to gain market share. 🐦

What would your strategy now be to recreate demand?

We are exploring new revenue-generating avenues, including home delivery and takeaway services, long-stay packages for business travellers and families, as well as corporate and wedding packages for limited gatherings at exclusive rates.

Apart from that, we are actively running campaigns on

We have redesigned our offerings to tap alternate streams through travel agents to gain market share

Trending: Inviting, open spaces

The first of the X2 resorts designed as an oasis of serenity, intimacy and bespoke experiences, X2 Kui Buri Resort by Thailand-based hospitality group Cross Hotels & Resorts houses 23 villas, each with their own terrace and garden, and most offering the facility of a private pool.



TT Bureau

Located on the gulf of Thailand, approximately three hours' drive from Bangkok, X2 Kui Buri Resort covers four acres of large open spaces and lush tropical greenery. This property by Thailand-based hospitality group Cross Hotels & Resorts houses 23 villas - 19 private pool villas and 4 private garden villas. Equally enjoyable for an active holiday or relaxing retreat, the resort allows you to 'cross to (X2)' a whole new dimension of luxury.

With COVID-induced protocols and safety measures in place all over the world, X2 Kui Buri makes for the



Kiattiyos Aprachitpairin
General Manager, X2 Kui Buri Resort

perfect holiday resort that offers the comfort of open spaces so guests can stay socially distanced. **Kiattiyos Aprachitpairin**, GM, X2 Kui Buri Resort, says, "The property has a very large public space at four acres. As per resort style, our public areas are in the open air. Being at the beachfront, airflow is to the maximum and social distancing is not a problem

for a small size resort of 23 rooms. Maximum hotel capacity is around 50 guests (if the hotel runs on 100% with double occupancy). At the resort, safety and hygiene protocols are being followed, including social distancing by rearranging furniture, frequent sanitisation of high touch-points, use of hot water for

linen, and proper disposal of trash."

Select a bespoke package

Bond and create meaningful memories as a family on a dream holiday or dazzle your loved one with a romantic getaway of a lifetime, whatever you choose, X2 Kui Buri has the perfect package for you. In fact, the



resort also offers pet-friendly deals. Then, if you wish to head out into the sunshine for some local sightseeing, the resort's convenient location near several national parks that are home to exotic wild animals and lush tropical landscapes will add a touch of the wild to your vacation. If you wish to

go out for a quiet stroll, there are many culturally significant temples to visit and admire, such as the Khan Kradi Cave that houses a large reclining Buddha.

The area is rural and peaceful, with small fishing villages being the only nearby communities. 🐦



WTM London and Travel Forward will be virtual-only shows in November 2020



The shows will take place on 9-11 November and are set to be the main virtual travel trade events of 2020

WTM Virtual to feature one-to-one meetings, conference sessions, roundtables and speed networking

WTM London – the event where Ideas Arrive – and Travel Forward – the travel and hospitality technology event co-located with WTM London – will be entirely virtual in November.

Live shows had been set to take place at ExCeL London (2-4 November 2020); however, the continuing travel restrictions, imposition of quarantine requirements and local lockdowns across Europe mean that our events will be fully virtual experiences.

WTM Virtual will take place from 9-11 November, offering delegates the chance to arrange one-to-one virtual meetings to do business, attend conference sessions and roundtables, take part in speed networking and more.

WTM London's Senior Director Simon Press said: "We have worked tirelessly to organise a physical show, but the increasing number of travel restrictions and the uncertainty around the world means it will be impractical for many overseas visitors to attend in person.

"Additionally, there remains uncertainty around business events and conferences being allowed to take place in the UK. The official deadline for this decision being the 1st October.

"However, thousands of travel trade professionals from around the globe will still be able to meet and do business in an extensive range of virtual sessions, to help the industry recover, rebuild and innovate."

The virtual show will also see an investment summit in partnership with ITIC – International Tourism & Investment Conference – and a new Marketing Forum and masterclass workshop in partnership with The Five Percent.

The WTM Virtual will have four virtual theatres to host webinars and debates, including the Responsible Tourism.

Furthermore, a virtual version of Travel Forward is being shaped up and will combine virtual exhibition, free virtual conference sessions and speed networking for start-ups to meet investors.

With the theme "Resilience, Innovation, Response", **Travel Forward Virtual** will add a technology-based approach in supporting the recovery of the travel and tourism industry.

Richard Gayle, Event Manager for Travel Forward said: "Travel Forward is the event that embraces fresh concepts and innovative projects to inspire delegates. This year, running Travel Forward virtually will allow us to connect even more with global travel tech companies wanting to promote themselves to the world.

