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Job revival key

The fundamental concern for MOT is to ensure that all stakeholders in the sector are employed, says **G Kamala Vardhan Rao**, DG, Tourism.

Nisha Verma

Claiming that after the pandemic, the tourism sector has suffered a lot across the world, **G Kamala Vardhan Rao**, said that they are trying to see shoots of revival wherever it's happening. "For the last two months, vaccination drive is happening at a rapid pace. India is doing very well, hence we are seeing revival of domestic tourism in the last 3-4 months. Our focus is to promote, incentivise and prompt travel. Boost is required for the hotel sector, tour operators, guides, taxi drivers, and all the stakeholders who have lost jobs. Our fundamental



G Kamala Vardhan Rao
Director General, Tourism

concern is to see that once tourism is on track, all stakeholders in the sector get employed, to bring back confidence levels of the hotels sector, hoteliers as well

Contd on page 8 ▶

MOT's emphasis on Northeast

A two-day conference of tourism and culture ministers of North Eastern States was recently held in Guwahati, Assam, where **G. Kishan Reddy**, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and DoNER, addressed the inaugural session.

Nisha Verma

The aim of the conference was to discuss development of tourism and issues related to connectivity in the North Eastern Region. "Tourism can be a game changer that can bring socio-economic change in the nation especially in NE region," said **G Kishan Reddy**.

He also said that under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, MOT has sanctioned 16 projects in the North Eastern region. "The Ministry is giving special emphasis on

developing infrastructure, ground capacity and skills in Northeast region. MOT is also providing branding and marketing assistance to the northeast region through its various schemes and flagship initiatives. Under the PRASHAD schemes, the ministry has sanctioned number of projects in the region. Approximately Rs 200 crore has been sanctioned for these projects," he informed.

Regarding initiatives under DoNER ministry, in the budget of 2021-22, the budget allocation to North eastern states



Kishan Reddy
Union Minister of Tourism
Culture and DoNER

is Rs 68,020 crore. Reddy urged all the state governments in the region to submit viable proposals so that the full amount allocated across

various ministries can be successfully utilised.

Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM of Assam, said that holistic approach is required for the development of tourism sector in NE zone. Overall, the North East as a brand has to be promoted and connectivity and infrastructure facilities need to be developed, he added.

An MoU between Ministry of Tourism and IRCTC was also signed at the event for cooperation in promoting domestic tourism and development of new tourism products. ▶

UNWTO champions inclusivity

While both the developed and developing economies have been hit by the pandemic, marginalised groups and the most vulnerable have been hit hardest of all. It is therefore essential that the benefits, restart of tourism will bring, are enjoyed widely and fairly.

Hazel Jain

While both the developed and developing economies have been hit by the pandemic, the marginalised groups and the most vulnerable have been hit



essential that the benefits this will bring, are enjoyed widely and fairly. UNWTO has therefore designated World Tourism Day 2021 as a day to focus on tourism for inclusive growth with the theme 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth'. It is to highlight tourism's ability to drive inclusive development and the role it plays in promoting respect, while generating opportunities for millions across the globe.

the hardest of all. The restart of tourism will help kick-start recovery and growth. It is es-

This is an opportunity to look beyond tourism statistics and acknowledge that, behind every number, there is a



Zurab Pololikashvili
Secretary-General, UNWTO

person. **Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary-General, UNWTO, says, "The human desire to travel and explore is universal, which is why tourism must be

open for everyone to enjoy. So too, must the many social and economic benefits that tourism brings, be available to everybody. World Tourism Day 2021 highlights the power of 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth'. By celebrating this day, we state our commitment that, as tourism grows, the benefits that come will be felt at every level of our broad and diverse sector, from the biggest airline to the smallest family business. Today, we reaffirm our pledge that, as we move forward and work to build a more prosperous

Contd on page 14 ▶

Sri Lanka opens up

SL has reopened for vaccinated Indian tourists, accepting all vaccines, including Covaxin with a mandatory insurance policy for all the tourists.

Janice Alyosius

Fully vaccinated Indian tourists can move freely around Sri Lanka, after an, on-arrival test, as the country reopens its borders to India. Only fully vaccinated Indians who have completed the recommended vaccine doses will be considered (after two weeks from their final vaccination), with no minimum stay period requirements.



Kimaril Fernando
Chairperson, Sri Lanka Tourism

For the benefit of the members, a webinar was organised by the Consulate of Sri Lanka in Mumbai along with the Sri Lankan Tourism

Promotion Bureau, on creating awareness about the new protocols for travel to Sri Lanka for Indians.

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holds NJC meet

TAFI president reiterates his vision for a strong TAFI where all Chapters are empowered to take decisions for the betterment of the industry. He also encouraged members to communicate frankly with the elected officials at the Chapter and the national levels.



Hazel Jain

The newly-elected Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) India team conducted its first National Joint Council (NJC) meeting recently at the Gift City Club Gandhinagar in Gujarat. The National Managing Committee and the Chapter Chairmen and Secretaries from all 11 chapters were present at this event. TAFI also invited members of the Gujarat Chapter for an interaction with the officials of Gujarat Tourism and the National MC.

TAFI President **Ajay Prakash** shared his vision of a resurgent travel and tourism industry as vaccination drives pick up pace. "The one positive that has emerged out of the pandemic is that Indians have begun to discover India. I congratulate the Gujarat government on the addition of Dholavira to the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites. This underlines the need for responsible tourism, even more so in such ecologically sensitive sites," Prakash said.



Ajay Prakash
President, TAFI

My vision is to empower the Chapters to take decisions for members

– Prakash



Jenu Devan
MD and Commissioner, Gujarat Tourism

I invite the TAFI team to hold a physical convention in Gujarat

– Dewan

Jenu Devan, MD and Commissioner, Gujarat Tourism, spoke passionately not only about the well-known sites in the state but also about the unknown and lesser-known tourist attractions of Gujarat. He invited the NJC to visit some of the nearby attractions on this visit

and extended an invitation to TAFI to hold a physical convention in Gujarat.

During the NJC meeting, Ajay Prakash outlined his vision for a strong TAFI where the Chapters were empowered to take decisions for the betterment of

the industry and the membership was encouraged to communicate frankly with the elected officials at the Chapter and the national level. He reiterated the commitment of the National Managing Committee to visit every Chapter and interact personally with the members. He also spoke about the higher paradigm of tourism – which was to connect people across boundaries and promised to send over the IIPT Credo of the Peaceful Traveller, which he urged every member to adopt and display in their office.

Prakash also shared his vision of a rejuvenated TAFI equipped to cope with the ever changing new reality. He apprised members of the steps taken in the last month - meeting with MoS Civil Aviation, discussions at FAITH regarding the need for empirical data on the industry and the formation of various sub-committees. A key part of the NJC agenda was to understand the issues at the Chapter level and every Chapter Chairman was invited to report on their respective regions.

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TRAVELTALK

VIEWPOINT

All for inclusive tourism

Before COVID-19, travel and tourism became an important sector in the world economy, accounting for 10 percent of global GDP (nearly \$9 trillion) and over 320 million jobs worldwide. The global pandemic has put 100 million jobs at risk. Many smaller enterprises employ a high share of women, representing 54 per cent of tourism workforce, according to UNWTO.

World Tourism Day, this year will be celebrated as a day to focus on tourism for inclusive growth. It's an opportunity to look beyond tourism statistics and acknowledge that behind every number, there is a person. Today, we salute each hero who despite all odds stood with the industry. Our heroes who continue to work tirelessly round-the-clock to keep the flag of hope for tourism recovery flying high. We take this opportunity to appreciate and thank each one for their service and valour while pledging to remember the face behind the statistics. While the tourism sector is as good as its people, here's to another year of celebrating tourism and growing the industry!

Visa Flexibility

Airbnb's Brian Chesky summed up the travel industry when he said, "The lines between travel, living and working are blurring". Flexibility is now at the heart of travel. We are seeing a shift in travel patterns as people become more flexible. While remote working makes it easier to integrate travel into everyday lives, are we creating flexible travel conditions? Are your products ready for the new age, last minute, impulsive traveller? Maybe not!

However, ease of travel and simple booking solutions are nowhere on the horizon. In the recent past, many countries have reopened their borders for the extremely sought after Indian outbound traveller, but have they eased the visa process? Has it become quicker, simpler and involves less paperwork? We all know the answer and hope everyday the situation changes. The race for the visa is back and how! All Indian travellers want is to quickly take that luxurious foreign holiday. But are the authorities going to offer that flexibility? I guess we need to wait and watch.

Airlift and tourism go together

Understanding the importance of airlines and their contribution to the development of tourism is vital. **Gavin Eccles**, Managing Partner, GE Consulting & Advisory, provides insights into how destinations and airports need to be aligned to the new realities post covid-19.

The aviation industry is undergoing fundamental change, and, we are seeing a shift from managing supply (what new routes can we build), to how to support demand generation (looking to bring passengers back on those services that we need to restore). With this in mind, airlines need to see the key benefits in 'why should I fly', and, this is not just financial, but, the drive from the destination and its airports to work on co-ordinated campaigns and protocols in assurance that they

destinations invest through incentives and funds from their tourist boards and Chambers of Commerce to support the development of airlift, in essence, contributes back to the government through the tourism spend contributions. A strong route development scheme is bringing tourists, and, such spend is often greater than any incentive given to support the route.

So, for 20 years we have witnessed many new routes that have brought great tourism development to multiple coun-

els achieved in 2019 until the end of 2022 or early 2023. In the meantime, as airlines look to redeploy their route strategy, key for destinations and airports is to consider the following:

❖ Airline engagement will be more important than ever – maintaining relationships, understanding their business and being a true partner will help ensure future success;

❖ Route development business cases will need to focus on destination and market trust, and, be more important than traditional route forecasts and market numbers;

❖ Whilst retrenchment into strong proven markets and networks may dominate the early period of recovery, there will still be opportunities for new routes in the rebuild - weakened airlines will have vacated markets leaving new entrant opportunities or creating a vacated opportunity for competing airports.

For destinations and airports to support the transition, and, support airlines in the rebuilding and connecting their aircraft to key tourism destinations, attention should focus on understanding market demand, airline behaviours, and, destination development.

Airline behaviours

Crucial to all airports and destinations will be how the airlines react post crisis. The key question is, how should airports alter what they do, based on the variations of airline behaviour which may emerge. In particular, being more aggressive on route support, and working harder to capture markets by:

❖ Undertaking a detailed 'network health check' of the airport's current routes, analysing load factor, passenger volumes, market share, etc. This will help airports and

destinations gain an understanding which of its routes are poor performers and may be at risk routes and which are its strong routes that may justify additional capacity or new airline customers.

The challenge for the wider tourism industry is lift, and route and connectivity support is key, and, it is this

It has never been clearer that aviation and tourism are working the same side of the coin

area where the tactical and more specific support measures will need greater state involvement. After all, it is the air routes and their connectivity that breathe the life into many of our economies. Schemes that were for tourism development will need expansion to serve a much wider range of cities which are left with little or no air service in the aftermath of the virus. Pushing programmes that offer risk mitigation for airlines with their route development, driven by clear impact assessment, will allow regions to harness air connectivity with their economic rebuild.



