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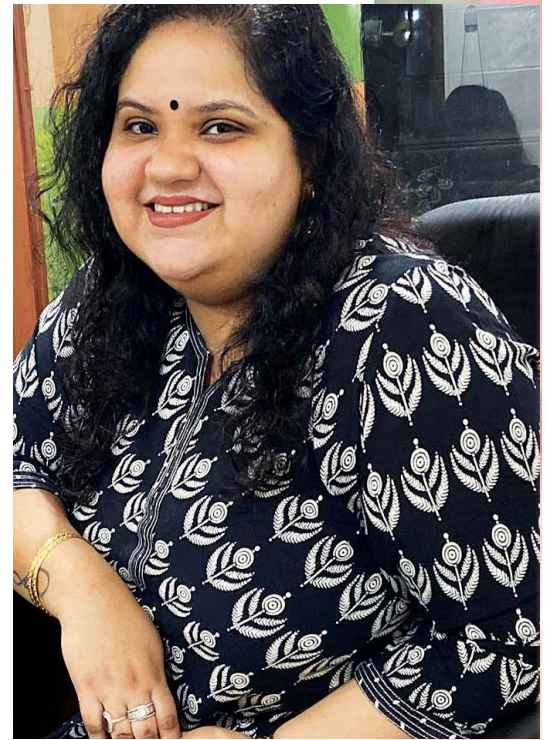
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From The Editor's *Desk*



Dear Friends,

Covid completes two years this month and the World around us has changed forever. What the human race endured in the last 24 months is nothing short of heroic and will be remembered many many years from now. Lives were lost, loved ones gone too soon, businesses closed shop, professions got changed, education took a new turn – what gave us solace during these harsh times were our homes – Work from home, study from home, business from home, exercise from home, cook from home, design from home... Our home became our World. Did we say a special thank you to the Woman / Women who held our homes together during this challenging time?

Women are superheroes. The glue that holds not just a family but also a workplace together. The multi-taskers who silently took on the additional tasks of handling work of home and work from home. The world is nothing without a Woman. They are the ones who keep the cycle of life going. She is a mother, a sister, a daughter, a wife... She is a mentor, a working professional, a philosopher, a guide, an entrepreneur, a marketing leader, pilot or simply anything she chooses to be...

This Women's Day, BOTT India (Business of Travel Trade India) wants to Salute the Journey of Women in Travel Tourism Industry. We at BOTT strongly believe that every woman is an inspiration and given the challenging times we are in currently, we want to motivate every professional by telling her, she is not alone in her struggle and that the world salutes her courage.

From heading an Association to sitting atop of a big conglomerate, running a hotel or a multi-national firm, being an entrepreneur to running a team – the arduous and challenging journey got more difficult in the Covid times as Women across the travel tourism sector struggled to maintain the work-life balance. So this Women's Day, BOTT Magazine aims to highlight their Journey. BOTT Women Special Issue, covering more than 30 Women Tourism Professionals, has highlighted their struggle during the recent challenging times and how Women from all walks of Travel and Tourism Industry worked hard to stay afloat and perhaps even make the most of this time.

Read on to know all about their struggle and success along with a details of an 'Action Plan' shared by 10 trade associations on what they plan to do to revive tourism. Please do share your feedback / praise and criticism with us

Happy Reading!

Priyanka Saxena Ray
priyanka@bottindia.com

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BOTT Women Special Issue

BOTT reached out to over 30 women professionals from Travel, Tourism and Hospitality sectors to share their journey this International Women's Day

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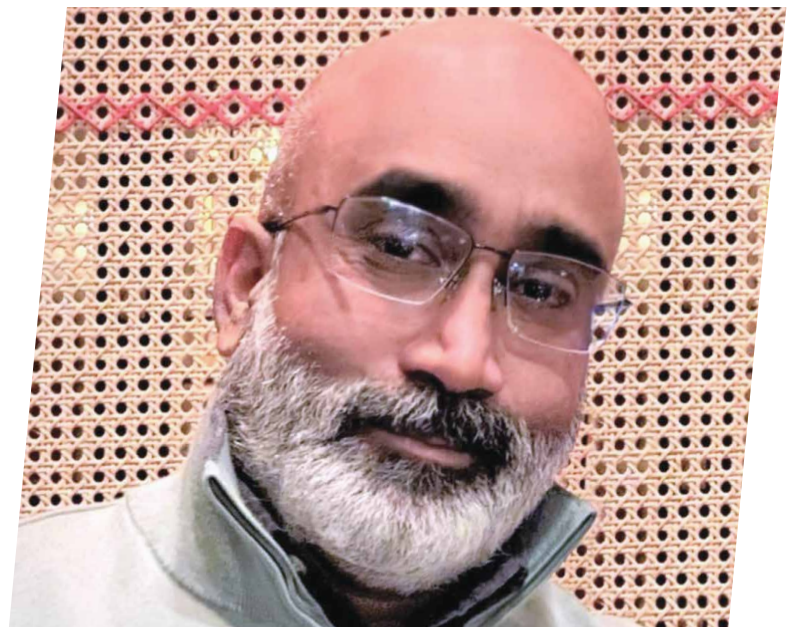
IndiGo brings back over 7180 Indian citizens in a week



In its mission to support the repatriation efforts from Ukraine, IndiGo brought back over 7180 Indian citizens across 33 flights till Sunday. An additional 215 citizens will land back in the country on March 07 on another flight from Suceava to Delhi. The airline operated 34 flights, around 52% out of a total 64 flights commissioned by the Government of India under Operation Ganga from February 28 to March 07. The airline is operating these missions on A321 aircraft with all safety precautions. Most of these flights carried relief material during their onward journey, while bringing back evacuees in the return leg via Istanbul. The citizens were comforted during their return travel with hot meals like dal chawal, rajma chawal, Maggi; fresh subs and sandwiches from Istanbul and a wide variety of snacks including nuts, cookies, chips, complemented by hot and cold beverages.