"We are confident Travel Forward Virtual will offer delegates all the support and ideas about how the industry recovery and more solutions to overcome the biggest challenges facing the travel industry."

London Travel Week (30 October-5 November 2020)

London Travel Week will be returning virtually providing attendees with a chance to learn, network and innovate in the week leading up to WTM Virtual.

During London Travel Week, there will be six **Speed Networking sessions** on offer so that exhibitors, brands and destinations can meet before the virtual show and form business connections.

London Travel Week will also provide the perfect forum to celebrate the achievements of those in the travel and tourism industry through virtual awards ceremonies such as the **World Travel Leaders' Awards** and the **Responsible Tourism Awards**.

The week will also see summits on Wellness, BAME Tourism, LGBT Tourism as well as Destination Briefings and Press Conferences allowing countries and brands to showcase their activities in the last few months to recover, rebuild and innovate.

The **UNWTO, WTTC & WTM Ministers' Summit** will gather tourism ministers and the private sector with a mixture of live and virtual events to set out a roadmap for a safer, greener and smarter future for the sector.

The summit is the largest annual gathering of tourism ministers and pledges to bring together about 100 ministers along with 100 industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and experts to help develop the manifesto through a Delphi process.

Simon Press concluded: "We made the decision to transition to a virtual-only event after a great deal of consultation with our industry partners, sponsors, delegates and staff. Our main objective has always been to deliver a global show bringing travel professionals from the seven continents, and we are now channelling our energies into the creation of an outstanding, large-scale digital gathering that will enable the travel industry to connect, to network, do business and learn about this new consumer environment."



ShriGo keeps business going

With presence in India and neighbouring Thailand, ShriGo Hotels & Resorts is an emerging chain of hotels that already has over 18 hotels in 12 cities, and looks to add more in the future. **Sudhir Awasthi**, CEO, ShriGo Hotels & Resorts, informs that their properties fall under the upper-midscale, midscale and economy segments.



Nisha Verma

ShriGo Hotels & Resorts, that operates a number of properties across India and Thailand, is now looking to further expand its network. CEO **Sudhir Awasthi** says, "We are expanding rapidly by the blessing of our valued guests who suggested that we mark our presence in cities that they travel most to. This helped our team find suitable options for our guests. In a span of 10 months, we created a milestone of 18 fully-functional hotels in India and Thailand. We are targeting to take this number to 50 by end of December 2022. We have signed new projects in Udaipur, Jim Corbett, Shimla, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Bekal,

etc., and we expect all these properties to be operational by end of March 2021. We launched new properties in Jaipur, Udaipur and Ranthambore this October."

While the pandemic did turn out to be hard for business, Awasthi claims that they took it as an opportunity to provide customers with best-in-class services blended with the highest safety measures and hygiene provisions. "Also, since there was so much uncertainty with the announcement of the lockdown, we utilised the initial lockdown period in imparting training to our human resources and having regular conversations with them to improve our operational procedures in order to pro-



Sudhir Awasthi
CEO, ShriGo Hotels & Resorts

vide more satisfaction and comfort to our guests after the lockdown. We also utilised the time to plan the new standards required after the pandemic, and train employees to develop a new set of skills in terms of cleaning, disinfecting and hygiene. We did the best in our capacity to plan the road ahead and control cost. We are proud to say that we haven't laid off any of our employees during

this critical time, and stood with them to support their families and dependents," he shares.

With guests now on the lookout for hotels that treat safety and well-being as their priority, ShriGo Hotels & Resorts looks forward to providing them elevated hy-

giene protocols and global safety standards. "Not compromising on luxury stay experience with apt cleaning, disinfection and inspection will be our USP in coming times. We have developed our in-house safety protocols and standards in line with the guidelines issued by WHO. We have re-designed our operations by introducing touchless payments, QR scan-based in-room and restaurant menu and order, as well as minimal touch at check-in and check-out with the use of advanced IT systems. We have strict and regular audit on all hotels to check compliance with guidelines," Awasthi says.

The hotel has also been getting MICE business. "Since

Unlock 1.0, we have organised many events and weddings at our properties, respecting and implementing the guidelines laid down by health authorities. We have received numerous queries across our properties for destination weddings, particularly for venues in Chitrakoot, Udaipur, Ranthambore and Dehradun," Awasthi shares.

The group is also actively promoting the hotels across its digital and social media platforms. Additionally, they are flexible when it comes to working with travel agents. "We are offering exclusive deals to our travel partners to reach the maximum possible guests," he shares.