Gavin Eccles
Managing Partner
GE Consulting & Advisory

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



are working to support the destinations' development.

Air services development was the backbone of tourism generation since the start of the new millennium. The low-cost airlines of the United States, Europe and the Far-East have all worked closely with airports and tourism boards to support routes of strategic interest. In particular, funds and incentives have been created that allow airlines to be supported when deciding new routes, and, such monies help stimulate demand. Can airports and tourism boards still find the incentives needed to help airlines in their business case and planning decisions?

Two sides of the same coin

The importance of connectivity is crucial for the vision of any destination. So, the launch of even one new route creates enormous trickle-down benefits. Monies that

tries and regions, and, whilst we have seen significant growth in aviation, we have been able to see equal growth in new routes and tourism development. We have come to see growth of flight as a precursor for the growth of international tourism, and, prior to Covid-19, both aviation and tourism were witnessing tremendous success. It has never been clearer that aviation and tourism are working the same side of the coin.

The road to recovery

It goes without saying that since February/March 2020, both the aviation and international tourism industry, have, both fallen off a cliff. The challenge is quite simple: how to stimulate demand for travel? Fundamentally all airports and destinations will be thinking about what will recovery look like. The consensus view is that traffic for many airports will not get back to the lev-

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Incentivise domestic travel

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), explains how including tourism under Concurrent List can help the industry. His team has been fighting for the revival of the sector even as 25% of hotels and restaurants have shut down.



Hazel Jain & Lipla Negi

What does bringing tourism under the Concurrent List mean for the industry?

As FHRAI, we had been asking to bring tourism under the Concurrent list for almost two decades. As of today, hospitality is only a state subject and not a Center subject. If we jog our memory a bit, we will realise that we have never had a Union minister for tourism. This is the first time that we've had a tourism minister.

So what does that tantamount to? Tourism is a state subject and the Central Government usually doesn't interfere in it. Likewise, all states follow different policies, which make it very difficult for a traveller to move around. Every state has a different taxation policy on certain items related to tourism, like Maharashtra has VAT on liquor. Some states have

different types of tax. Imagine a traveller going from Maharashtra to Goa or to Kerala and paying different taxes.

When one minister is dedicated to this, there will be rules, regulations and laws which will be formulated by the Center and those will apply on all states. Things will get regulated, policies will have to be made by the Center which will be followed by all states, and everything will get streamlined. Prob-



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
VP, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI)

ably the government is realising the seriousness of tourism.

How will this benefit the industry at large?

First, it will allow the entire industry to be effectively regulated. Right now, when we go to the Center, they push away saying the state will decide. It's a no-brainer that the taxes should be charged. Some states have given a complete waiver, and some have given a conditional waiver. In the Concurrent list, there will be a standardised format that will effectively regularise the sector.

How did your meeting with CM Uddhav Thackeray go?

He immediately investigated our request and gave us the appointment. We discussed issues concerning Maharashtra and those cities which we felt were not given proper treatment including Mumbai. We conveyed to him



that while this was done keeping in mind our best interest, we must realise that we cannot shut a sector like this as there are lives and livelihoods involved.

How many hotels/restaurants have shut down in Maharashtra so far?

Maharashtra has approximately 10,500 hotels and close to two lakh restaurants. Right now, 25% hotels are shut and about 40% restaurants have shut – not because of the lockdown but because they cannot revive back. Approximately 50 lakh people have lost their jobs. Many people have not come back as they don't find stability in the sec-

tor. They prefer to be paid less in another industry rather than being laid off every two to three months. Talking about revenue loss, we lost nearly Rs 5,000 crore every month because of the shutdown. We became vocal

Today, 25% hotels and 40% restaurants have shut down because they cannot be revived

when we heard that there was a panel of doctors who were taking decisions and there were no members from the hospitality sector in that task force.

Breaking News

■ Thomas Cook India expands its presence in South India with opening up of a franchise outlet in Bengaluru

■ Chief minister Pramod Sawant announced 50 percent reduction in shack fees in Goa

■ Vistara gets official approval for international flight operations to USA.

■ UAE opens up tourist visas to all covid vaccinated people.

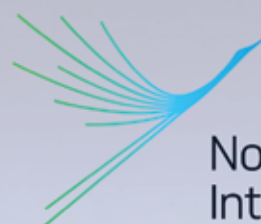
■ Sri Lanka opens for Indian travellers once again with flight operations from 9 cities

■ DGCA lifts ban on Boeing 737 Max after two-and-half years.

■ Indian Railways starts 2 new vistadomes.

■ Udaipur gets highest number of tourists in 10 years

■ Domestic airlines can stop providing Covid safety kits: Health Ministry.



Noida
International Airport

RFQ(Request for Qualification) for “Selection of Licensee to Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer the City Side Hotel” at NIA

Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (“YIAPL”) has been granted the right to develop, operate and maintain the Noida International Airport (“NIA”) on DBFOT basis.

YIAPL intends to select a Licensee to award the right to “Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer the City Side Hotel” at NIA (the “Project”) pursuant to and in accordance with open bidding process. YIAPL wishes to receive Applications in response to this RFQ to short-list experienced and capable Bidders for the RFP Stage. In line with the same, YIAPL has Published RFQ(Request for Qualification)for above captioned project on NIA e-tendering Platform.

Interested parties can download the RFQ upon successfully registering at YIAPL's e-portal, accessible at:
<https://niaairport.abcprocure.com>

For further clarification, interested parties can communicate at tenders@niaairport.in.

nepal Beyond the mountains

Dr. Dhananjay Regmi, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), shares how they are using the pandemic as an opportunity to change the image of Nepal, while ensuring that the country's tourism manpower stays afloat by providing them with alternate employment till the sector revives.



Nisha Verma

When the entire world was closed owing to the pandemic, Nepal wooed tourists by giving them an opportunity to climb Mt Everest and other peaks. **Dr. Dhananjay Regmi**, Chief Executive Officer, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), says, "We opened climbing for international tourists this year since Mt Everest and other peaks were closed from the China side. At present, we have a significant number of tourists, but it isn't much as compared to 1.2 million in 2019. To attract tourists, we are also trying to make protocols easier and our policies liberal."

Biggest markets

Nepal focused on India as a pilgrimage tourism market with Pashupatinath and Muktimath, and rest of the world for adventure tourism for trekking, climb-



Dhananjay Regmi
Chief Executive Officer, NTB

ing, etc. "During the pandemic, we realised that we could promote Nepal for a number of products all year-round instead of promoting it seasonally for adventure. Hence, we got the idea of promoting 800 km of our mid hills with the hill stations. Indians are currently interested in adventure activities as well as hill stations, instead of just pilgrimage. Apart from Kathmandu and Pokhara, we haven't promoted our lesser-known places, espe-

cially for people living along the border for whom Darjeeling and Shimla is far," informs Regmi.

The tourism board realised that by developing these mid hills, it can attract more Indian tourists and this could be a major market, for which even the government has announced some policies. "Earlier we relied on the international airport, but now we need to connect with every railway station adjoining our border and every bus stop, facilitating tourist movements in both the countries. This would also benefit the Nepali people, who are going to India for education as well as for medical reasons. It is a win-win for both countries as Nepal also gets benefitted by providing better facilities to Indian tourists looking for relief from summer temperatures. In fact, even for adventure, if we properly advertise in India, we don't even have to look for other markets," Regmi added.

Helping the workforce

Regmi shares that because of the pandemic and no climbing, number of tourists in the mountains had significantly decreased. People visiting these areas and religious sites, needed services from porters, guides, Sherpas, cooks, etc. Now the drop in tourists has severely impacted the manpower working on the mountains. "While there was a negative impact on the entire hospitality and tourism industry, we were more worried about the people in the mountains who had lost their livelihoods.

Hence, we thought of using the COVID times for the betterment of our mountain friends, and came up with new job opportunities. We tied up with the UNDP-The United Nations Development Programme - and other international organisations to create an employment programme. Under

that, we are giving almost 5,000 people short-term employment. Besides this, we are focusing on infrastructure development, especially porter houses and building bridges which is helping us support people in the tourism industry. There is already a lot of brain drain; we don't want a skill drain," he insists.

Revival strategy

It was only during the pandemic that NTB thought about such ideas. "The pandemic prompted us to re-strategize. We did SWOT analysis of Nepal tourism and thought of making Nepal a year-round and all-age destination. Hence, to change the image of Nepal, we are going to focus more on the culture and our natural diversity as we have landforms running from 60m to the top of the world. People and culture are the major attractions of Nepal. We de-

cided to make accessible trail for people who cannot walk or are on wheelchair. We have already developed an accessible trail in Pokhara," he shares. They

We wanted to use the lockdown time to improve lives and come up with stable job opportunities

are also focusing on spiritual and wellness tourism, as well as educational programmes for children, which in turn would attract the parents.

MoCA's 100-day plan for aviation

Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union Minister, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), has unveiled a 100-day plan to boost the aviation sector in the country, which has suffered a major setback. Its plan is to develop four airports: in Kushinagar - which will be the focal point for Buddhist tourism, Dehradun, Agartala and of course the Jewar airport.



Nisha Verma

Jyotiraditya Scindia has revealed that the ministry's 100-day plan will be based on three foundations— infrastructure, policy targets and reforms initiatives. "We have a 100-day plan for the Ministry based on which we'll be answerable to the stakeholders transparently. The plan is a result of the vision of Prime Minister and includes inputs from all our stakeholders. We constituted separate advisory groups for all sections of the aviation industry and after combined consultation, we have made this 100-days plan. This 100-day scheme will carry on from 30th August to 30th November," he shared.

Scindia also revealed, of the total 16 areas, four come under infrastructure development, 8 relate to policy and four are

under reforms in the aviation sector. Moreover, the minister announced that six heliports would be developed in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand under the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN.

"There's a complete ecosystem in civil aviation sector - with airlines, airport operators, we have MROs where maintenance, repair and overall is done. There are flying-training organisations, the cargo sector, ground handling sector, aircraft manufacturing sector," he said.

Infrastructure and airports

As far as infrastructure is concerned, MoCA will develop four airports. "The first airport will be in Kushinagar, a ₹225 crore project, which will have the landing capacity for Airbus 321 and Boeing 737 aircraft. This would



Jyotiraditya Scindia
Union Minister Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)

make, Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, the focal point of the Buddhist circuit. Another airport terminal will come up in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, where ₹457 crore will be invested. In comparison to the current 250 passengers, the new terminal building would be able to handle 1,800 passengers," he said.

In addition, a new terminal will be constructed at Agartala in the state of Tripura, and an amount of Rs 490 crores is

being invested for the same. Scindia revealed that from 500 passengers per hour, it will be able to handle 1,200 passengers per hour. The fourth airport is the Jewar airport in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, which is being made at the cost of Rs 30,000 crores.

Under UDAN, Scindia revealed that, there will be five airports that will be operationalised, which are Keshod (Gujarat), Deogarh (Jharkhand), Gondia (Maharashtra), Sindhudurg (Maharashtra), Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh). Apart from that six heliports would be established in the states of Himachal Pradesh [Sanjoli (Shimla), Sase (Manali), Mandi, Baddi] and Uttarakhand [Haldwani, Almora].