Signature Tours gets rebranded to its new avatar, Away&Co

Since 1977, the Creative Travel family of brands has been at the forefront of service led experiential travel. Within that philosophy, Creative Travel is delighted to announce an exciting transformation of its luxury outbound brand, Signature Tours to its new avatar, Away&Co. Away&Co is for a highly cultivated traveller with an appetite for the unusual, who are looking for something enriching and authentic, who like to wander, discover new secrets, and find new stories across the world. Rohit Kohli, Jt. Managing Director, says "The Indian outbound market has matured exponentially over the years. Indians are more aware than ever before, and want to explore the world, but not as tourists. Its legacy of 45 years is built on creating amazing experiences, and that's what we're doing at Away&Co as well. The world is ready to welcome a new kind of Indian traveller, one who is immersed in the culture and the people, not just the monuments and sights"



Thomas Cook India & SOTC launch 'Risk-free Holidays' Campaign



To build customer confidence while travelling in the Covid-era, Thomas Cook (India) Limited - India's leading omnichannel travel services company and its Group Company, SOTC Travel, have launched an innovative 'Risk-free Holidays' campaign. The brand campaign addresses the concerns of travellers and clarifies their doubts/ uncertainties associated with travelling again. Travelling in the Covid-era can be challenging, more so keeping in mind the flux in travel and health guidelines. With vaccine acceptance and easing of restrictions, there is a strong pent-up desire, with travellers longing to re-start their international holidays. To make it simple and worry-free for customers, the Companies have launched a brand campaign that addresses all apprehensions, thereby streamlining their travel decision-making process.

Cleartrip partners with Yatra.com to offer a wider hotel inventory to its customers

Yatra Online recently announced its partnership with Cleartrip. Under this agreement, Cleartrip customers will now have access to Yatra.com's inventory of 94,000 hotels and homestays of various kinds ranging from 5-star luxury properties to alternate accommodations such as villas, guesthouses, and service apartments amongst others in over 1,400+ cities and towns. The addition of Yatra's inventory with real-time pricing on Cleartrip, will enable both domestic and international travelers to have access to a wider selection of relevant and ideal accommodations to meet their travel needs. Additionally, it will expand and increase opportunities and business avenues for the hotel partners. Yatra.com will also benefit from this association through the large customer base of Flipkart and Cleartrip. This strategic association between Yatra and Cleartrip, both leading brands in the online travel space in India aims to provide a boost to the entire hospitality and travel ecosystem and uplift the sentiments of both customers as well as suppliers for hospitality as we emerge out of the pandemic.



MoT signs MoU with Alliance Air Aviation Limited on promotion of Domestic Tourism



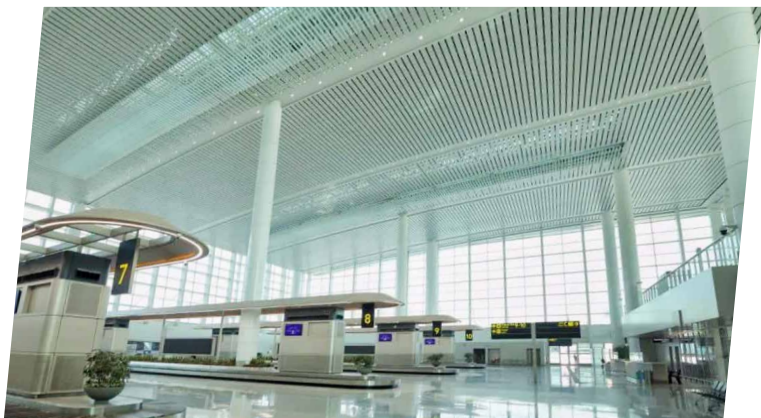
The Ministry of Tourism in order to boost tourism throughout the country signed an Memorandum of Understanding with M/s Alliance Air Aviation Limited (AAAL) on 17th February 2022 at New Delhi. The Ministry of Tourism endeavours to position India as a preferred tourism destination in the tourism generating markets whereas M/s Alliance Air Aviation Limited with its vast domestic network, plays a vital role in the promotion of tourism in India. The MoU was signed with a view to achieve the common purpose of joint domestic promotion and considering the need to synergise the activities of MoT and AAAL in the tourism markets. Ms. Rupinder Brar, Additional Director General on behalf of Ministry of Tourism and Mr. Vineet Sood, Chief Executive Office on behalf of M/s Alliance Air Aviation Limited jointly signed the MoU

PM of Jamaica challenges travel fraternity to grasp opportunities born out of Covid

The Global Tourism Resilience Forum held today in Dubai at Expo 2020 in the DP Pavilion was an outstanding example of 'taking the bull by its horns'. Minister of Tourism for Jamaica and the Co-Chair of the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC), Honourable Edmund Bartlett spear-headed the event with a powerful opening purpose-made video setting the scene for the dramatic day to unfold. The Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica delivered remotely, a powerful and thoughtful opening speech explaining the importance of preparedness and resilience. "The recovery of the global tourism industry is a critical determinant of the overall pace of economic recovery but particularly for the most tourism dependent regions of the world."



IndiGo strengthens domestic network with Pantnagar, Dehradun



The airline will operate ATR aircraft for 6E exclusive direct flights from Pantnagar to Dehradun, and new flights to Delhi as part of its summer 2022 schedule, w.e.f March 27, 2022. These new flights will strengthen connectivity between Pantnagar and the national and the state capital cities. Pantnagar will be the airline's second destination in the state of Uttarakhand. These flights are designed to cater to business and leisure travellers who are constantly on the lookout for new and affordable flying options. Connectivity to Pantnagar also helps in enhancing tourist footprint in destinations like Ranikhet, Mukteshwar, Mussoorie, Almora, Kausani, Binsar, Ramgarh, Munsiyari, Abbott Mount, Chaukari, Lohaghat, Berinag, and Jeolikot.

BRANDit to represent The Residence by Cenizaro portfolio in India

Cenizaro Hotels & Resorts, has commissioned BRANDit as its integrated marketing agency in India following a competitive review process. The partnership will support stakeholders and further enhance the brand's presence in the India market through The Residence by Cenizaro resort collection, with Maldives and Mauritius at the fore. BRANDit will fortify Cenizaro's sales, marketing and PR strategies with a brand-new outlook as part of its mandate. The Residence by Cenizaro collection of resorts is part of Cenizaro Hotels & Resorts, an international, bespoke hospitality group.



With OTM Mumbai, physical international travel tradeshow returns in India



OTM Mumbai is being held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre from March 14th to 16th, 2022. Organised after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the show will witness 600+ exhibitors from over 20 countries, 29 Indian States, and 7 Union Territories. It will be the first international travel trade show since the pandemic. The 3-day event will bring together all destinations that are open including International Tourism Boards, National, and State Tourism Boards, Hotels & Resorts, Airlines, Destination Management Companies, MICE, Wedding Planners and Film Producers under one roof. The dignitaries at the inaugural session will include Tourism Ministers, High Commissioners, Consul Generals, Secretaries, and Heads of various Tourism Boards.