We are offering exclusive deals to our travel partners to reach the maximum possible guests

Our wildlife needs good branding

National Tourism Awardee, Best Tourist Guide (Odisha), **Tapan Kumar Mishra** speaks about the gap that lies between India's wildlife offerings and how it is currently being promoted – within India and the rest of the world. He adds that a social welfare scheme must also be developed to retain well-qualified and experienced guides.

We lack professionalism and side-line environmental issues while operating wildlife tours. It's a matter of great surprise that we look for BS-VI vehicles on the road but don't care in case of vehicles used for jungle safaris. We should be more environmentally sensitive in this case. Most of the national parks in India operate jeeps that are more than 15 years old.

Moreover, a limited number of tourists and safaris should be allowed per day into a national park. Unfortunately, for the sake of revenue there are no limitations which in turn disturbs the wildlife. There is also a need for tourists to be wildlife and environment friendly,

and accompanying guides should ensure this.

The government does offer specialised courses for guides and naturalists. There is a special provision of eco-guides in many states. In Odisha, there are eco-guides at most of the national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. We have such guides deployed at Chilika lagoon, too. There is an award at the national level for Best Wildlife Guide. The good part is that the government of India has hiked the guide fee in two years.

Need for better branding

Branding and aggressive marketing strategy are seriously lacking when it comes to promoting wildlife tourism in India. We must focus on new



markets along with traditional source markets. If Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand can bank upon tourism as their major source of revenue, then why not India? What do we lack in India in terms of tourism products? We can scale the Himalayas in the summer and other destinations in the winter. We should and can

offer India as a 365-day destination for both domestic and international tourists.

Trained guides

The government should also look at training the guides seriously as we must not forget that guides are the 'cultural ambassadors' of the country. A tourist sees a

country through the eyes of a guide. A well-trained and experienced guide is definitely an asset to the industry. I am privileged that a lot of times I get repeat clients.

The government should therefore focus on profes-

sional training. The minimum qualification to get selected for guide training should be graduation. Last but not the least, the government should retain well-qualified and experienced guides by extending some social welfare schemes to them. It's a pity that there's no such scheme for them.

A limited number of tourists should be allowed per day into a national park, but there are no limitations



Tapan Kumar Mishra
National Tourism Awardee
Best Tourist Guide (Odisha)

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

3,000+ contest winners till date

Tripjack's exciting competition based on the on-going IPL matches not only has more than 3,000 winners till date but has also managed to engage its travel partners and create some buzz in the industry. All smiles, the winners are exhilarated to bag some massive prizes!



Hazel Jain

With Tripjack's Travel Agent Fantasy League there is an opportunity for everyone to win prizes for every match. It also has a weekly and season-long leader-board where winners are eligible to win bonus rewards and mega prizes! Sharing more on this is **Hasan Patel**, Director of B2B travel portal Tripjack, who says, "Last month we began a campaign to bring excitement and engagement to our network of travel partners with a unique concept of Travel Agent Fantasy League. I am very excited to share that it has been a successful campaign so far, and we are seeing more and more users participate daily. For those of you who are not aware, please visit Tripjack.



Hasan Patel
Director, Tripjack

com and click on 'Go to Fantasy App' button and start playing. You can make teams daily before the matches and get a chance to win exciting prizes. We are very happy to have brought this to our partners, and till date we have had more than 3,000 winners."

Tripjack.com, one of India's largest B2B travel portals, offers hotels, flights, visas, insurance and various other travel products for agents. ↗

Tripjack Travel Agent Fantasy League winners

"Their team is extremely supportive and I have never had any problems with them. I would like to suggest everyone in the trade to sign up on Tripjack and experience this for themselves. Even their Fantasy League that I am playing right now is very interesting and it doesn't cost us anything."



Rahul Tahlilani
Co-Owner, Perfect Life Tours & Travels (Ahmedabad)



Zaid Kaladia
Proprietor, Chisti Tours & Travels (Mumbai)

"The team is very helpful, accurate, and quick with responses 24x7, whether it is an urgent query or for a future booking. Moreover, the fare is very competitive. As one of the winners of their contest, I request all agents to sign up and win Tripjack coins that can be redeemed against future bookings."



Avneet Singh
Owner, Adarsh Communication (Jaipur)

"This is something new that a B2B travel company has started to engage us. I have been associated with Tripjack since a long time now. I am impressed with their competitive fares and their back-end support. It's the best portal that I have come across for travel agents. Their service has been top notch."



Shyam Agarwal
Managing Director
Shree Shyam Travels (Kolkata)

"I have won 5,000 Tripjack coins in the ongoing contest. This is a very interesting concept. I rate Tripjack as a B2B operator very highly. In today's competitive environment, one's service needs to be prompt and their sales team has a very quick revert time. Their internal communication is very strong."