New initiatives

He also announced that 50 new routes will also be op-

erationalised under UDAN. "In fact, 30 of these routes will be operationalised by October 2021.

Our new airport in Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh will make it the focal point of the Buddhist circuit

In addition, Scindia unveiled a new policy for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) activities.

AirSewa 3.0

Under the AirSewa grievance redressal system, said Scin-

dia, "There has been 93% reduction in pending grievances, which has reduced from 1354 in July to only 92 in August. The AirSewa 2.0, which was enabled since 15th August 2021, the closure of grievances happened not only at airline's level, but also by passengers."

He announced that on 30th September AirSewa 3.0 will be launched. "Under this, we are deciding on the process for grievance escalation in airline companies as well, so that higher officers can check and close those grievances. On our portal, against every airline and every airport, their pending grievances will be given, so that the officers or departments are answerable for closing them. We are also putting this data on our website so as to promote the AirSewa portal."

Abu Dhabi puts MICE at centre stage

The Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) Abu Dhabi, recently organised an educational webinar focusing on MICE titled 'Rediscover MICE in Abu Dhabi' which presented the emirate's various MICE offerings. Abu Dhabi is not a one-day destination. There are offerings, for upto 11 days, based on client requirements.



Nisha Verma

Nikhil Jeet, Country Manager India, Department of Culture & Tourism - Abu Dhabi, started the discussion with the news of Abu Dhabi opening for fully vaccinated travellers from across the world from September 5, 2021.



Nikhil Jeet
Country Manager India
DCT Abu Dhabi



George Ghantous
Director of Sales
Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island

Rules first

"We don't have any green list or red list requirements. It's open for travellers from across the world. However, if one needs to go to Abu Dhabi, make sure to get the latest requirements," he informed.

Time is now

Under its campaign 'Abu Dhabi- The Time is Now', DCT urges the travel agents to talk to their clients now. "One key take-away is that Abu Dhabi is not a one-day destination. We have offerings for upto 11 days, depending on whatever clients want, including adventure, dining, entertainment, leisure, wellness

Abu Dhabi is not a one-day destination. We have offerings for upto 11 days

— Jeet

We are the latest addition to Abu Dhabi and our hotel is ideal for MICE and FIT

— Ghantous

Thirdly, he claimed that Abu Dhabi is considered as the Manhattan of the Middle East. "It is young, trendy, happening, has world class restaurants and entertain-

ment Advantage Programme', which can offer up to 350 Dirhams per person as incentive to get your groups of as many as 500 people to Abu Dhabi. Hence, contact us



and team-building. It's a destination, a city, a region within itself," said Jeet.

Secondly, he said that Abu Dhabi shouldn't be thought of as an expensive destination. "I know that's been a conception in the market. We have over 33,000 hotel rooms in Abu Dhabi, ranging from 1-star hotel apartments to 5-star deluxe hotels."

ments. We would like this to be a take-away from this webinar so that you can convey the same to your clients," he said.

Perfect for MICE

Apart from that, he shared that the emirate offers hotels for meetings, MICE events, weddings, and everything a corporate client can ask for. "We also have an attractive incentive programme, which is called the 'Abu Dhabi

to design your itineraries and we can give incentive support. The first step is to contact DCT Abu Dhabi for all queries. So please contact india@dctabudhabi.ae with all the requirements."

For MICE, Jeet said that they have a variety of event venues as well as dinner venues and Indian food offerings everywhere. Abu Dhabi is the right MICE destination for Indians. Jeet also informed about the team building exercises, local experiences and upcoming attractions in Abu Dhabi, including Al Qana Aquarium, Snow Park, and Qasr al Watan.

Hospitality offerings

George Ghantous, Director of Sales, Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island, shared that they are the latest addi-



The best part Ghantous says was that every guest at the Hilton Abu Dhabi Yas Island will get complimentary access to Yas Island theme parks, including Ferrari World, Warner Bros as well as Yas Waterworld.

DMC Perspective

Roula Jouny, Executive Director, Tourism 365, revealed that they have recently taken initiatives to support tourism and the incentive business in Abu Dhabi. "One of them is Capital Experiences and the other one is Capital Travel. Capital Experience is a DMC, which will have its own fleet of cars. We have people on the ground and at the airport, exhibition centres, as well as guides. Hence, we will be providing a full-fledged experience, when it comes to DMC. Capital Travel will enhance the experience of the travellers from UAE to abroad, hoping that Capital Experience will expand outside UAE."

Aysha Omar, Director Contracting, Capital Experience, added that they are focusing on MICE business as Abu Dhabi has the full potential to grow the MICE business. "This is despite the fact that Abu Dhabi could be overshadowed by other Emirates of the UAE, which is something we are looking at changing with the support of DCT Abu Dhabi, as well as tour operators and travel agents in India. We are looking at retaining the MICE business in Abu Dhabi, so that we don't lose it to any other emirate. It's not just about price matching, but the experiences Abu Dhabi has on offer. Since we belong to the ADNEC group, whatever the MICE market needs from weddings to leisure, attractions to exhibitions and event management, everything can be covered under Capital Experience," she said.



Roula Jouny
Executive Director
Tourism 365



Aysha Omar
Director Contracting
Capital Experience

We have taken initiatives to support incentive business in Abu Dhabi

— Jouny

It's not just about the price but the experience Abu Dhabi has to offer

— Omar

called the Yas Waterfront. To the right of the hotel is Etihad Arena, which is the latest event space to open in Abu Dhabi. It can take up to 18,000 people indoor. To the left of the hotel is Pier71, where by Q4 this year we are expecting around 35-40 food and beverage outlets," he informed.

Speaking about the property, he shared that it is the biggest prop-

erty on Yas Island. "We have 545 rooms and this project and property has opened because of the vision of having Yas Island as a destination within the destination and to be the ideal MICE destination. The rooms offer stunning views, and are equipped with Espresso machines and flexible working

Expo 2020

Jeet shares that one can travel from Abu Dhabi to Expo 2020. "In fact, it is closer to some parts of Abu Dhabi than some parts of Dubai. There is also public transport, as they are organising buses from various points in Abu Dhabi to Expo as well. Also, if your status is green on your AlHosn app and you are fully vaccinated, you can easily travel between Dubai and Abu Dhabi."

'Switzerland of Asia'

Sadhguru, who was recently visiting Nepal and Mt. Kailash, emphasised on earmarking Nepal's tourism industry as a priority sector by the government.

TT Bureau

Jagadish Vasudev, venerated as Sadhguru in Nepa l for darshan of the holy Mt. Kailash. He had the darshan from Limi Valley of Humla District from Karnali Province in the North Western part of Nepal.

During the meeting with Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Tourism Board, Dr. Dhananjay Regmi and prominent Nepali media, Sadhguru shared his experience, "The view is not only spectacular but also inspiring. Nepal can be Switzerland of Asia for its natural beauty with all kinds of diversities. It is a wonderful destination for its Nature, Culture and people"

He praised "Bhaktapur as the most unique city on the planet" and requested all concerned to preserve the sanctity and originality of Nepali culture and tradition.

He emphasized the urgency of earmarking Nepal's tourism in-

dustory as a prioritized sector by the government. Highlighting the sustainability of tourism sector, he stressed it would be an injus-

Meanwhile Regmi updated Sadhguru about NTB's efforts of promoting Nepal in Indian markets as spiritual destination,



tice to rich tourism products and God's gifts endowed onto Nepal, if its contribution to national GDP does not reach as high as 30%. Sadhguru claimed India will always be a major tourism market for Nepal and Indians are interested to visit this beautiful country be it for Pilgrimage, or for Adventure or for MICE and holiday breaks.

and the destination for the holistic health of body, mind and soul. He expressed gratitude to Sadhguru on behalf of the whole tourism fraternity of Nepal for visiting and promoting it as a great tourism destination even in the middle of COVID pandemic and for inspiring Nepalese people to spirituality and meditation.

More flights to the islands

Andaman & Nicobar Islands' tourism and hospitality industry appeals to the Ministry of Home Affairs for increased flight frequency at Port Blair in order to ensure enough tourist footfalls.

TT Bureau

India's apex hospitality association, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), has submitted a representation to the Additional Secretary (UT), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govind Mohan requesting removal of the restriction imposed on the number of incoming flights at Port Blair to allow at least ten flights a day. Airfares have skyrocketed, tickets cancellations are through the roof and the islanders are boxed in.



Gurbaxish Singh Kohli
Vice President, FHRAI

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, FHRAI, says, "There has been no tourism activity since the last 18 months and the economy of the UT is in dire straits. Ironically, no such restriction applies on flights anywhere else across India. To recover from the damage is going to require a massive amount of effort and time and removing the current restriction on the number of

incoming flights to allow at least ten flights a day will be a good start. This will still be less than 50 per cent flights in operation at Port Blair compared to the pre-pandemic levels."

The FHRAI has pointed out that between October 2021 and March 2022 flight movement on Port Blair will be restricted to before 2pm only on account of re-carpeting of the runway. This would mean that Port Blair Airport will not be able to operate at full capacity even during the peak tourist season. "Prior to COVID19, Andaman & Nicobar

Islands had twenty-two operational flights a day which is now restricted to less than four flights. As a result, the islanders are unable to obtain tickets. Also, airfares have skyrocketed and the curtailment of flights has led to cancellations and cut-offs from

Ironically, there are no such restrictions applicable on flights anywhere else across India

many metros and important cities. Students and patients who are unable to secure seats are suffering the most due to this. We hope that Government will understand and allow at least 10 flights a day immediately.

'Keeping the spirit alive is our motto'

Contd from page 1

as stakeholders in the tourism sector," he says.

Stakeholder engagement

Rao shared about regular interaction with the stakeholders at various levels. "Whether it's the aviation sector, tour operators, tourist guides or state governments, we are doing outreach programmes. Recently, we have done major programmes in Ladakh with the stakeholders," he said.

Initiatives

Another focus of MOT is to implement their flagship programmes of PRASAD and Swadesh Darshan. "The idea is to oversee these projects and go for domestic publicities and develop infrastructure wherever it is required and conduct research. We would like to focus on research this year, in terms of how the pandemic has really impacted the tourism as well as the hospitality industry."

Capacity building

Stressing that capacity building is very essential, Rao shares, "Right from Northeastern areas to Ladakh, we are seeing the homestays industry

We believe that survival and revival of the tourism sector is important

growing well. Hence, MOT would like to focus on this capacity building as well as skill building within hospitality- food & beverage, as well as guides. We will review these initiatives every month with the stakeholders. Also, under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, celebrating 75 years of Independence, we are taking up major activities."