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"Nothing concrete was announced in the Union Budget this year for an industry that has been bleeding for the last 3 years. The tourism industry was expecting some relief to be announced in this budget but we are really disappointed. The Government should understand that Tourism is the largest employment generator and has been contributing 9-10% of GDP and about 30 billion dollars in foreign exchange earnings. The greatest need of our country is to tackle the problem of unemployment which can only be done by supporting an industry like Tourism. About 35-40 million people have either lost their jobs or are in the process of losing them."

-Subhash Goyal, Chairman, Stic Group



To say one is disappointed at the Union budget is a gross understatement. The extension of the EGCL is a paper whitewash. Only those with existing debt could use the scheme to begin with. And to make the industry take debt on debt is cruel. It does not reduce the cost as the interest clock is still clicking. The Modi government has yet again kicked an industry that is already on its knees. I am saddened for all of us in the larger tourism and hospitality space. So many people tried their best to get something for us. So many representations were made. But the truth is we simply don't matter.

-Rajeev Kohli, Jt. MD, Creative Travel



"In her budget speech the Hon'able Finance Minister set out "Amritkal" being positive for the growth of the country, we feel that this is not Amritmanthan but "Mahapralaya" – dissolution of the travel and tourism trade in India. Our appeals to the government to liberalise taxes and grant tax holidays on GST for boosting travel and tourism has being ignored. Further, he stated that, it was also expected that earnings from inbound travel would have been supported by Export Status, which would have enabled trade growth enhancing the economy."

-Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI



"We expected the government to support us with some concrete measures but the budget announced earlier this year was a huge disappointment for inbound as well as outbound tour operators. Despite multiple requests from various associations no relief was announced for TCS and GST. The launch of e-passport and extension of the ECLGS are welcome moves by the government. The 400 new Vande Bharat trains and ropeway projects are surely going to help long-term for the infrastructure but the budget clearly fails to address the immediate concerns for the industry's survival."

-Dr Naveen Manchanda, President IATTE



"The extension of ECLGS moratorium extension by one year for the hospitality sector will come as a breather for the hotel players grappling with burden of loan repayment and uncertainties in revenue generation. The move will bolster the much-needed liquidity to the sector which employs a large number of people. It is appreciated that inspite the revenue constraints faced by the government and its impact on the widening fiscal deficit, the government has taken cognisance of the strain the hospitality sector is going through. This will help the sector tide over the cash crunch and working capital issue."

-Kush Kapoor, CEO, Roseate Hotels and Resorts





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The She Age

A Sustainable Future For Women in Tourism

Women in Travel and Tourism stood tall in the pandemic and are now ready for a brighter future

COMPILED BY
PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY

The last two years have not been easy on anyone. While the travel trade was one of the first sectors to severely feel the impact of Covid, it is also one of the last few that is picking pace. However, Women in Travel and Tourism showed immense resilience in these challenging times as they heroically maintained the work-home balance – not letting either of it suffer.

They say – Great Things Happen When Women Support Women – and we firmly believe this.

This International Women's Day, BOTT wants to Salute the Journey of Women in the Travel Tourism Industry. We at BOTT strongly believe that every woman is an inspiration and given the challenging times we are in currently, we want to motivate every professional by telling her, she is not alone in her struggle and that the world salutes her courage.

From heading an Association to sitting atop of a big business conglomerate, running a hotel or a multinational firm, from being an entrepreneur to managing a working team – the arduous and challenging journey of Women got more difficult in the Covid times. These women are not just Presidents, Vice Presidents, Directors, Representatives, Marketing Professionals, Entrepreneurs and Employees but also Daughters, Mothers, Wives, Sisters, who kept their families as well as their workplace together....

In our endeavour to bring the story of the Women in Travel and Tourism to light, BOTT reached out to over 30 Women across the industry – from all walks of the sector. We asked their views on 2 critical points – First, how did they maintain the work life balance in Covid and secondly, going forward, will the travel fraternity see a paradigm shift in how Women in Travel and Tourism function, operate and grow?

Read on to know the opinion and journey of these dynamic Women in the Travel and Tourism Sector during the pandemic...

‘Women need to recognise their own strength and believe in themselves’: **Rupinder Brar**

In the last two years, her name has almost become synonymous with that of the travel trade in India. Always a patient listener, her knowledge of the sector is simply par excellence and her passion for tourism is well-reflected in the web series – **Dekho Apna Desh**, which she loves to say is her baby and has grown leaps and bounds to cross over 100 episodes in less than 2 years. **Ms. Rupinder Brar**, Additional Director General, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India shares the Ministry's plan for engaging more women in the travel trade and her thoughts on more women coming forward and being a part of the tourism sector. Here are her view, in her words –



Personally, we did not really work from home. So frankly, we were at times envious that everyone around us is working from home while we are working from office. But, on a serious note, I think for women who have been working from home, in a sense, it's added value because you could suddenly multi-task better, especially given that women are mothers, homemakers. However, through my communication with many women I realised that they are also missing the social interactions of a workplace, which are essential for developing an emotional connect and relationships with your colleagues, which are crucial aspects of your personality. So whether the work from home scenario was good or bad is best left on personal judgement as I feel it had its own upside and downside.

MoT is also undertaking few initiatives with regards to involving more women in the travel trade. Currently, we are working on a conclave in April, wherein we would recognise 75 women who have made some remarkable contributions to the sector. When we say remarkable, we mean remarkable vis-à-vis where you are – so it could be someone on absolute margin who started a homestay set-up, which for us, is remarkable. So recognising such women will be one part but that day we will also generate conversations so see that could the ministry look at some schemes / support mechanism, especially for the women in the various segments of the supply chain of the tourism and hospitality sector.

On March 8, we will be launching an e-marketplace for the tourist facilitators and tourist guides. It is kind of like an uber app platform where you can engage the services of a guide suited to your requirement. So for example, if you go to a place and you say while I would love to see the monuments, I would also like to learn about the textiles of that place, or the food of that place, or say golf – so you

will be able to match your requirements as a tourist with the guides available on the app. We will also have a profile selection of a male or a female guide, which can be engaged through various filters. So the soft launch will take place on March 8 and within a month of the beta launch, the app will be completely ready for use. Currently we have 3200 functional guides registered with the Ministry of Tourism and as of now atleast 1500 have already taken the exam and whoever takes the exam is automatically listed on the app.