Coping mechanisms today

Travel companies in different countries are responding to the growing uncertainty amidst the pandemic in different ways. We share insights from three...

Thailand

"Tourists to Thailand must pre-pay both a 14-day quarantine and a 90-day hotel stay. They must have at least \$100,000 in health insurance and a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 72 hours of arrival, travel only by charter or private flight. So, with a cost of at least US\$7,440 for a family, excluding airfare, who is planning their next holiday in Thailand?"



Shashank Nigam
CEO, SimpliFlying



Min Yoon
Founder & CEO, Tidesquare
and Co-founder, WIT Seoul

South Korea

"To help the trade during this time, the South Korean government has subsidised domestic travel if it is booked through the travel agents. This programme gives the customer the equivalent of US\$30 coupon per booking. This mostly comes through online purchases, when travellers download the coupon and then go to the designated travel agencies to redeem them."

China

"I would consider our customers lucky to have us to arrange their logistics and help them communicate with the destinations, their governments, their embassies, as well as their insurance companies. This is the service as tour companies that we should provide to our customers and help rebuild their confidence."



Huiying Zhao (Karen)
Product Manager (North & Central Asia), Intrepid Group

Inputs by Hazel Jain

Seeing is believing these days



"If we do not see it for ourselves, how can we sell it to others," was the thought that inspired **Ashwani K Gupta**, Managing Partner, Dove Travels, to break the monotony and travel to Dubai to witness first-hand the safety measures being adopted every step of the way. A satisfied Gupta now hopes that he's able to inspire other agents to kick-start business.

Great Basin National Park, a must-visit



For the outdoorsman looking to get away from it all, Great Basin National Park in Nevada, USA, is the place to bump to the top of your to-do list. The park is known for its spectacular high elevation and mountainous terrain peppered with cascading streams, lakes and bristlecone pine trees more than 4,000 years old.



TT Bureau

Whether it's hiking, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, camping or wildlife viewing, this park seems to have it all. Great Basin National Park has no entrance fee. Here are 5 of the top reasons why you must visit Great Basin National Park for some much-needed recreation.



REASON 1: HIKING

Great Basin National Park boasts more than 60 miles ranging from 6,200 feet to 13,063 feet in the southern part of the Snake Mountain Range. Since the park is positioned beyond that 13k elevation mark, the hiking season is June-September.

REASON 2: STARGAZING

Half the park can best be ex-

perienced after dark. Whether or not you've experienced true darkness before, or you pride yourself as an astronomy hobbyist, the night skies at Great Basin are sure to impress. During most summer nights, the Milky Way is visible to the naked eye, as are thousands of constellations, planets, nebulae and galaxies.

REASON 3: ADVENTURE & DISCOVERY

A must-see at Great Basin National Park are the mighty Lehman Caves. Tours of Lehman Caves offer a glimpse at stalagmites, stalactites and rare cave formations called helictites that seem to defy gravity. When heading out on a guided tour of this unique cave system, be sure to keep

an eye out for shield formations. While most other caves will likely have one or two of these unique formations, Great Basin National Park has more than 300.

REASON 4: WILDLIFE

Great Basin National Park offers a diversity of habitats, from alpine areas to caves and creeks, making it suitable for a variety of animal species to thrive. While the mule deer can be seen throughout the National Park, even crossing the road at times, yellow-bellied marmots can be seen along the Baker Creek Road. In fact, if you're lucky enough, you might even be able to spot the elusive mountain lion or a bobcat. And, from the



campgrounds to the roads and along the trees, be sure to view some wild turkeys.

REASON 5: THE DRIVE

You've got to take the calmest stretches of road ever to get to the park. Drive the Loneliest Road in America, the stretch of U.S. Route 50 that traverses central

Nevada, and we guarantee you'll find more than peace and quiet. If the weather and conditions are right and your vehicle is up for some dirt on its tyres, you can cut up and over a small pass via Osceola Ghost Town and point your lens at some fabulous views, as well as old ruins from the town. 📸

Canada has a business proposal

Bridging the industry-academia gap, InCanada.me is offering courses that are aligned with the skill set currently required by corporates of Quebec, Canada. Travel agents can use this programme to earn commissions per student acquired besides earning on the student's visa application, air ticket and foreign exchange at the time of travel.