Ladakh takeaways

MOT recently organised an event in Ladakh, which according to Rao was a good experience. "We interacted with the local stakeholders and the secretary and LG of Ladakh. With 17 flights every day, it's seeing a big increase in tourists. Apart from Buddhist activities, there is adventure, trekking and skiing as well. There is a huge potential for tourism development. One of the takeaways from the event is capacity building in the form of homestays. Being a delicate ecosystem, one cannot expect five-star hotels everywhere in that environment. Hence, the intention is to increase homestays and do capacity building for the locals. All projects and programmes are aimed at employment generation for the locals. LG also mentioned that many homestays are coming up in Kargil, Nubra Valley, etc. Foreigners are showing interest in staying at these places. Almost 30-35 helipads are already identified and would like

to increase this number as well as the basic infrastructure for adventure tourism for trekking and providing medical aids. We are looking at doing holistic development with a good synergy between all concerned departments to fulfil our goal of increasing tourism. However, we don't want to take mass tourism in such a delicate area, it should be controlled, sensible, ecologically balanced and responsible tourism."

On borders opening

In line with the revenge tourism, Rao is optimistic that both outbound and inbound tourism will happen whenever the borders open. "However, it depends on how the pandemic has affected other countries and if there can be movement between India and any of those countries. Owing to vaccina-



G Kamala Vardhan Rao, DG, MOT, speaking at the 'Ladakh: New Start New Goals' event in Leh

tions and less number of cases in other countries, we expect more of inbound tourism soon. Keeping the spirit of tourism alive, is the motto of the Ministry of Tourism and we believe that survival and revival of the tourism sector is important," he says confidently.

AS CMD of ITDC, he is dedicated towards expanding the business

and go beyond hospitality. "Now that we are going slowly beyond the hotel industry, we would like to focus on other services, whether it's Ashok Tours and Travels, or consultancy works, engineering division, event management division, or medical-value tourism. Under medical-value tourism, we would like to offer non-medical services" he insists.

Mumbai airport registers nearly four-fold growth in passenger traffic in August. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) handled 16-lakh passengers in August this year.

TravelBullz set to conquer travel

TravelBullz has set off on a mission to be the largest marketplace in the world that will connect supply to distribution and make both sides technologically strong. It has recently launched a dynamic packaging engine, which will help agents book Maldives along with transfers at the click of a button.



Janice Alyosius

The travel and tourism industry has been through difficult times though, there is hope at the end of the tunnel. The whole world is expecting everything to gradually go back to normal. With the same hope, TravelBullz, an online B2B Destination Management Company hosted an exclusive networking event, **Let's Talk**, partnering with Centara Hotels & Resorts for closed group travel partners. The event was held at Le Meridien, New Delhi on 3rd September.

The event was organized with the agenda to showcase the latest technology and product development at TravelBullz and present the glimpse of what future holds for the travel business.

KD Singh, Founder and President, TravelBullz, spoke about their



KD Singh
Founder and President
TravelBullz

business scenario in pre and post COVID situation. He also gave an insight of their business and about the new developments made by the company. TravelBullz has set out on a mission to be the largest marketplace in the world that will connect supply to distribution and make both sides technologically strong. They aim to empower the traditional DMCs as well as, the travel agencies and shift from an offline model of buying and sell-



ing, to digital. "All our customers are tech savvy, thanks to COVID, what would have happened five to seven years later has already happened," said Singh.

TravelBullz claims to have a strong footing in India, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Maldives, Dubai and Indonesia with 22 million dollars turnover in hotel sales in Thailand, Macau and Hong Kong, pre COVID. They recently celebrated their 11th anniversary, for which Singh said "Eleven years of awesome experience! We've seen some amazing passion in the team. I think we have made it till here because of our team and the support we have got from the travel trade from India and worldwide. It was

one hell of a journey and we look forward to another 11 years".

Talking of the new developments and initiatives, TravelBullz has recently launched a dynamic packaging engine, which will help agents book Maldives along with transfers at the click of a button. It is one of the easiest user interface where, agents can immediately issue vouchers on real time basis without waiting to send email or Whatsapp to any of the suppliers. Being highly user friendly, it helps customers and travel agents to

make live bookings in real time. Digitalization is part of their new initiatives, i.e. to digitally con-

nect destination management companies with the travel agents worldwide. This will help digital-

We took the challenges we faced as opportunities and redesigned our reach to customers

Singh stated that they have also started Thailand domestic business, which is the largest today, as TravelBullz portfolio of distribution and they further expanded their product in Dubai, which resulted in them to get huge agent traffic. Singh shares, "In 2020, we reported 10,400 bookings and in 2021, we have already crossed 7,800 bookings, which means it will end up somewhere in between 18,000 bookings projected at the end of this year, depending on, how the COVID formalities pan out."

The Government has announced to clear all pending dues of exporters worth Rs 56,000, which includes SEIS. This includes those in the tourism and hospitality segments who will be able to claim benefits for FY 2019-2020 for which Rs 2,061 cr has been provisioned.



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HAI discusses ECLGS issues

Hotel Association of India (HAI) was invited to appear before the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism & Culture, headed by **T.G. Venkatesh**, M.P., Rajya Sabha on 9th Sep. HAI team had Corporate Member **Jyotsna Suri** and Chairperson & MD, Bharat Hotels Limited and **Ajay Bakaya**, Fellow Member HAI and MD, Sarovar Hotels. The committee heard from the stakeholders on the implementation of relief measures extended by GoI for various sectors under the series of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS). This is the second appearance of the Association before the Parliamentary Standing Committee. The committee, in the previous appearance, had heard HAI's views on the 'Distress in Tourism and Hospitality Sectors due to COVID-19 pandemic'.

TAAI facilitates workshop on MSME

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) recently conducted a virtual workshop for its Ludhiana Chapter with an aim to educate and update its members about various schemes of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and how it can benefit them.



Janice Alyosius

Under the astute leadership of Jyoti Mayal, President, and Office Bearers of TAAI, a web workshop, in collaboration with the MSME Development Institute (DI), Ludhiana was organised, with the purpose to educate and update members about various schemes of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise. The workshop was a part of the series initiated by TAAI at pan-India level to educate its members about the benefits and reliefs extended by the Ministry of MSME.

The discussion was initiated by **Neeraj Malhotra**, Chairman, TAAI (NR). He briefed the participants about this unique initiative and conveyed that how TAAI at the National, Regional, and State level is working wholeheartedly for the Members to survive during these crucial



Neeraj Malhotra
Chairman
TAAI (NR)

TAAI at all levels is working wholeheartedly for the members
— Malhotra

times. While mentioning the role of MSME DI Offices in facilitating businesses,



Himanshu Talwar
Executive Director
TAAI

MSME initiatives can benefit businesses at large
— Talwar

Himanshu Talwar, Executive Director, TAAI introduced the dynamic officer present to



Virendra Sharma
Director, MSME Development
Institute, Ludhiana

Registration to aid members in availing MSME Ministry benefits
— Sharma

grace the occasion. During the presentation, Sharma and his team shared various schemes



and initiatives of MSME and explained how it can benefit businesses at large.

Virendra Sharma, Director, MSME Development Institute, Ludhiana, specifically mentioned the schemes, where members may attend exhibitions and trade fairs in different parts of India. He highlighted that registration is free-of-cost, and registration might be of benefit to members looking at availing benefits extended by the MSME Ministry through different schemes in the years to come. He also shared various schemes and initiatives of MSME. 🐦

ADTOI's LEO set to empower women

Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) has introduced Lady Entrepreneur Officer (LEO), a pioneering initiative with the vision to empower women and bring them forward in the field of tourism. Each LEO member takes initiatives according to her vision, interest and expertise for women empowerment.



TT Bureau

Ekta Watts, Chairperson of Women Empowerment and CSR activities, ADTOI, in a recent virtual meet talked about their initiative to empower women in tourism industry with their Lady Entrepreneur Officer (LEO). It is a pioneering initiative of the Women Empowerment and CSR Wing of ADTOI. Each LEO member takes initiatives according to her vision, interest and expertise for women empowerment and CSR activities for each one of the 10 Chapters of the Association. Their profile is to work as a team on PAN India basis to meet their objectives.

Watts said "In the coming years, it is critical for us to ensure women in a different place, in a world of equality. I want to underline the importance of the empowerment of women. Effective

polices backed by action to accord us our due rights, opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".

Effective policies backed by action to accord us our due rights and equal opportunities

Watts informed that the LEO initiative aims to connect and provide a platform to the lady entrepreneurs of ADTOI in promoting the tourism industry, empower the women leaders within and work to increase lady members in ADTOI. A LEO would reach

out to the lady executives working with the members and also non ADTOI members who are connected to tourism and allied services. Acknowledging the importance of connecting to the youth, a LEO would also reach out to the female students in colleges / universities who are pursuing tourism courses. It will increase their potential through entrepreneurial education and training. They also target to work at the grass-root level, to encourage more women to be a part of the tourism industry.

For reaching out to female students, LEOs envision to give lectures in colleges to encourage and acquaint them to the tourism industry with focus on dynamics of domestic tourism in India; tourism as a profession for women; encouraging economic empowerment in tourism for rural women; handloom; lady guides; cuisine specialist; sus-



Ekta Watts
Chairperson of Women Empowerment and CSR activities, ADTOI

tainable tourism with focus on domestic sectors; responsible tourism; use of technology in tourism industry and other areas associated with tourism.

They plan to engage more women into the fold of Leo Women's initiative through two major initia-

tives— one is the formation of Women Empowerment Cluster for ADTOI members and the other is formation of Women Entrepreneurs Network for Non ADTOI members. The Women Empowerment Cluster is an initiative to form a network of women tourism professionals who can benefit from events organised by ADTOI for women. In the long run, this will help the cluster members to enhance their knowledge, gain self-confidence and personal growth. The Women Entrepreneurs Network comprises of the initiatives taken to form a network of women entrepreneurs (non ADTOI Members) from the fields of handloom, handicraft, cuisine and tourism (tour guides, cuisine specialists etc.).

Few events have already been conducted, like the Breast Cancer Awareness Camp held in Delhi for ADTOI ladies and CSR activities like the full day excursion for blind children of AndhMahavidyalaya, New Delhi. To provide digital support to the lady members, an exclusive Facebook Page and Instagram Accounts for ADTOI lady entrepreneurs, were launched in May 2021. Through the Lady Entrepreneur Facebook Page, many ladies have expressed interest to be ADTOI members and the LEOs are in the process of welcoming them. Many Pilot Projects to work with local communities are being planned pan India. 🐦

Udaipur has recorded maximum tourist footfall in 10 years - better than in previous years. Its occupancy rate (in hotels) has gone up, especially on weekends in destinations bordering other states.

A new vista of tourism

In an exciting development, the Indian Railways has started two new Vistadome trains that promises to change the tourism landscape of this region. One will run between Guwahati-New Haflong and the other between NJP-Alipurduar.



Hazel Jain

The Vistadome tourist train that started in Gujarat has shown us that a destination's appeal can leapfrog with even one single tourism product. This bodes well for the north east region as it gets two new Vistadome trains. The Indian Railways has recently started them between Guwahati and New Haflong in Assam and New Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar Junction in North Bengal. There are jungles, wildlife and tea gardens on the route between NJP and Alipurduar that will provide tourists with the opportunity to view the natural beauty of Doorgas during their journey.