The other thing that we are going to do on March 8, 2022 is to see that the Nirbhaya fund that comes from the Women and Child Development and comes through us and goes to state governments, what kind of support systems or safety systems or any other thing that makes travel a smoother process for women – what could be done. So we will have a session where we are hoping to have some representation from Police, from an NGO to see how women can actually benefit from some actions – what kind of value chain can be added.

I really hope that all the ideation that went in the last two years in reminding women and encouraging them to come forth and participate will find results in women actually being there. I hope they will find themselves in a more prominent position and find recognition for the work that they doing and not remain in the shadows.

I think what women need to do is to recognise their own strength, especially in travel and hospitality. Being hospitable, organised and multitaskers comes naturally to them so many times they do not realise the importance of the same. I would encourage women to come forth and get recognition, have confidence in their abilities and believe in themselves.

'I became stronger in my outlook, deliverables & thought process'



To retrospect, these two years have been stressful, be it mentally, physically or financially. I personally have experienced anxiety & thus can very well imagine what others may have gone through. Things were a confused mess in the beginning as there were no defined roles or duties assigned to other house members. Slowly better understanding of the situation kicked in & the roles started to define, and everyone began to think about the possible solutions instead of just sitting and waiting for things to get better. After the initial dread, I started thinking out of the box and was able to motivate the TAAI team & our members. Together we faced multi challenges, from refunds of tickets by airlines to protection of finances, sharing innumerable representations to the government, interacting with various stakeholders, trying to save lives on innumerable platforms, getting medical support, free vaccination, keeping members occupied, skilling & upskilling, exploring & bringing new business opportunities & much beyond. Most importantly to be able to motivate them & always being there for them. When I look back, I think God gave me the strength & motivation to deliver the best for the industry.

I think women are great at managing things. I am a woman entrepreneur and a homemaker – a wife & a mother, which is a full-time job by itself. But this whole corona pandemic has given me a new perspective towards life and my work. I have emerged stronger, developed more skills & grown not just as a human but also as a businessperson. I hope to see new women leaders emerge and take charge of the change and capitalise tourism, travel & hospitality to new heights with new vigour & vision. As a woman leader of TAAI, we started 'Woman in TAAI & Tourism' WITT, which will act as a game changer to bring out more woman, empower them more and help them grow.

JYOTI MAYAL,

President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)



'Live in the present and believe that better times will come'

Just prior to the first lockdown we were all set to expand the business at Outbound Marketing and OM Tourism. We had also just opened Parvada Bungalows with a lot of investment. On the personal front, we had again just finalised our son's wedding slated to take place in Feb of 2021. As the lockdown was announced, our clients reduced our fees or stopped it. So we too had to cut all the costs we could, such as reducing the office rental and keeping our team on a small retainer. We moved to Parvada and set up the place, learnt new skills and therefore managed the landscaping with some help from the local villagers, who taught us a lot.

In the last 2 years, all of us have faced independent personal challenges like being demotivated, feeling of worthlessness, great sense of insecurity, overwhelming feeling of sadness at the loss of near and dear ones and so much more. I think the message I always shared with my near and dear ones (my team are part of this term) has been to stay in the present and believe that better times will come.

There is no denying that women have suffered a lot in the last two years. In general the percentage of women workforce has reduced. They have not only lost their jobs outside of their homes but were also forced to attend online classes with their children and attend to the demands from the family who were constantly at home during the pandemic. Whether the pandemic will be a catalyst or not I cannot say for sure, but women in the hospitality and tourism industry are the very key for the industry to thrive and have a balance and going forward, we must see them return back to work in good numbers.



VASUDHA SONDHI,

-MD, Outbound Marketing, OMPL Group and Co-Founder Parvada Rural Stays, Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand

'Each day was a different challenge and new learning for us'



MEENA BHATIA,
Vice President & General Manager, Le Meridien New Delhi

Every sunset is an opportunity to reset. Every sunrise begins with new eyes. The previous year was a phase of unparalleled challenges and the uncertainty still continues. It is said that every adversity opens new doors. With no standard rule book, each day was a different challenge and learning for us. Amidst the pressures of the changed world, maintaining work-life balance became more difficult.

Professionally, we worked together to align our protocols, hotel procedures, processes and operations to instil a heightened sense of safety, security, comfort and consistency for our guests and associates. New programs/initiatives were launched to embrace the new norms, protocols, behaviours and skills to create a clean and comfortable environment for all. It was our constant endeavour to reach out and stay connected with all through social media, various activities and trainings. Our teams worked hard to deliver the best during these unpredictable times.

In the last two years, the industry had literally come to a devastating halt. With global travel advisories, suspension of visas, travel restrictions, lockdown, we experienced a crisis we had never witnessed before. There wasn't any standard playbook to operate. To survive and revive, we had to redefine ourselves steadily. Complex web of issues were faced by women both in their personal and professional lives. Some had to leave their jobs or scale down the hours to handle their home front, care for the elderly and support their children taking online classes & spouses working from home. There was not only the need to work on rectifying the inequality but also help empower women to recover faster. With policies that empower women, training, skill development and support we aim to support our women to recover faster.

At our organization, we are working to empower women through education, training and development. We are also reaching out to NGO's to support women to be a part of Tourism sector.



'I believe that the hybrid model of work is the best of both worlds'

The last two years have been really challenging times – especially for the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industry. Even in normal times work -life balance is hard, but during the pandemic lockdown, when we all had to compulsorily work from home, these challenges multiplied. Working from home sometimes disturbs a person's equilibrium. My formula during the lockdown to maintain this balance was to remain organised, setting up a daily work schedule with timings, and embracing technology to build efficiency. I still follow the old style of to do lists, but I now use technology to help me keep track. Also during this time, I was able to find time for my hobbies, to create uncluttered 'me time' thereby helping me remain creative and efficient.

Remote working has not been the norm in India except for some in the IT sector. Working from home during this period has presented several new opportunities for all, especially qualified and experienced women, who were unable to continue with their careers due to various family reasons. They can now work from home. Also, now talent is not geography specific, acceptance of flexible working hours, part time or project work has opened new avenues for many. Digitisation has also ushered in a hybrid model of work, with many companies downsizing their large offices, thus saving on real estate costs. Many executives have upgraded their home infrastructure to incorporate dedicated work space, high speed internet etc. However, working from office still remains important, as you are able to physically interact with customers and colleagues, exchange ideas for projects etc.