Manas Dwivedi

InCanada.me offers skill set enhancement courses with a consequence at the end of the programme. Using backward integration, the company has curated courses that teach students the necessary skills, expose them to real-time workplaces, and offer them 100 per cent job placement at the end of their tenure in their field of interest. Sharing more details, **Geetanjali Alamshah**, Co-Founder, InCanada.me, assures students of brighter outcomes at the end of their study journey. "We have tied up with Cégep de Thetford in Quebec that have created programmes exclusively for

us. Designed especially for non-French speakers from India, the programme also offers paid internships during course. They are paid on minimum CDN13.10 an hour and can work 20 hours a week. All of this is with real-time learning, no virtual classes," she says.

"Our aim is to give students the opportunity to study, up skill and settle abroad with high paying jobs and security in their future. We want to level the playing field by being transparent with the expectation from each student and support them in selecting the right course that puts them in a fertile job market. We ensure that both time and money are well spent and that there is clar-



Geetanjali Alamshah
Co-Founder, InCanada.me

ity on the final outcome," she adds.

The company offers counselling services to students, starting from an aptitude test to assistance with college applications, CAQ applications and study permits.

Where do agents come in?

According to Alamshah, the travel trade is already

very familiar with Canada as a country, and Quebec as a region. In addition, they are experienced with the Canadian immigration process, too. They can easily leverage their current customer base to sell education in Canada, to the same customers they were selling holidays to in



INCANADA.ME

Canada. "They can use this programme as a medium of remaining connected with their customers and make commissions per student acquired besides earning on the student's visa application, air tickets and foreign exchange for the student at the time of travel. It's truly a win-win," she shares.

Explaining, she says, "Embarking on this journey will provide travel agents with additional income in Canadian dollars during and post COVID times. Our courses

are back-integrated with the industry requirements in Quebec – mechanical and plastic engineering, web development and office automation. There is a need for international skilled workers in these areas."

To spread the word, InCanada.me is partnering with educational consultants and travel agents who can add value to their programme. They are also leveraging social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn to promote weekly webinars. The company is targeting Tier-II and III cities to give students the opportunity to study, work and live in Canada. 📸

This will provide agents additional income in Canadian dollars during and post COVID times

Adversity, a blessing in disguise

Teleporters Travel Solution is the first-of-its-kind travel solution provider based on the revenue sharing model, getting travel professionals together from across the country, especially at a time when people have lost businesses and jobs. It ensures that travellers are protected and get the desired destination experience.



Nisha Verma

Teleporters Travel Solution is a new offering from the trio - **Neeraj K Sarna** and **Gurinder Bawa** as Managing Partners along with **Ra-**



Neeraj K Sarna
Managing Partner
Teleporters Travel Solution

Jan Sehgal as Advisor. They have teamed up to not only provide clients with the ultimate travel solution, but also

to make sure that travellers are protected and get desired destination and travel experience. Launching on October 17, the new venture focuses on engaging travel professionals across the country, both for sales and operations, to be able to use the resources, inventory and

We adopt best practices, tailor them to our customers' unique situations

– Gurinder Bawa



Gurinder Bawa
Managing Partner
Teleporters Travel Solution

culture and constraints, while keeping in mind COVID-19 safety protocols.”

One can book everything, from curated holiday packages and luxurious getaways to exotic safaris and cruises, short work-from-home breaks with friends and family, even perfectly planned road trips. The revenue-sharing model allows travel professionals to handle customer

requirements with their own booking engines without investing in technology. Sama says, “The idea is to provide a platform that offers those who have been hit by the massive job and revenue losses in the



Rajan Sehgal
Advisor
Teleporters Travel Solution

industry with opportunities to earn money, while at the same time enlisting the experience of travel professionals to ensure optimised service for their clients.”

We intend to ensure that employees are constantly acquiring new skills

– Rajan Sehgal

To this, Sehgal adds, “It has started as an incentive and business generating programme. It's a new concept, with people connecting from different parts of India. We intend to ensure that employees are constantly learning and acquiring new skills to improve the client experience. We will strive to always be the best value service provider.”

Reviving business post re-opening

‘The first step in moving towards the recovery phase will be to accept and develop an understanding of the situation that the tourism and hospitality industry is severely impacted, and will take some time to rebound and stand on its feet,’ believes **Irfan Khatri**, General Manager, ibis Bengaluru City Center & ibis Bengaluru Hosur Road.

The pandemic may have impacted the business of the entire country, especially the hospitality industry, but it will rise again, resilient than ever before, better prepared for the future. After accepting the reality, the next step towards recovery is taking necessary action to swiftly adapt to the new normal that the world is talking about today. It is especially necessary for the travel and tourism industry to follow safety protocols stringently to regain the confidence and trust of travellers.