Nirmalya Choudhury, Chapter Chairman, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO - North East Chapter) and Director, Jungle Travels India, is already promoting the Vistadome train and destination Haflong to his clients. "The NF



Nirmalya Choudhury
Chapter Chairman, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO - North East Chapter) and Director, Jungle Travels India

Depending on the demand, the NF railway may consider upping its frequency

– Choudhury

Railway said they may consider increasing the frequency of the



Susmita Hazarika
Joint Secretary, Tour Operators Association of Assam and Co-Founder and Inbound Manager, Landmark Tours & Travels

Haflong is a new destination and there's a dearth of facilitators and facilities here

– Hazarika

Vistadome train, add more Vistadome coaches and even ex-

tend the area covered by it, if it catches on," he says. Choudhury hopes to see the train benefit local entrepreneurs as well. "They can start quality eateries including local ethnic food, providing transport and guide services, new accommodation facilities can come up including homestays in the area," he adds. His association, IATO, is also helping promote this product. "We have shared brochures on this and the attractions in and around New Haflong to be circulated among the entire IATO membership," Choudhury shares.

Challenges with it

Like any new product, this too suffers from teething problems. According to Choudhury, since it is launched in an area where tourism is at a nascent stage, there is an issue. But this is also an opportunity to do things right from the start and make sure that local authorities enable and engage local people for services – good local

transport services, trained drivers, high-quality accommodation facilities with focus on homestays and guesthouses, local guides, restaurants, etc."

Another concern, flagged by **Susmita Hazarika**, Joint Secretary, Tour Operators Association of Assam and Co-Founder and In-

district of Assam. There are a few other routes within Assam that are being considered by NF Railway for similar operations," she says.

Her company has sold more packages for day excursion and few with three-night stays. "Seats are fully booked till the first week of November!" she claims. Haz-



bound Manager, Landmark Tours & Travels, is the five-hour layover at Haflong to allow passengers to see the sites in and around Haflong late in the evening. "Haflong is at a nascent stage of tourism development and there's a dearth of tourism facilitators and facilities like taxis, restaurants, local guides, etc. The NF Railway should have worked with local stakeholders so that visitors receive quality services. This one train has the potential to give a great boost to local employment and development at Haflong and nearby places in the Dima Hasao

arika adds that Dima Hasao can be promoted as a year-round destination. This region is a conglomeration of 13 tribal groups each with their distinct customs.

"I also feel that the five-hour layover in Haflong is too less a time to cover prominent places in a hill station even if the tourist opts for packed lunch. Moreover, the return journey is totally in the dark with no scope to enjoy the country side. It would have been better if the train is scheduled for thrice a week instead of two days a week," she adds.

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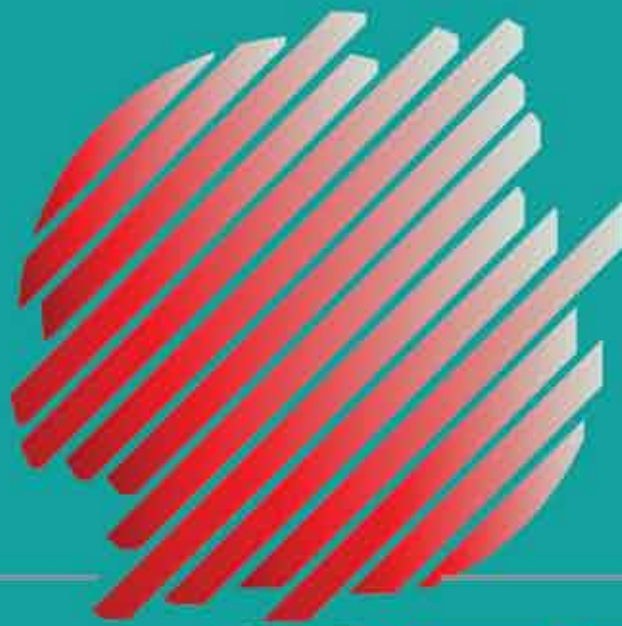
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Air Tanzania starts India flights

Air Tanzania has announced resumption of its services between India and Tanzania. The first flight out of DAR was on 30th August, 2021 and return from Mumbai was on 31st August 2021. To start with, this will be a bi-weekly service every Tuesday and Saturday out of Mumbai with convenient departure timings of 05.50 hours arriving in Dares Salaam at 09.20 hours. To make the journey comfortable, Air Tanzania will operate B787-800 brand new Dreamliner aircraft. Its Business Class has 180-degree 22 flat beds. Indian meals will be served on board. Once the situation normalises, the flights are likely to increase to thrice a week with scope of further expansion in future. Air Tanzania operates from its hub DAR to Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar, Mwanza, Arusha, Dodoma, Mbeya, as well as international destinations Harare, Lusaka, Entebbe and Hahaya (Moroni). Air Tanzania is expanding its network and new destinations on its international network are likely to be added soon. The airline is grateful to the travel trade for the trust.

AM Hotel Kollection adds 4 hotels

With growth of the portfolio a priority, AM Hotel Kollection is on schedule to announce at least four more launches before the end of the year. It is also aggressively building onsite facilities to cater to niche as well as large weddings at its hotel locations.

 Hazel Jain

The hospitality landscape in India continues to be uncertain, but it has also brought new perspectives and opportunities, says **Randhir Narayan**, Director and CEO, AM Hotel Kollection. "We



Randhir Narayan
Director and CEO, AM Hotel Kollection

have seen growth in boutique and experiential hotel landscape. There is reasonably good opportunity in investing at holiday destinations such as beaches, hills and jungle

retreats. They have seen quite a few transactions and investments and new openings both big and small. We see good opportunity for hotels between 25 to 70 keys, especially the ones built keeping in mind their surroundings," he says. AM Hotel Kollection is a collection of individually-owned, independent boutique hotels and resorts. Each hotel has its own character and vibe. It is in the process of adding to its collection of hotels. Recently, it has added six new locations: Gurgaon, Goa, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kufri and Panchkula. It is now operational in 15 cities across India.

Narayan however adds that there is trouble for large inventory city hotels. "The ones in luxury segments are still benefitting with social events but the ones in budget space will have to improvise in the medium term. Perhaps they may have to look at converting them-



Shashi Razdan
COO, AM Hotel Kollection

selves to mixed-use properties or becoming serviced apartments, as there is significant drop in transient corporate business," he explains.

Growth of the portfolio is a priority for the company. Narayan says, "We are on schedule to announce at least four more launches before the end of the year. We have developed curated and destination weddings. Our select hotels have achieved good success in first half of this year. We are aggressively building onsite facilities



to cater to niche as well as large weddings at our hotels."

He adds that travel agents are offered special rates and packages including bundled offers, curated experiences, discounts, benefits on extended length of stays and higher commissions on incremental room nights. Sharing details on this is **Shashi Razdan**, COO, AM Hotel Kollection. He says, "Engagements with travel agents has been continuous. Regular educational trips have been organised for them and weekly meetings are

done with sales team as well as unit managers."

Explaining the ethos of the company, **Sanchit Wahi**, CMO, AM Hotel Kollection, says, "We are a hotel services platform that provides asset owners with management expertise and effective end-to-end operational service solutions. Our talent pool assists at every stage of development – from inception to project completion and operationalisation. We cater to premium and experiential segments of business." 

Jet Airways to start domestic ops in Q1 2022

Jet Airways is all set to resume domestic operations in Q1 2022, according to the Jalan Kalrock Consortium, the successful resolution applicant of Jet Airways. **Murari Lal Jalan** is the lead member and proposed promoter of Jet Airways.



Murari Lal Jalan
Lead Member
Jalan Kalrock Consortium

The process of reviving the grounded carrier is on track with the existing Air Operator Certificate (AOC) already under process for revalidation. The Consortium is working with the relevant authorities and airport coordinators on slot allocation, required airport infrastructure, and night parking. Senior Mem-

bers of the Jalan Kalrock Consortium along with Jet 2.0 team led by the newly appointed Capt. Sudhir Gaur, Accountable Manager, and acting CEO visited key airports last month.

Murari Lal Jalan, Lead Member of the Jalan Kalrock Consortium and the proposed Non-Executive Chairman of Jet Airways said, "We received the NCLT approval in June 2021, and since then we have been working closely with all concerned authorities to get the airline back in the skies. Jet Airways 2.0 aims at restarting domestic operations by Q1-2022, and short haul international operations by Q3/Q4 2022. Our plan is to have 50+ aircraft in three years and 100+ in five years which also fits well with the short-term and long-term business plan of the Consortium. It is the first time in the history of Aviation that an airline grounded for more than two years is being revived."

Industry can aid inclusive growth

► Contd from page 1

and peaceful world through tourism, we will not leave anyone behind."

He adds, "It is a pledge that is both timely and necessary. The pause in international travel caused by the pandemic has made clear, the relevance of tourism to our societies. The economic and social impact has been felt far beyond the sector itself. And in many places, the most vulnerable members of society have been hit hardest of all. Working for inclusive growth means getting everybody behind a better vision for tourism. Only this way

Empowering rural folks

The idea of empowering locals of rural areas through a sustainable model had been encouraged by many. With the increasing adverse impact of mass tourism, it is important for destinations to bring more focus on sustainability and community-based tourism. Every tourism player in the value chain needs to adopt a sustainable approach towards this.



Mitali G Dutta
Founder of Food Sutra by Mitali

can tourism's restart, reach people and communities that need it the most right now and build the foundations for a better future for all."

into action. World Tourism Day is a chance for a diverse range of tourism stakeholders, including destinations and businesses of all sizes, to explore how they can be more inclusive as tourism restarts, to share best practices and to celebrate achievements.

Individual tourists: Tourism is all about people and experiences. Individual tourists are called on to be part

Government too slow to react

The Indian Government and state tourism ministries have been far too slow to react to nature-based, community-based ecotourism or even talk about it. Laws and policies are just not in place to make it happen, and this is why India is at the bottom of the world ranking for sustainable tourism. I'd like to see more community-based tourism for it to become a central feature of Indian tourism.



Julian Matthews
Chairman, TOFTigers


Tribes of northeast

North East India has a number of tribes and communities each with their own traditions, customs and practices. Here, community-based tourism is a promising segment as travellers are increasingly looking for authentic experiences. They are willing to spend more money on these activities, especially if this benefits local communities. Communities therefore need to be prepared and trained for this.



Arijit Purkayastha
Chapter Chairman, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI) - North East

How industry can help: Destinations and businesses: Ideas and commitments are nothing if they are not put

of the conversation, sharing their thoughts on how the sector's growth can be more inclusive. 

Kerala launches travel app

To boost tourism in the state, Kerala Tourism has recently launched a mobile app which will allow travellers to make inquiries using its voice assistant feature.



Janice Alyosius

The mobile app launched by Kerala Tourism ensures hassle-free travel for tourists, giving them an opportunity to discover unexplored attractions themselves and record their impressions during the visit.

The app was launched by film actor Mohanlal at The Raviz, Kovalam, where tourism minister Shri P A Mohamed Riyas and Dr V Venu, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Kerala Tourism, was also present. "Besides providing all information about destinations and services at your fingertips, a key feature of this app is that it identifies unexplored destinations in all panchayats in Kerala. It will help attractive local tourist spots to grab global attention", Mohamed Riyas said.