There is also another viewpoint especially for women as they feel their work load goes up whilst working from home. For such people I feel that discipline and setting up a work routine is essential, as I believe that the hybrid model of work is the best of both worlds.



SHEEMA VOHRA,
Managing Director, Sartha Global Marketing

'During the pandemic, women portrayed themselves as real superheroes'



PRIYANKA NIJHAWAN

Director – Representations, Nijhawan Group

The pandemic has redirected the whole world to adapt to a newer and better approach to life. As a woman, juggling between multiple roles, from a mother, wife, daughter-in-law to a successful entrepreneur, the hustle has never been easy. The pandemic was the biggest test to strike the balance between my professional life and personal time as the boundaries were blurred. Initially, it was difficult to cope with the overlapping routine of work and home but gradually it became the new normal as we call it now. The struggle is constant, but what motivates me is my passion for what I do and I feel that is what results in success. With hard work, resilience, and support from my family and team, I have been able to grow to newer strengths to overcome any obstacles on the way.

The Indian travel industry has had a great representation of women across various vertices of the trade. Our meticulousness and attention to detail, make us the perfect fit for roles in this dynamic industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the life that we knew of. While digitization existed; it was the pandemic that ensured we adapted it. There was a huge paradigm shift in the nature of the society where feminism existed, women were able to break those shackles and at the same time made the other gender realise the constant hustle of bringing balance to work and home. During this phase, women portrayed themselves as the real superheroes at work and in the household. Additionally, the hybrid model is here to stay making the juggle easier. Taking risks with responsibility comes naturally to women; it is a rare quality you need in a leader to successfully take charge.



'The work-from-home culture has given birth to many women entrepreneurs'

COVID-19 period has been hard on women as millions of women were already supporting themselves and their families on meagre wages before coronavirus-mitigation lockdowns sent unemployment rates skyrocketing and millions of jobs disappeared.

The pandemic has drastically affected all sectors but most importantly the travel and tourism sectors were severely affected and women working in these fields were no exception. It was a tough period for me professionally and personally seeing your loves ones and friends battling the onslaught of Covid. Work from home concept blurred boundaries, many organisations had to cut-down the salaries of employees as the economy has suffered too. Initially it was tough but we all managed to put a system and process in place so that work was not affected and life after work was also smooth. The key was patience and perseverance with the thinking that this too shall pass soon. But there is no denying the fact that a good number of women especially mothers had to cut down on their working hours or in some cases, eventually, quit jobs. It led to a disrupted lifestyle for many families where the women were working.

Although these challenges have caused a lot of problems in the lives of working women but there are a lot of opportunities that have opened the doors for success and positivity in their lives. Adaption of technology is bringing a paradigm shifting on how businesses are being done. The pandemic has drastically evolved the workplaces globally especially the norms in India. Because of the pandemic-caused lockdown, many women have got the opportunity to work on their dreams without having to leave their household responsibilities. The work-from-home culture has given them a chance to start their own ventures. I see a lot of young women professionals engaging themselves in earning and utilizing their skills into something productive.



PINKI ARORA,

Marketing Representative North & East India, Bangladesh & Nepal, Tourism Authority of Thailand New Delhi

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‘Empowering women to participate fully in economic life is essential’



KOMAL SETH,
Founder and Director, LinkIn

In the last two years between our socialising and working life the pandemic has significantly altered the way we live our lives. Living through a global pandemic has driven dramatic shifts in finding balance within our life. Everything has changed from working in the office and traveling non-stop to working from home, coordinating everything on the call. It was difficult to manage at first, but I gradually became happier with achieving my goals and taking small breaks. I found myself motivated and satisfied with my quality of work. As it says "Multitasking turns into a superwoman." Now I'm calmer and more focused than before and can shift my task like a pro.

Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on the jobs and livelihood of people but I do believe that the balance and the equality is needed. Equality does not mean that women and men became the same but the rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. As for the functioning, operating and growth I would say that something will change due to Covid but our fundamentals will remain the same. And sustainability in tourism cannot be achieved without decent work, gender equality and empowerment of all women. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life is essential to building strong economies; creating more stable and just societies; achieving internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights; and improving the quality of life of women, and consequently, that of communities. For the tourism sector, the impact of greater gender equality and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial, because diverse and gender equitable organizations perform better.



‘Tourism has demonstrated pathways to woman empowerment’

It's tough to put a positive spin on Covid-19, but the pandemic has resulted in shaping me into a complete multitasker with increased demand for my intervention by lending myself to limited staff. For me, the pandemic forced me (like my fellow woman) to work and learn, to take on a greater share of responsibilities, including facilitating online learning for my son, sailing disruptive routines, work and household responsibilities from our home offices did prove very challenging when the most impactful global health crisis of our generation hit & disparities increased. And, at the same time adapting to everything virtual!

Before the pandemic, I just felt I worked two shifts – one at work and one at home. There was still a need to create a work-life balance. It's just more urgent now!

The crisis has brought home the reality that inclusive approaches must be part and parcel of strong and effective pandemic response. As the world looks toward the post-pandemic recovery, we need to build back rapidly, but also in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are integral components of just, equitable societies. In my opinion, tourism has demonstrated pathways to woman empowerment. However, due to Indian women's concentration in lower-paid jobs in tourism, their potential to contribute fully is currently under-tapped.

Thus, empowering Indian women to participate fully in economic life towards their households is essential to building strong economies; creating more stable and just Indian societies; achieving internationally agreed goals for development, human rights; and improving their quality of life and consequently, that of our communities. To ensure that women are an integral and equal part of our tourism recovery, they must be an equal part of shaping the sector's response. Female inclusion in decision-making processes and visibility in communicating the response is therefore vital to ensuring a gender-inclusive sector-wide response. I believe, the impact of greater gender equality in our workforce and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial, because diverse and gender-equitable organizations perform progressively.

I feel fortunate to have been able to contribute to my family-run business of travel, where daughters are only empowered!



JASMINE DUGGAL,
Director, Minar Group

'There is no stronger soul than a woman'



There is no stronger soul than a woman. They are able to take 5 rupees and amplify it into 500 rupees. They are able to take challenges and put them on their back and carry them. Women infuse hope and bring light and provide in the darkest hour. My faith has been about who I am – a woman, a mother but most importantly I am a spiritual person. I strongly believe that nothing is impossible for me. For me, it's all about faith and conviction but most importantly to reach out to other people around me. I am very conscious of those around me and I am glad to share that they are very good. Many a times, we just forget to ask people – are you okay? If you are not okay, I cannot be okay. If you are okay, I am okay. I always say this to my colleagues and people in the Industry.