Accor has always prioritised the safety of its guests and employees, and has always had high standards of hygiene and cleanliness all over



the world. To strengthen these cleanliness measures, Accor introduced the ALLSAFE certification, developed with and vetted by Bureau Veritas, a world leader in hygiene and cleanliness inspection. The ALLSAFE programme is designed to reassure guests with an all-encompassing set of procedures responding to new consumer behaviours and expectations around a

safe experience. It is based on a range of guiding principles and commitments, and consists of over 200 standard operating procedures, keeping sanitisation and safety at the centre of all policies. Additionally, every hotel has a designated ALLSAFE officer who ensures seamless implementation of all guidelines, 24x7. All 19 ibis hotels in 13 cities have been awarded the

ALLSAFE label and are ‘now open’ for business.

At ibis, we are now headed towards a gradual recovery and we are looking at the world with a fresh mindset as the priorities and needs of our guests have changed. After the unforeseen period, all our hotels across the country are open for business and we are happy that we are seeing steady business growth in the key markets.

With the recently-launched campaign ‘For the love of Travel, for the love of Now’, Accor is encouraging its guests to follow their hearts and cherish every moment of life. As an extended leg of this campaign, Accor has announced ‘Missed Celebra-

tions’ to encourage guests to celebrate their special occasions with friends and family. Whether it is a birthday, silver jubilee anniversary, a long due engagement or a graduation party – our hotels have it ALL covered at the restaurants and bars

with discount vouchers at 30 per cent off the total spends which can be used to host celebrations that have been missed due to the pandemic.

Our endeavour is to make every moment unforgettable and ensure that every occasion at ibis, big or small, is celebrated with grandeur.

It is especially necessary for the industry to follow safety protocols stringently to regain the trust of travellers



Irfan Khatri
General Manager, ibis
Bengaluru City Center & ibis
Bengaluru Hosur Road

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

EVENT TALK

Media Partners:



OCTOBER 2020

Date	Event	Time
16	IATO Training on Internet Marketing	11:30 am
16	IATO Interactive Members Meet	4:00 pm
21	Visit Utah Destination Webinar	11:00 am
22	GPS & TravTalk's Webinar on TCS	11:00 am
22	CAPA India Webinar	4:00 pm
21-23	ITB Asia Virtual	3:00 pm
21-23	MICE Show Asia	3:30 pm
21-23	Travel Tech Asia Virtual	3:00 pm
26	IATO Skill Development Workshop	11:30 am
26-27	Future Hospitality Summit	1:00 pm
27	Tourism New Zealand Virtual Road Trip	11:00 am
30	IATO Interactive Members Meet	4:00 pm
30-31	13 th Convention India Conclave	TBA

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

UFTAA seeks revised IATA rules

The second mid-year forum of United Federation of Travel Agents' Associations (UFTAA) saw some pertinent questions rising in terms of agents' rights with respect to IATA and airlines. Here is what ensued...



Nisha Verma

Stating that UFTAA and the travel agent community cannot wait for the crisis to get over, **Yossef Fatael**, VP, UFTAA, laid focus on the relationship of agents with airlines and IATA, and said that they have a commercial agreement with IATA, not airlines, which needs to be respected by both sides. "It's a joint agreement which IATA signed on behalf of the airlines that makes us accredited agents. Hence, by legal definition, this is an agent-principal relationship, which is even written in the IATA resolution, with the principal being the airlines. There are duties for each side to fulfill. However, the principals need to act in accordance with the terms that



Yossef Fatael
Vice President, UFTAA

include indemnity to agents and to deal fairly in good faith, with compensation being part of the legal duties of any principal," he claims.

Hence, UFTAA has written to IATA to change the rules. Fatael adds, "Right now, our demand is to make some urgent changes that will reflect all the weaknesses that we are experiencing during this crisis. We think that not only do they need to guar-

antee the money, we don't owe them any money and we should not even pay the money in advance. We need to agree on the number of days before travel that the agent would transfer the money to the airline. Hence, this relationship of being creditors will stop."



We need to agree on the number of days before travel that the agent would transfer money to the airline

'Do not hesitate to go to the law'

One important message to the associations is that they should not hesitate to go to the law. All



Sunil Kumar
President, UFTAA

federations are up in arms for asking IATA to safeguard agencies' future and therefore, the entire resolution must be re-drafted, and we have started the process.

Tech that COVID-19 has given rise to

The risk of human-to-human virus transmission has never been so much in the spotlight, and the travel industry is trying to adapt to a new world of airport health screenings and contact-free security. Although some of this technology may have been around for some time, its application has now surged.



Hazel Jain

Touch-free tech

Touchscreen technology has been around for some time. But, only COVID-19 forced companies to look at touchless tech, which uses biometrics to verify bookings and identity. This means mobile boarding passes and transition towards iris scans and AI facial recognition, already being implemented by **Delta Air Lines**.