Dr Venu said that the app was designed with a view to provid-

ing all services to tourists. "Tourism Minister's direct contribution was there during the preparation of this user-friendly app. It has the facility to add user-generated content, and thus, going

innovative features within six months. In the next phase of the app, tourists can make enquiries using 'Voice Assistant' facility, which will give answers through voice, eliminating the difficulty in



Actor Mohanlal launches the mobile app along with officials from Kerala Tourism

forward, it can give a kind of modular growth."

The in-progress app is designed in such a way that a visitor gets the opportunity to write about any unexplored destinations and experiences through the option 'Create Story'. The app will be further upgraded with more

typing letters. Moreover, the app makes the current toilet mapping activities very fast as it helps those travelling inside Kerala to find out safe and hygienic rest rooms nearby. Tourists can also explore restaurants and eateries that offer delicious Kerala cuisine and relish local flavours as per their choice.

Thomas Cook India expands



Thomas Cook India has inaugurated a new Gold Circle Partner franchise outlet in Bengaluru. This expansion augments Thomas Cook India's distribution and reach in Karnataka to 17 consumer access centres: 7 owned branches and 10 Gold Circle Partner (franchise) outlets across Bengaluru, Hubli, Mangaluru, Mysuru, Udupi, Shimoga and Gulbarga.

TAFI's MP Chapter meets in Pune



The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) Madhya Pradesh Chapter conducted a physical meeting for its members in Pune recently over two days. It was led by Chapter Chairman TK Jose along with the National Committee team led by President Ajay Prakash. The team met in Pune in order to promote the destination along with nearby places like Lonavala and Mahabaleshwar.

Activity-based tourism will help

Contd from page 1

Speakers from The Tourist Hotel Association of Sri Lanka (THASL), Sri Lanka Inbound Tour Operators Association (SLAITO), Association for Small & Medium Enterprises in Tourism (ASMET), also shared their views on catering to the demand under the new normal.

President, The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, Sanath Ukwatte, said that they are expecting good response from the Indian travellers. "We are getting about 1,000 requests a day for visas from Indians, which is a huge surge. For travelling to Sri Lanka, they should have the Indian government approved vaccination certificate. We have over 204 safe hotels to choose from. They all have safe and secure certification. We also have range of Indian food offered in almost all hotels."

Recently, **Kimarli Fernando**, Chairperson, Sri Lanka Tourism,



Sanath Ukwatte
President, The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka

We are getting about 1,000 requests a day for visas from Indians

— Ukwatte



Jay Bhatia
Vice President, TAAI

Being close to India, SL should try to promote itself as weekend getaway

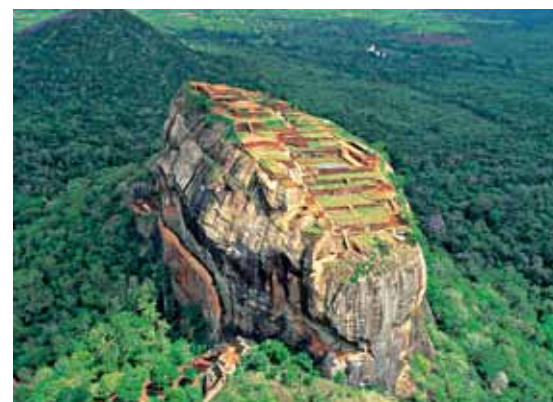
— Bhatia



Ajay Prakash
President, TAFI

When a tourist participates, she/he is better connected & more likely to return

— Prakash



He said that being close to India, Sri Lanka should try to promote itself also as a weekend getaway. With opening of its borders with protocols, Sri Lanka should initially concentrate on repeat travellers, which shall boost the confidence of first-time travellers. He also suggested that roadshows, training programmes and webinars along with TAAI should be held to educate and update the members in detail, which shall assist in enhancing tourism to Sri Lanka.

TAFI President, **Ajay Prakash**, said that Sri Lanka is like a little jewel in the Indian Ocean. More

awareness and promotion is required to boost Sri Lanka's tourism and for that greater connectivity, incentivisation and more road shows are needed. "With vaccinations picking up pace in India, and with relaxation of only two day stay in hotel, will provide great boost to the Sri Lankan tourism market. Sri Lankan tourism should consider tourist's participation activities. When a tourist participates, she/he is much more connected, and is more likely to return and become an ambassador of that country. Hence, it is important that we encourage activity-based tourism", said Prakash.

revealed that the island nation has launched a US\$12 (₹890) mandatory insurance for a policy of US\$50,000 (₹37 lakh) valid up to one month. She also mentioned unlike a lot of countries, both Covaxin and Covishield are accepted by Sri Lanka. "We are

using this opportunity to shift gears in tourism. Despite COVID, 2021-2030 has been declared as the tourism decade for Sri Lanka and we see this as a time to do things we did not do in the past. We are creating a strategic development plan."

TAAI VP, **Jay Bhatia**, highlighted the need for Sri Lankan Tourism Board to incentivise agents for promoting tourism to the island nation and special incentives for promoting sports tourism, adventure tourism, MICE, weddings, small groups etc.



gears up to open for Indians

As part of its 'Thailand Build Back Better Together Campaign' Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) India Offices, New Delhi and Mumbai are engaging the Indian travel trade through several activities on social media platforms, with month long engagement, allowing them to participate in contests on different themes, polls, articles and situation updates.



Nisha Verma

Vachirachai Sirisumpan, Director, TAT, New Delhi Office, stressed, this is the right time to kickstart 'Thailand Build Back Better Together Campaign' as the COVID situation has improved globally, especially in India. "As we all know vaccination drives have been carried out by many countries, including India. Things are moving very fast and people are looking forward to travel again, both domestically and internationally. At the same time,

Thailand has started opening to welcome back international travellers, beginning with Phuket Sandbox, which commenced on 1st July, 2021, followed by Samui Island. Then Phang Nga and Krabi have opened as combined destination with Phuket Sandbox," he pointed out.

Cholada Siddhivarn, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Mumbai, further shared, "Though there are cases in Thailand, it has started declining now, which is a good sign for us as well as for India.



Vachirachai Sirisumpan
Director, TAT
New Delhi Office



We would like to share current scenario and the procedures in Thailand

– Sirisumpan

We hope that by the fourth quarter of this year, we will have good news for you."



Cholada Siddhivarn
Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Mumbai



I hope that by the fourth quarter of this year, we will have good news for you

– Siddhivarn

Vachirachai highlighted that through the campaign, they would like to provide update about the



changing situation in Thailand. "We would like to share the current scenario as well as the procedures in Thailand, with the trade partners. This would give them some information about Thailand. Also, this plays an important role to reconnect, as we would like to have our Thai partners to connect directly with Indian partners."

The campaign will go on till 30th September and each week will

have a different theme and destination, in focus. "Thailand has a lot of variety to offer, and we have many products across the country, to fascinate everyone," said Vachirachai. Speaking about the opening, Cholada added, "We are hoping it to happen by mid-October or November this year, but it is based on many factors, as our policy makers have to balance between economy and health."

The campaign is following a theme each week from 30th August -30th Sep

- Week 1:** Adventures in Thailand (Phuket - Krabi - Phang Nga)
- Week 2:** Exotic Beaches; Attractions in Thailand (Koh Samui- Koh Tao - Koh Phangan)
- Week 3:** Family Fun in Thailand (Bangkok - Pattaya - Hua Hin)
- Week 4:** Luxury and Wellness in Thailand (Chiang Mai- Chiang Rai)

Experiences galore in Thailand

As Thailand gears towards a calibrated opening, it is wooing Indians with Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) India's 'Thailand Build Back Better Together Campaign'. Service providers in Thailand are leaving no stone unturned, to offer the best to Indians as they get ready to welcome them to the destination.

"As the world continues to deal with the ongoing pandemic, we would like to assure you that we have taken all mandatory measures of safety and well-being at each of our properties. We have carefully crafted the Dusit Care – Stay with Confidence programme. In 1948 we opened our first hotel – Dusit Thani Bangkok and at present, we own and operate over 30 properties and 300 upscale Villas in a total of 13 countries worldwide."



Prachoom Tantiprasertsuk
Vice President Sales
Dusit Hotels & Resorts

"Absence does truly make the heart grow fonder. Hence, why not come back and fall in love with us, all over again? We, the Pearl of Andaman are back, but bigger and better than ever before! It's time to chill and relax from these turbulent times. Welcome back to happiness where you can always feel at home. Deevana Hotels & Resorts properties include Deevana Patong Resort & Spa, Deevana Plaza Phuket Patong, Ramada Phuket Deevana and many more."



Atchara Sutiguranond
Cluster Business Development
Director, Deevana Hotels & Resorts

"Laguna Phuket is the perfect destination for Indian travellers. Besides deluxe hotel accommodations, our integrated destination resort includes a myriad of activities like restaurants, bars, spas, boutique shopping, private yachting and water sports and golf at the award-winning 18-hole Laguna Golf Phuket. We have established an on-site PCR test centre in partnership with Bangkok Hospital Phuket, to provide our guests extra assurance and care as we welcome them back."



Ravi Chandran
Chief Executive Officer
Laguna Phuket



Alexandra Wulf
Assistant Director of Sales, JW
Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa

"Reconnect with the world around you at JW Marriott Khao Lak. Our elegantly renovated rooms and restaurants sit harmoniously amidst the breathtaking nature of Khuk Khak Beach, whilst our world class facilities are waiting to host the most memorable honeymoons, family vacations, conferences, meetings and events. Our beachside retreat features 293 exquisite rooms and suites, captivating culinary venues, artful event spaces, wellness and leisure offerings."

"Set along a flourishing tropical hillside, Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui welcomes international travellers with renewed energy. The resort is renowned for family vacations, where adults enjoy a well-deserved break and children frolic with fun learning experiences. The resort is the perfect sanctuary for an extended get-away, with beautiful private retreats ranging from two to four bedrooms. Guests seeking a home-away-from-home now have a new address Koh Samui."



Sean Mosher
General Manager
Four Seasons Resort Koh Samui



Michel Scheffers
General Manager Amari Phuket
ONYX Hospitality Group

"We are delighted to welcome the Indian market back, the rollout has begun today. The pandemic has been a challenging period, hence there is a feeling of satisfaction at bringing back Indians to the market. We're looking forward to brightening the Indian market to stay with us, with many destinations in Thailand, Bangkok, Pattaya, Hua Hin, Samui, Krabi Phuket and Buriram. We can't wait to welcome them back to our hotels under the Amari brand and brighten their world through our services & experiences."

Thai suppliers ready for Indians

“Dear Indian tourists, Koh Samui and our resorts are ready and excited to welcome you soon. You will find nature, relaxation and better service for sure. With a perfect location in central of Chaweng, Koh Samui’s best beach, Chaba Samui Resort is the ideal location that can’t be beaten. With a perfect location in central of Chaweng, Koh Samui’s best beach, Chaba Samui Resort is the ideal location for offering a location that can’t be beaten for the centre of the action, Chaba Samui Resort has it all.”