I am who I am because I am a woman. I stand before everybody as a mother, woman and a South African woman. I have the most amazing women team. They have delivered the best of results always. It is only because of their dedicated efforts that I am standing where I am today and they continue to support me and I continue to support them. They have made working and staying in India so easy for me, taking care of all my needs. All around me, I am surrounded by strong women in the industry. My life is in the hands of women. My ease is in their hands. There is something about women, their compassion and care and foresight and instinctual of what someone needs.

I can see the pandemic becoming an endemic and I am convinced that Indian travellers will visit South Africa as soon as commercial flight operations open between the two countries. The coming times will bring in plenty of good news regarding travel from India to South Africa.

NELISWA NKANI,

Hub Head – Middle East, India and South East Asia, South African Tourism



'The tourism industry has many women entrepreneurs and decision makers'

Pandemic brought about many challenges to our world, impacting us all at an unimagined scale. Even though travel and tourism for leisure had halted, we had to ensure we were supporting people who still had to travel for exigency along with the professionals in travel trade who were negatively impacted. Using technology and meeting people face-to-face via video conference ensured continued connectivity. We all learnt the new term "Zoom Fatigue". Even before the pandemic, women have historically been doing what I call as "Second-Shift"; where after finishing the day's work in the office they still have to finish an inordinate amount of household chores.

I too endured similar challenges during the current pandemic and very quickly realized that if I do not make a plan to strike a balance, I would feel burnt out pretty soon. Firstly, I continued following my set schedule as before the pandemic which ensured that I stayed focused on delivering my work assignments. Secondly, I utilized the time saved which otherwise would have gone in commuting to and back from work judiciously. I would take care of my home garden in the mornings and read books on tourism in the evenings. Thirdly and most importantly, I ensured that I was having my principal meals with the family which was a great way to unwind from the stress. I feel all of us, especially working women coped in our unique ways during this to continue being the go-getters of the world. I would like to congratulate all the women for their strength and grit and encourage all to keep up the fighting spirit.

It will be difficult to predict at the moment if the pandemic was or will serve as a catalyst to redefine gender balance in the tourism sector. However, if past results can be taken as predictors of the future, I am highly confident that we will see more and more women in the sector.



ALKA KAPOOR,

Manager Media & Projects, Punjab Tourism

'Women have a greater capability to multi task and also being hospitable'



NAGSRI PRASAD SASHIDHAR,
Chief Happiness Officer, NAGSRI

Considering how bad the pandemic has been, with every single individual facing different degrees of challenges, one thing was very clear that the Travel and Hospitality industry suffered the most. In fact in any adverse situation we are unfortunately always the first to succumb and the last to be back. This situation has been no different. Hence, with literally no work during most part of the last 2 years I think the focus for me personally was to maintain more of a life balance. Mental health, balance and ensuring a positive thought process was crucial. Not just for myself but also for the family around. Ensuring that all of us had minimum exposure to the virus and steering clear from this invisible entity was the prime focus. This was more so because we had our parents at home who are all above 70 yrs. What is also most unnerving is the fact that no one knows when the end of the pandemic is, so as to be able to plan ahead. This phase also taught me to be mentally resilient and accept the unknown and let go and go with the flow since there really is nothing in our control except to remain positive and strong.

The pandemic sure has left us with numerous learnings, Historically we have seen that the number of women in this business has been far greater than men and I would say this is inherently because women have a greater capability to multi task and also being hospitable and having an eye for detail comes far more naturally.

More than seeing a paradigm shift towards more women getting into the foray, which will anyways continue to be the case, I think it would be more appropriate to say that the way travellers will holiday going forward will see a paradigm shift. Hence all in this industry must be ready and up their game as we will see clients opt for more boutique accommodation, explore lesser known destinations that are not overly crowded, indulge in self-drive holidays, get more aware of sustainable and environment friendly holiday options etc. So yes it is a golden opportunity indeed to get something new to the table and also start on a clean slate where product and safety standards will rule

We need to focus on areas like entrepreneurship, leadership education'

Coronavirus pandemic completely altered the way we lived our lives. People faced isolation, anxiety, bereavement, loss of income that triggered their mental health conditions. The sudden shift to remote work environments was difficult and finding balance between work and home was complicated and stressful. However, approaching new working environment with calm and composure helped navigate the transition. Moreover, recognising and acknowledging the complexity of the situation was the key element in creating a work-life balance.

For growth of women in travel and tourism, we strongly need to focus on important areas like entrepreneurship, leadership education etc. The impact of greater gender equality and women's empowerment would be highly beneficial for organisations to perform better. In the context of responsible tourism and local development, tourism has huge and significant role for the empowerment of women.

I would also like to mention that upliftment of women is a subject very close to my heart. I do my duties diligently for upliftment of women and children in our society. I am associated with an NGO, which is committed towards the upliftment of Shekhawati region in Rajasthan. I am actively involved in a school providing free education to underprivileged children. I am always more than happy to lend any help in any initiative associated with Women Empowerment.



RANJANA SHARMA
MD, Trav-N-Tours International (TNTI)

'The pandemic has given rise to many women entrepreneurs in travel'



ARSHDEEP ANAND,

Managing Director, Holiday Moods Adventure

Coronavirus has certainly impacted all our lives, but I choose to look at it positively. It brought a pause in life and gave me time for introspection, learning and self-growth. For a few weeks, it was holiday time, there was ample time for cooking, baking, painting, music, and family fun. But then the situation demanded that we work from home. Just like with everyone else, initially it was a struggle, but then we geared up and streamlined our daily routine. We converted one of our rooms into an office and had fixed office timings, meal timings, work out time, family fun time and everyone pitched in to do the chores. Since business was heavily affected and in a slump, we chose to utilise that time to work on our website, increase our knowledge base and develop new products. We learnt about alternate methods of income generation. Since we also have our campsites, a challenge was also to maintain our human resource as well as the properties. We found a middle path with all our employees and as a result still have our entire team intact. Being in adventure travel, we have faced many daunting challenges in life, & have learnt to move on. And that's exactly what we did now.