Pre-booked security

Skipping airport security queues could be closer to reality than we think. In order to stop over-crowding, airport queues will become 'by appointment' only. We may move to a reservation-only society, with little room for last-minute travel.



Montréal-Trudeau International Airport has begun asking passengers to book their own security screenings, eliminating the need for a queue.

'Sanitagged' luggage

Luggage will have to be spray-disinfected and then 'sanitagged' on the check-in belt before being put on the plane. Hand luggage will be quickly sanitised via UV rays or fogging while in the X-ray security machine. **Changi Airport** is already implementing the sanitisation of trolleys, check-in kiosks and security trays with a long-lasting antimicrobial coating to reduce transmission.



Autonomous payment systems

The introduction of digital payment systems straight from your phone could eliminate the need for tills. The world will go mobile and contactless at an incredible rate. The thought of handling paper tickets and paying with cash will quickly become things of the past. Robots could even be used to deliver purchases to duty-free shoppers.



Health kiosks

Imagine if viruses could be detected during travel. With effective health testing incorporated into the security process, that could become a reality. South Korea's **Incheon International Airport** is deploying temperature-taking robots in solo kiosks, while thermal screening in **Hamad International Airport**, Qatar, is implemented by robotics and special helmets.



Disinfection robots

No matter how much airport sanitisation takes place, there's an element of human transmission that can be eradicated by the use of cleaning robots. **Hong Kong International Airport** was the first to trial full-body disinfection booths and Intelligent Sanitisation Robots. Cleaning robots are also deployed throughout **Changi Airport**.





**BE PART
OF THE
FUN**



HILTON HOTEL

Chennai

Hilton Chennai has appointed **Sherin Mathew** as its Commercial Director. Mathew comes with more than 14 years of rich and formidable experience in hospitality sales and marketing. In the new role, he will be responsible for developing a commercial strategy covering all segments and channels to maximise revenue and profit performance of the hotel, and its integration with revenue management, proactive sales and marketing communications team.



DOUBLETREE BY HILTON

Gurugram

Rajat Tuli has been appointed as General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Gurugram. He brings with him over two decades of industry experience, having worked in several well-known brands such as Taj, Marriott, ITC and Radisson among others. From 2008 to 2015 he worked with Hilton India across a number of their hotels. He was also instrumental in assisting with the opening of several Hilton hotels, such as Hilton Chennai.



CROWNE PLAZA ADYAR PARK

Chennai

Athitha Kumaran Pandiarajan has been appointed as Assistant Manager Marketing and PR at Crowne Plaza Chennai Adyar Park. In the new role, he will be handling all aspects of online and offline marketing, partnership management as well as public relations management for the property. Pandiarajan brings with him an extensive track record of restaurant and bar marketing strategies, as well as managing campaigns for several fine-dine establishments.



Airports offer COVID testing facility

According to a research by UK consultancy The PC Agency, testing passengers has proved to be more effective than a quarantine regime and also helps build traveller confidence. Taking cue from this, airports across the world are introducing this facility to encourage people to fly more while avoiding the mandatory 14-day quarantine for international flights.



Hazel Jain

Frankfurt Airport, Frankfurt

This German hub has had a coronavirus testing station for several months now, and the procedure is well established. Different German airports use different systems for testing — in the case of Frankfurt, the process is run by CENTOGENE, and registration is required in advance. It's only free for those arriving in Germany from a high-risk country or region. Quarantining is required until the results come within 10 hours.



Heathrow Airport, London

COVID-19 tests on passengers at Heathrow Airport in London, United Kingdom, could start soon. Tests will cost £150 for each passenger. Options include a test on arrival at the airport followed by a second test seven days later, or a scheme where passengers are also tested before they board the plane to London. This will effectively shorten the 14-day quarantine.

Helsinki Airport, Finland

The city of Vantaa believes that the dogs will be an efficient method of ensuring health and safety at airports. According to preliminary tests, dogs are able to smell the virus with almost 100 per cent certainty. They can also identify the virus days before the symptoms show up. If the result is positive, the passenger will be directed to a health information point located at the airport.

infected with coronavirus



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai

Mumbai airport has launched testing facility for all arriving passengers. It will help international passengers opt out of institutional quarantine if results are negative and remain in a 14-day home quarantine instead. The airport's testing facility comes for ₹1,600 as against Delhi airport's ₹5,000, and gives reports within eight hours.