Adisorn Suanarunsawat
Sales & Business Development
Director, Chaba Samui Resort &
Chaba Chabana Beach Resort



Somchai Ratanaopah
A-One The Royal Cruise Hotel

“Namaste and welcome back to Pattaya, Thailand at A-One The Royal Cruise Hotel. A step away from the beach, located in the heart of Pattaya city and surrounded with eateries, entertainments and shopping malls. A-One The Royal Cruise Hotel and its unmistakable iconic twin cruise ship building, is renowned for its exceptional service, novelty restaurants with fine tastes of Indian cuisine, cosmopolitan bars, convention halls and large tropical pool. It is worth considering for lively and intimate getaways in Pattaya. The Hotel is the only address worth considering for lively and intimate getaways.”



“Thailand has been one of the best-chosen spots among Indian tourists. The year 2019 alone catered to 40 million tourists in which India has been one of the highest growing market and the ties between both the countries have grown stronger in all segments of business year by year. Once Thailand opens, we will have new destination, dimensions and experiences in tourism ready to be explored by Indian tourists. Thailand is eagerly waiting to welcome Indian tourists,”



Nuntinee Chuachongse
Assistant Managing Director
Rama Gardens Hotel Bangkok

“We have always been open for unceasing service and never culminate to be above standards for our customers. In hospitality, we have been awarded for the standard of SHA from TAT, Green Hotel from Dept. of Environment and Save Travels from TICA. We are always ready to serve. Step into another world of tranquillity in Bangkok’s most popular city resort, amid 26 acres of manicured lawns and tropical plants, we offer combination of elegant accommodation, fine dining, meeting facilities, and sporting activities.”



Preecha Champi
Director, Board Committee Association
of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) & Director,
Destination Siam Group

“Raya Heritage concept stems from northern Thai culture’s simple, elegant approach to life and art, and the social value placed on living in balance with nature and the surrounding community. Immersed in tranquil natural surroundings on the banks of the Ping river, Raya Heritage’s serene atmosphere makes it the perfect base for discovering the unique charms of the region at an unhurried pace. I am sure Indian travellers would like to experience Raya Heritage Chiang Mai.”



Siwat Phumma
Assistant Director of Sales
Raya Heritage Chiang Mai



Garth Simmons
Chief Executive Officer, Accor
Southeast Asia, Japan & South
Korea, Accor

“Accor Live Limitless is delighted to welcome back our valued guests from India to the tropical oasis of Phuket. Those longing for an island getaway, Accor offers 11 SHA+ accredited resorts, for travellers taking advantage of the ‘Phuket Sandbox’, with some of the most stringent cleaning standards & operational procedures in the industry. We look forward to hosting you with warmest Thai hospitality. Accor is a leading hospitality group with over 5,100 properties.”

“Conveniently located on the seafront of Hua Hin and Cha-am just 2.5 hours from Bangkok, Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa offers 240 rooms and suites surrounded by tropical landscaped gardens, the 560-metres lagoon shaped swimming pool, 5 restaurants & bar, Shine spa, Fitness and Kids Club. The resort is ideal for hosting events, meetings and weddings. Sheraton Hua Hin Resort and Spa is a family-friendly resort with 240 rooms, 5 restaurants and spa.”



David Ippesiel
General Manager
Sheraton Hua Hin Resort & Spa



Tabatha Ramsay
Executive Vice President Commercial,
Centara Hotels & Resorts

“Travel to Thailand with confidence and peace of mind. Re-discover the Land of Smiles and immerse in its cultural heritage, beautiful beaches and nature, plus enjoy shopping and countless unforgettable activities. Centara Hotels & Resorts, Thailand’s leading hotel operator – ranging from luxury island retreats and upscale family resorts to affordable lifestyle concepts, is ready to welcome you back. Our hotels are keen to play host to Indian travellers very soon,”

“Ratilanna Riverside Spa Resort, the resort has been awarded Hall of Fame, Thailand Tourism Award and SHA + certificate. We look forward to welcome you all back to Rose of The North of Thailand soon. Sitting on the bank of the Ping River, in the heart of Chiang Mai, Ratilanna Resort is surrounded by the city’s top attractions. Across the river from our resort is the ancient city of Wiang Kim Kam, an archaeological site that was once the capital of Lanna Kingdom.”



Ka-iaad Bungsritthong
General Manager, Ratilanna
Riverside Spa Resort Chiang Mai



Vorapong Muchaotai
DMC Event Thailand

“Chiang Mai, the most splendid city of culture and UNESCO awarded, is reopening and will welcome all Indian travellers from October 1, 2021. Chiang Mai is most delighted to offer luxury service, world class golf, MICE and numerous champions products under the campaign of Charming Chiang Mai. We are a professional DMC based in Chiang Mai with proven services for MICE & Leisure as well as many years of experience in handling Indian customers in all areas of Thailand.”



travelbullz
destination management company

engages with Delhi trade

TravelBullz recently hosted, Let's Talk, a networking event, in partnership with Centara Hotels & Resorts at the Le Meridien, New Delhi on September 3, 2021. At the event, TravelBullz showcased its latest technology and product development to the agents in the capital as they interacted over sumptuous food and cocktails.



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EVENT TALK

Media Partners:



SEPTEMBER 2021

Date	Event	Time
15	ATOAI Webinar	11:00 am
16-18	World Tourism Expo	9:00 am
20-22	ILTM- North America	Mexico
23-24	MICE Conclave	2:44pm
24	Switzerland tourism Webinar - Jungfrau Railways	3:00 pm
27	World Tourism Day Celebrations	Worldwide
30	Switzerland Tourism Webinar - Interlaken Tourism	3:00pm
30	International M.I.C.E. Showcase 2.0	10:00am

OCTOBER 2021

1	Dubai World Expo 2020	Dubai
5-8	IFTM Top Resa	Paris
6	Switzerland tourism Webinar - Zurich Tourism	3:00 pm
10	World Routes 2021	Milan
12-14	Gulf Travel Show 3.0	12:00pm
13	TTG Incontri	Rimini
20 - 22	Your South Africa	11:00am

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

Glimpse of events at WTM

WTM London has released a sneak preview of the main live events that will take place on the WTM Global Stage at ExCeL London, 1 – 3 November 2021. An afternoon dedicated to winning customers and making money in travel in 2022, is on the schedule.



Rindings from the official WTM London Industry Report will be revealed and as delegates have come to expect from previous years, it is THE must-read report for anyone who wants the inside information on what the industry and UK holidaymakers are thinking about, what's important to them and where they want to travel next year and beyond.

Market Research Company Euro-monitor International is also set to reveal their new Innovation report, an annual highlight for all visitor types to learn from and enjoy.

Aviation sessions, organised by WTM's aviation expert, John Strickland will take-off on the Global Stage. "WTM's BIG Airline Session" focuses on the state of play, the challenges and the outlook for the sector, which is still in deep crisis due to the COVID pan-



dem. The airline CEO interview takes place straight after, with leading industry executives discussing how they are managing the crisis; how they are helping customer confidence return and their vision for the future.

Two key destinations will take centre stage at WTM with the WTM China Forum organised by China Travel Online, looking at China's recovery and reopening, market trends and key factors to attract Chinese visitors. Followed by two exciting sessions on up and coming destination Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia's Tourism Vision and Saudi Giga Projects Put Sustainability First.

A fundamental part of WTM London will be the well respected and highly anticipated Responsi-

ble Tourism session and Awards. The travel industry has never had a better opportunity to embrace a sustainable future, so these sessions could not come at a better time and are certainly ones not to be missed.

The UNWTO, WTTC & WTM Ministers' Summit will return for 2021, entitled - Investing in Tourism's Sustainable Future. The Summit will unite tourism ministers, sector leaders and top thinkers and examine tourism's sustainable future and the essential role targeted 'green investments' will play in achieving this.

An afternoon dedicated to winning customers and making money in travel in 2022, is on the schedule and will consist of separate sessions organised by Travel Perspective, looking at how broken business models can be fixed and the future of advertising. Other key topics and unmissable sessions

around travel agents, Brexit and the future of the travel industry workforce will also take place to round-off the three days of top quality content.

Charlotte Alderslade, Conference and Seminar Manager, WTM Portfolio said, "With pent-up demand for 2022, it's crucial to ensure travel providers and destinations are one step ahead when it comes to planning for the future. So this year, we have a real emphasis on research, trends and the future of travel. We're extremely excited to reunite with the industry as well as welcoming some top CEOs and C-level speakers to our sessions, with the likes of ABTA, Expedia, TUI and BBC already on-board for 2021. WTM London is the ideal platform to present this thought-provoking and top quality educational content to help get destinations and companies back on track." 📌

Is India heading towards slow travel?

Slow travel is not just a way to travel, it's a mindset. It's the belief that the quality of your experience is more important than the quantity of your experiences when you travel and it may have caught on in India, says **Virender Razdan**, Co-founder & Chief Business Development Officer, My Villa Stays.

On 24th March 2020, the PM ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days that extended to over 90 days and this changed the vacation pattern of our fellow citizens. They just wanted to move out even if it was just few hours' drive from home. So we can say that in 2021, the Indian vacationer adapted to how Europeans have been travelling – slowly!

Slow travel is bringing us back to the roots of why we travel. People are embracing this mindset to offset travel fatigue and fully immerse themselves in experiences. Travel has become a ubiquitous part of life for so many people, particularly now that technology has made it seem much more accessible.

If you find yourself making an extensive list of the places around the country that you want to tick off your bucket list, it may be time to take a step back and think

about the reason behind your desire to travel. What do you want out of your travels? A fast and furious tour seeing 'everything there is to see', changing locations every two to three days?

Slow travel is an approach to travel that emphasises connection: to local people, cultures, food and music

Or do you want to feel like a local, spending leisurely days strolling off the beaten path? If you're craving a more authentic experience, one that leaves you with a



feeling that you truly got to know the places, people and cultures on your travels, it could be time to slow down.

What is slow travel?

Slow travel is an approach to travel that emphasises connection: to local people, cultures, food and music. It relies on the idea that a trip is meant to educate and have an emotional impact, in the present moment and for the future, while remaining sustainable not just for the local communities but also for the environment.

Heard of the slow food movement? It originated in Italy in 1986 and aimed to preserve regional cuisine, local farming and traditional cooking methods through education of tourists and local residents. People were realizing that increased tourism was changing the way people were eating, bringing larger, chain-based restaurants to major cities and taking away profits from family-owned establishments. The slow food movement worked to draw business back to traditional restaurants by touting the ben-

efits of using regionally-sourced ingredients and stimulating local economies. Different industry, same concept. When it comes to travel, a "slow" mindset urges tourists to take a step back from their to-do lists and Instagram-worthy photo ops and simply embrace what the local community has to offer. Instead of making sure you hit the "hot spots" outlined in a travel guide, focus on things that locals do every day, things that excite them and give them joy. The impact that these connections have on you will last a lot longer than the memories that you have of racing from one tourist attraction to another.

Slow travel is not just a way to travel, it's a mindset. It's the outlook that the quality of your experience is more important than the quantity of your experiences when you travel. You can wake up without plans for the day, unsure of the adventures that await you, but with the knowledge what

you will experience, will mean so much more than a post on social media could convey. Many travellers like to use the phrase 'there's always another trip' to convey that it's impossible to see or do everything within a city in a short span of time. It's okay to save some of the sights for another visit. Instead of racing to do it all, indulge in experience-based activities. What other impactful local activities could you only experience if you were traveling slowly?