Women comprise the majority of the workforce in the travel industry; yet the workforce remains majorly male dominated and women are hardly visible in any leadership roles. They either work in lower paid jobs or do unpaid work in family businesses. The pandemic has given rise to many women entrepreneurs in the travel industry. Inherent multi taskers that they are, women have aced the work – life balance compared to their male counterparts. Increase in gender parity is an onward trend at the moment and with sustained efforts shall continue. Encouraged by one of the goals for sustainable development – Gender Equality and Women empowerment – I definitely envisage more women entrepreneurs in Tourism.



'Women can do their best in the most challenging situations'

Balancing work, the duties of maintaining a house and a personal and family life has become a hot topic since the Covid 19 pandemic forced us into the 'Work from Home' culture. While this is being actively discussed as a new challenge brought about by the pandemic, women across the world have been practicing (and acing!) the art of maintaining a healthy work-life balance for a long time. We are not strangers to ensuring a household runs like clockwork and translating that same energy to the work place to deliver maximum productivity and output. This is of course challenging, with work and personal life often crossing lines during the pandemic, however, setting goals and timelines and organising your tasks, make this challenge easy to overcome. Being empty nesters and having grown up kids has certainly added to this ease as compared to mothers with younger children.

The Covid-19 has thrown all of us into an unforeseen situation, which has resulted in a bundle of opportunities and challenges. Women have been known for their ability to handle personal and professional life and the unprecedented pandemic situation has yet again reinforced the fact that women can do their best in challenging situations.

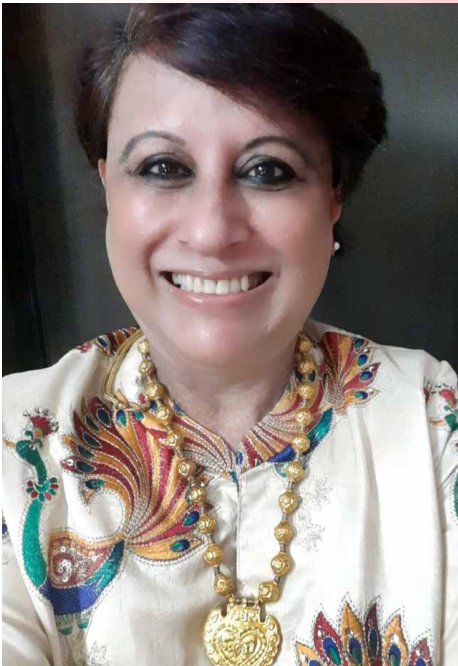
With the pandemic the entire corporate world has been pushed to conduct their businesses online. Women are now able to reach out to clients and conduct all corporate tasks with simply a good internet connection and the marvels of modern technology. In many ways, working from home has been a boon to women with younger children to be able to deal with their more demanding lifestyles while also delivering their 100% at work. The new hybrid model of flexible working, gives women in travel and tourism to grab more opportunities and grow!



BEENA MENON

India Representative, Tourism Ireland

‘Unless we work together and support each other, we will perish!’



PUNAM SINGH,

Chief Happiness Officer, Indian Hospitality Network – IHN

The COVID 19 Pandemic turned the world literally on its head. No one had prior expertise of living through a calamity of this size and scale, which is still ongoing, shifting shapes and degrees of severity. The hardships faced by the global populace with hundreds and thousands dead and families torn apart have decimated the very fabric of family life, hope, prosperity and professional success. Our industry verticals especially, were severely impacted.

Through these economically, emotionally, physically and professionally challenging times, it is my faith that has been the bulwark of my being. The belief, that this too will end, that nature will regenerate, that the hardships will make us stronger and encourage us to think out of the box, that we will learn the value of collaboration and that most important lesson, that unless we work together and support each other, we will perish! To know, that winter is always followed by spring! Each day is faced with courage and hope for oneself and compassion for others. My workplace at IHN is an extension of all this and more.

I have always believed and seen that women are an integral and extensive part of our expanded industry verticals, but have not really been effective in shattering the gender glass ceiling. The Pandemic has allowed them to play to their strengths with a focus on multi-tasking, WFH, upselling, expanding their business parameters and learning new skill sets which so many have been applying with astonishing success. Importantly, men have learned domestic skills through a couple of years of home incarceration and their recognition and appreciation of how much women actually contribute is a refreshing change.

So yes, these trying times have presented the Tourism Sector with an impetus for change. To recognise the true value of women in this vertical as they bring a natural ability across our various platforms to innovate, deliver, raise the bar, support and leave a legacy. Their get up and go is indeed admirable and the industry would be the poorer without their natural talents being utilised to the greatest effect!



‘It’s never too late to learn or start anything’

The pandemic hit the world in March 2020, first month after the first lockdown went away in a ziffy, doing household chores and just wondering what the hell happened!!

All my life I have always worked so sitting idle was out of the question. There was no help for house work, so it gave me any opportunity to utilise the time to do things I could not do in last many years due to the busy schedule. I started few online life coaching certification programs as well as digital media course. I started my YouTube Channel on Motivational Life coaching and cooking and kept myself busy doing household chores, shooting and uploading my videos. Since there was no hope of tourism revival anytime soon, I decided to start a wellness start up to promote superfoods and holistic health, called 'Vitality Club'.

At 'Vitality Club' our mission is to build a community around the core idea of vitality - i.e. the exuberant energy stemming from a life of balance. I believe in "It's never too late to learn or start anything" and "Never say never"!

I personally feel that Pandemic has given a golden opportunity to each individual, however it's up to us how we use it! Tourism sector in particular has suffered the most. We will surely see a paradigm shift in how women in travel and tourism sector function, the pandemic has brought both men and women to the same level playing field. Each of them now gotten used to of working from home! Women have always been more resilient and pandemic has proven this even stronger. Tourism and hospitality sector will be offering more equal jobs to the men and women post pandemic. Also the digitalisation in tourism sector will offer more exciting and innovating opportunities to women.



DEEPIKA CHOWDHRY,

Founder, Candid India and Co-founder, Vitality Club

'As better multi taskers, Women have a greater ability for creation and execution'



RICHA SHARMA

Head of Corporate
Communications & PR, ITC Hotels

Capability and Cope-ability: That's what the last two years were all about. Disruption affected people across continents. It changed life patterns and impacted our attitude and behaviour. I have always believed that Crisis is a litmus test that checks one's level of preparedness and strength, both mental and physical. At ITC Hotels we immediately swung into action and presented a robust plan of action that secured health and safety for both associates and guests. It is imperative that Corporate Communications and Public Relations create a support mesh for the organisation that enables quick flow of information across all levels. I am extremely proud of the dedicated PR Team at ITC Hotels that went all out to do what was needed irrespective of time and day. All this while simultaneously communicating the strict hygiene protocols and updates to our external stakeholders. Like everyone else, I too had my share of challenges. What remained common to both work and life was 'Anxiety'.