Tampa International Airport, Florida

Tampa International is the first airport in the US to offer tests to all passengers flying any airline. Travellers have the option of taking a PCR test that gives results in 48 hours or a rapid antigen test that returns results in 15 minutes. Ticketed passengers who are flying or have flown within three days and can show proof of travel can take a nasal swab test for \$125 or an antigen test for \$57.

Fiumicino airport, Rome

Italy is aiming to introduce 'COVID-free' flights with 30-minute tests for all passengers before they board in an attempt to save the airline industry. Fiumicino airport (also known as Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport) in Rome, which already offers rapid testing to passengers, will become the first European airport to test departing passengers to Milan.





X2 KHAO LAK ANDA MANI

luxurious, multiple-award-winning beachfront resort with
spectacular ocean views.



Get in touch with us for attractive prices and discounts at:

sales@crosshotelsandresorts.in, +91 9650196521 | mumbai@crosshotelsandresorts.in, +91 9987550769

24 PROPERTIES

THAILAND | VIETNAM | BALI

CROSS
HOTELS & RESORTS


buzz travel marketing
managing your destinations' image
CRM: 16530401521904471012755086

STAYING
UPDATED
HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER

Tourism
BreakingNews

YOUR
DAILY
TRAVEL
DOSE



E-news is delivered to over
600,000 industry professionals
daily via. e-mail and
WhatsApp covering India &
South East Asia



Please subscribe at:
Subscription@ddppl.com,
devika@ddppl.com,
+91 9818767141

'Airlines need government help'

Though that may be the case, at the same time, airlines cannot expect to have government support forever, says **John Grant**, Chief Analyst, OAG – a global travel data provider with headquarters in the UK. He shares his thoughts on the Indian aviation market as well.



Hazel Jain

Do you vote for quarantine or no quarantine on arrival at international/domestic destinations?

Quarantine is not a solution for me. As an industry, we need to rebuild consumer confidence and take away any doubt around the flight operating, the travel processes, etc. Having that spectre of quarantine on arrival is not going to work in the context of industry scale required. The reason it has worked to date is that people have had to travel for real necessity or equally became trapped and had no option.

Long term, it is not sustainable and we have to find a series of better, more nuanced alternatives.

Are Indian airlines taking the right decisions right now?

Indian airlines have a much more commercial and dynamic operation that allows them to grow as and when they can. When it comes to taking the right decisions, the

visibility of data and market sentiment is now difficult for anyone to read with the various lockdowns and restrictions. But I sense from what data I see that they are doing a decent job of balancing capacity to demand.

The risk in India is always over-capacity and airlines adding services too quickly, leading to low fares and then a collapse. We appear to be past that adolescent phase of airlines and if that is the case, then India is as well placed as most to eventu-

sively in making sure that airlines refunded cash as was their legal obligation.

The airlines delaying refunds have probably fuelled consumer uncertainty and created a large degree of mistrust in booking a new flight. Would you purchase an air ticket any earlier than necessary to give the airline your cash and then see them cancel and offer you a voucher or refund at some vague date in the future?

What is the role of governments to ensure aviation industry remains airborne?

A tough question this and one that could be the basis of a conference! Different governments have taken different approaches and that in itself is a real long-term issue around state aid, subsidies, etc., and will impact the longer term market.

support right now and yet at the same time airlines cannot expect to have government support forever. The best outcome for all is perhaps that COVID-19 results in some industry consolidation and relaxation of government rules around overseas ownership of airlines; it has for decades prevented the industry behaving like any other global industry and seeing consolidation of carriers.

Let's face it – the various airline alliances are really only ways for like-minded carriers to work together because they cannot consolidate their businesses.✈

Alliances are for like-minded carriers to work together because they cannot consolidate business

ally come through COVID-19 and grow onwards.

Airline refunds have been a huge problem in many countries. Your thoughts.

It has been poorly handled by airlines, in many cases who sought to hang onto the cash as long as possible. Having said that, the regulators in many countries probably failed to act quickly and deci-

Two things are for sure: airlines need government



John Grant
Chief Analyst, OAG

Need for creativity

"It is vital as long as it's not too whacky! There are great examples; the fly as much as you want for the rest of the year promotion in China that is heavily restricted, so not as great an offer as it may seem, or the waiving of penalties for changing reservations."

Advertise in

the business travel magazine
M!CEtalk
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

for its Oct-Dec'20 issue



India's First & ONLY **M!CE** magazine

Each month

18,000

copies of MiCEtalk go out to corporates, MiCE agents, PCO's, DMC's and other MiCE organisers

the electronic version is read by over

3,50,000

readers

Business Travel gets a Makeover...



For further details, please contact:
rakesh.kashyap@ddppl.com +91 9650399910