Virender Razdan
Co-founder & Chief Business Development Officer, My Villa Stays

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

Switzerland Webinar Series.



Switzerland Tourism invites you to participate for our exclusive webinar series. With travel restrictions easing, Indians are once again getting ready to travel to their favourite destination – Switzerland!

Get the latest information about Switzerland and its various touristic offerings.

Date	Day	Webinar	Time
27th Aug 2021	Fri	Visa Section, Embassy of Switzerland	3.00 PM IST
3rd Sept 2021	Fri	Self-drive - The Grand Tour of Switzerland	3.00 PM IST
9th Sept 2021	Thur	Swiss Travel System	3.00 PM IST
24th Sept 2021	Fri	Jungfrau Railways	3.00 PM IST
30th Sept 2021	Thur	Interlaken Tourism	3.00 PM IST
6th Oct 2021	Wed	Zurich Tourism	3.00 PM IST

To register for and view our webinars:



View our previous webinar recordings: www.MySwitzerland.com/STIndiaWebinars

Register and complete our e-learning program to become a Switzerland Travel Expert:
www.MySwitzerland.com/SwissTravelAcademy

Follow us on LinkedIn for the latest news and updates: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/st-in>

*T&C: Attend all webinars to be eligible.

IATA

Singapore

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced the appointment of **PHILIP GOH** as its Regional Vice President for Asia-Pacific. Goh succeeds Conrad Clifford, who has been IATA's Deputy Director General since 1 July 2021. Goh is a 34-year veteran of the airline industry. He has held various senior management roles at Singapore Airlines in Singapore and overseas, at Virgin Atlantic Airways in London, and has extensive experience working throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Most recently, he was Regional Vice President for the South West Pacific for Singapore Airlines based in Sydney.



AMBASSADOR – IHCL SELECTIONS

New Delhi

Ambassador, New Delhi appoints **SHEETAL SINGH** as the General Manager. She joins the Hotel, after her role as Director Rooms at Taj Bangalore. As a leader in championing gender diversity and inclusion, IHCL's appointment is in line with the Company's ongoing efforts in creating an equitable workplace and ecosystem, while empowering women in the hospitality industry. Sheetal brings with her years of valued knowledge and experience gained from her association with leading international and domestic hospitality groups. She has essayed various roles since joining IHCL in 2008.



THE LEELA PALACES, HOTELS & RESORTS

Gandhinagar

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts has appointed **JAIDEEP ANAND** as Vice President and General Manager at The Leela Gandhinagar and Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre Complex. With three and a half decades of experience in luxury hospitality, He has worked with brands like The Oberoi Hotels and Ananda in The Himalayas. He spearheaded the pre-opening tasks for The Leela Hyderabad, The Leela Bhartiya City, Bengaluru, The Leela Gandhinagar & The Leela Palace Jaipur..



PULLMAN & NOVOTEL

New Delhi

Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity announced the appointment of **PARINITA SAMANTA** as the Director of Marketing & Communications. A seasoned marketer and a veteran of the industry, Samanta will bring more than a decade of expertise and marketing insight to the role. She will be the custodian of the hotel's brand standards and marketing and also responsible to create strategic communications plan. Prior to this, she was Director of Marketing & communications at Hyatt Regency Delhi. Her previous assignments were at Taj Hotels and Kempinski Ambience Hotel.



RADISSON BLU HOTEL & SPA

Nashik

Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik has announced the appointment of **GOPINATH GOPALAN** as its General Manager. In his career of over two decades, he has been overseeing multiple pre-opening hotels, repositioning of luxury brands, and played pivotal leadership roles in iconic luxury hotels such as Park Hyatt Goa, Grand Hyatt Mumbai, The Leela Palace Bangalore, and Oberoi Hotels & Resorts in Mumbai, Udaipur, and New Delhi. Being a veteran in pre-openings and luxury hospitality, his operational techniques will play a role in establishing the hotel. He will oversee the strategic and financial performance of the property.



Goa

The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts has appointed **SATISH KUMAR P.** as the General Manager for the luxury beach resort, The Leela Goa. He will be responsible for developing and implementing strategic sales and marketing plans and initiatives in the hotel's effort to deliver outstanding guest service with luxury. Prior to this, Satish was the General Manager at Conrad Pune. A pre-opening specialist, he has over two decades of industry exposure with brands like Oberoi Hotels, Taj Group of Hotels, Marriott Marquis Doha-Qatar, and The Ritz-Carlton-Bangalore.



GRAND HYATT

Mumbai

Hyatt India and Grand Hyatt Mumbai, Hotel and Residences have appointed **DIETMAR KIELNHOFER** as Area Vice President of Hyatt India and General Manager of Grand Hyatt Mumbai Hotel and Residences. With over four decades of experience, Kielnhofers is truly a veteran in the hospitality industry. A career that has seen Kielnhofers circle three continents and work in major cities such as Tokyo, London, Sun City – South Africa, Istanbul, Bangkok, Vienna, Mallorca, Zermatt, Lugano and more. His last assignment was in Mumbai where he was the General Manager at the iconic JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar.



With over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry, **JULIEN LLOYD** joins Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa, Nashik as Hotel Manager. Julien has engaged senior roles in award-winning hotels such as JW Marriott and Grand Hyatt Mumbai where he played a vital role in launching two of its exceptionally popular and iconic restaurants - Celini and the China House, both being game changers in India's ever flourishing food and beverage scene. He has also been part of the pre-opening team at Hyatt Regency Ahmedabad, and at Park Hyatt Chennai – a luxury brand of the Hyatt Hotels & Resorts.



Bengaluru

The Leela Palaces, Hotels & Resorts has announced the appointment of **MADHAV SEHGAL** as General Manager of The Leela Palace Bengaluru. Madhav is an accomplished hotelier with over two decades of diverse hospitality experience, having worked across markets like India, UAE, and Canada. Prior to joining The Leela, Madhav was the General Manager at Andaz Delhi and Hyatt Delhi Residences. His previous assignments include The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi, The Imperial Hotel New Delhi, Renaissance and Marriott Hotels in Canada, Fairmont Abu Dhabi and Hyatt Hotels in Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai amongst others.



TALKing People

Since **DEBADITYA CHAUDHURY**, Managing Director, Chowman Hospitality, is a musician himself, his favourite de-stressing strategy is to play the piano and listen to music. "I have my lists which include songs from my own band 'Lakkhichhara'. I also found solace in cycling especially during the lockdown. I have covered over 20-25 km every day cycling all over Kolkata," he says. Speaking about his favourite holiday destinations, Chaudhury adds, "In India, it would be Goa. I love how Goa lifts the spirit with its beaches, the young crowds, the tranquil scenic greeneries."



With a lot of time on hands during the lockdown, **ANANT LEEKHA**, General Manager, Ibis Navi Mumbai and Ibis Mumbai Vikhroli, learnt how to play squash. "It was extremely refreshing and this sport helps you release all of your day's stress. I also enjoy listening to a mash-up of Hindi songs while driving either to work or on weekend getaways. This is my go-to method to de-stress," he says.



MOTI SINGH RATHORE, Founder of Manvar Resort in Rajasthan, enjoys driving a 4x4 vehicle into the 400 acre Manvar Desert Reserve. "I also like to unwind with early morning walks at the farm and listening to classical Rajasthani instrumental music. During the lockdown I picked up a few hobbies like – photography, star gazing and bird-watching." Speaking about his favourite holiday destinations, Rathore says, "It would have to be Kashmir in India and Spain and Italy internationally."



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Flying with the times

Tony Douglas, Group CEO, Etihad Airways, shared how not only managing the pandemic times, but also the way forward will be fuelled by sustainable initiatives with collaborations across the industry.



Nisha Verma

Tony Douglas claimed that at Etihad, they tried to capitalise on the old cliché of never waste a good crisis. He said, "In 2019, Etihad handled over 70-million passengers. In 2020, despite having our best first quarter ever, after the pandemic there has been a complete collapse internationally. In the first half of 2021, we had a million passengers, hence, given the fleet that we deployed, that was on average, about 25% load factor. Etihad's a very agile business. We focused on cargo and looked at fundamentally redesigning our in-cabin experience around Etihad Wellness as a product. We were also expecting that over time, as vaccines curves get more mature and travel restrictions begin to ease, we could capitalise upon it. Faster the vaccines are rolled out globally; faster will we return to normalcy."

Green shoots

Claiming that July was their best month in about the last year and half. Douglas said, "The average load factor (25%) was up to just over 40% in July. This was firstly because vaccination curves were increasing in many countries, followed by a slight ease in travel restrictions."

Corporate Demand

Douglas agreed that the demand for leisure and VFR has seen a surge after ease in restrictions. However, in terms of corporate travel, "I think everybody's aware that it is heavily suppressed and is likely to be, for some more time. Despite that there has been a shift in terms of increasing percentage of tickets sold into business class." That's a function of lots of people being prepared to take the benefit of extra space in

As vaccines curves get more mature and travel restrictions begin to ease, we could capitalise upon it

order to give them the sense of wellness and perhaps don't feel as comfortable in some of the low cost operating environments in the past."

Network planning

Douglas said that, network planning has changed drastically after COVID. "At Etihad we used to



do deep dive planning of our network once in three or four weeks, before the pandemic. However, it's become a daily dynamic activity now, and the reason being frequent changes in travel restrictions around the world."

Revenue management

Douglas believes that revenue management is going to be more dynamic. "At present, yield management considerations are more important in pricing and position than they've ever been before. There will be many incredible deals for travellers which will force many operators to rethink their business model," he predicted. In fact, they established Air Arabia Abu Dhabi as their low-cost carrier. "It was a plan that we concluded just over two years ago and today we're operational with Air Arabia Abu Dhabi, which is a critical component operating here on narrow body, within the GCC and into Eastern Europe and the Indian subcontinent," he asserted.

In terms of SAF, Douglas revealed, "We hold the record currently for the longest duration, with the heaviest SAF mix. However, sustainable aviation fuels are over two and a half times more expensive than conventional aviation fuels. Unless

the economics of this can be resolved, it clearly isn't going to be a commercially sustainable part of the solution."

He stressed, "It's not all about big initiatives, but some of that's around the use of smarter technology, like machine learning, artificial intelligence, etc."

Government support

Calling out for regulators and governments, he said that a lot of dialogue around using more punitive measures regarding taxation and penalties is needed. "I think the need for a coordinated solution to aviation sustainability is going to require a collaboration across governments, regulators, commercial airlines, manufacturers and the industry at large," he concluded.



Tony Douglas
Group CEO, Etihad Airways

The hub: Abu Dhabi

"Abu Dhabi has been one of the best led places in the world in dealing with this pandemic. It's been holistic and all-encompassing and public health, wellbeing has been first priority. Everything is coordinated in a very easy to operate fashion, using smart apps on people's phones, which corresponds to their vaccination and or PCR status. I think we're still number one in the world in terms of vaccination per capita and it reveals itself in the way in which we're pretty much back to absolutely a normal. I think this plays well to the way in which international tourism will be able to come back with confidence."

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