Coming from a Forces family, courage and strength become our second nature. Taking all health precautions and keeping family members connected and in constant communication goes a long way in ensuring zero panic levels. There is a reason why our ancient Indian practices of meditation and deep breathing were recommended by Ayurveda. No matter what the challenge, these practices generate immense benefits that keeps one in a positive frame of mind. This positivity makes one pre-empt solutions and not problems. And I only want to be a part of the solution, not the problem!

First of all, I believe that COVID-19 has presented to the world the strong and resilient workforce of frontline workers who looked beyond gender and truly kept service before self. It is indeed an honour to work for a company as ITC Hotels that gives equal opportunities for growth and development. Many of my colleagues (women) are steering leadership roles across functions pan India. As I mentioned earlier, as better multi taskers, women certainly have a greater ability for creation and execution. Having said so, I think that opportunities should be open to all and may the best woman/ man win! It is all about the appropriate skill match, experience, aptitude and attitude. Gender opportunity is an equaliser and not a divider.

'Having the will to overcome the challenges is the most important thing'

I feel it has always been difficult for a working woman to balance between work and life but I believe this is how you take it, during the years it becomes our habit to multi-task as I feel God has always given us more power to cope with it. Along with many things, I took this time to evolve myself, do things which I liked to do but couldn't get the time to do so previously. Small things like trying out to cook new cuisines, reading some old books, catch up with some great TV shows. Making each day productive at home was my motto and a way to balance many things at a time. Work from home gave me and as a matter of fact everyone a new experience everything shifted online and we all had to acquire more skills to keep ourselves technically updated. To maintain a proper balance, I used to ensure not to spend much time on screen and involve myself in some other activities too. In these darker times, the silver lining for me was the time I used to spend with my family and children. Having all three meals together, chatting for hours and watching movies together were some of the great moments.

I firmly believe that change is the only constant and we all should evolve with the wavering situations around us. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is to be hopeful and I firmly think that having the will power to overcome the challenges we face is the most important thing at this time.

The pandemic has bought us on a base level where we have the opportunity to start once again. It is not only important for tourism sector but pivotal for every organisation and startup to consider gender balance through fair pay scales, training staff in management and leadership, including women in every field and making policies in favor of both men and women.

I think paradigm shift has already begun with online work gaining prominence, women are being able to show their intellectual contribution to the industry in a much more concrete manner. As start in ADTOI women empowerment and CSR wing has taken initiative to give a platform to women and tourism (members and non-members) by providing them online support through face book page and Instagram page.



EKTA WATTS

Equator Tours, Chairperson – Women Empowerment and CSR Activities, ADTOI

'Equal pay policy & recruiting women into high-level jobs should be encouraged'



SAMINA MUNSHI,
MD, N. Chirag Travels

The travel and tourism industry is setting a strong example for women empowerment all over the world. Whether it is as licensed tour guides, pilots, running travel tourism enterprises as entrepreneurs or hoteliers, women are challenging stereotypes and leading the way in the industry. Despite the added stress and exhaustion of the pandemic, women are rising to the moment as stronger leaders and taking on the extra work that has come with it to support their teams and advance in the sector.

Technology has been a catalyst for empowerment, offering women more training opportunities to enter the tourism industry. Leadership acceleration programmes, mentoring and skill development initiatives for young women to guide them in navigating the industry are worthwhile initiatives.

Over the years, women have to come up to constitute majority of the tourism workforce worldwide. As mentioned above, women are excelling in diverse roles across the industry which is a heartening achievement. However, the challenge of recognition still prevails. Greater efforts are needed to recognize and reward women leaders who are driving progress by creating a culture that fully embraces and leverages diversity. There is also a need for greater initiatives to ensure women have equal access to higher-level decision-making positions in the sector.

The sector can promote equal opportunities for women by establishing and implementing a comprehensive equal pay policy and recruiting women into high-level tourism jobs. Fostering women in the travel business can be enhanced by promoting work-family balance and encouraging equal sharing of childcare responsibilities to ensure women do not drop out of the work force and continue to work their way up.

As women take up increasing number of roles in the tourism workforce, there is need for a renewed focus on gender equality in the industry. There should be an increased focus on skill development training programs for high-level positions, initiatives that promote work-life balance, health-oriented benefits and creation of future travel jobs that provide equal opportunities to all is crucial. Considering the impact of the pandemic on the businesses and households of small/medium women entrepreneurs, special credit lines could be introduced for women tourism entrepreneurs and governments can prioritize women-owned enterprises in public procurement. The travel industry has proven to provide pathways to empowerment, and the opportunity for tourism to make a difference in this area should be maximized.

'Pandemic has also been a blessing giving ample time for retrospective change'

It's a universal fact that Hospitality and Travel has been the foremost sector hit by the pandemic. It was quite difficult during the pandemic with multiple challenges staring at us in terms of work and emotional well-being along with safety of near-dear ones. However I have always believed that it's the mind first that can be healed. I had always been spiritually inclined and during this tough time I turned towards my faith, which helped me to remain calm, sort out the emotional stress, take charge of my life and move on. Honestly, there were precautions taken, but had no fears whatsoever. The pandemic had also been a blessing in disguise giving ample time for retrospective change, newer opportunities in work from home concept and the time spent with family at home was endearing. The work life balance came naturally.

There is no doubt about the fact that the pandemic has given the tourism sector a golden opportunity to re-define the gender balance. As per statistics, pre Covid, the women work force accounted for almost 45% of the tourism industry. Although a huge percentage of this is still not above a higher bracket of management or leadership roles. However post Covid the rise shall be more than 54% and the women in travel industry will not only function but evolve in employments, entrepreneurship, education and leadership roles as the pandemic has only made this gender stronger than ever.



DEEPIKA KHANNA
Founder and CEO, Anchor Destinations

‘Most women are showrunners at work and also at home’



Two years ago, during the onset of the global pandemic, my co-founders and I ventured to commence Intrepid Marketing and Communications. In addition to navigating through the nuances of a new business, we had to comprehend the everchanging dynamic of the travel industry, imposed by COVID-19. However, when you have the right team who's equally driven by passion, then work doesn't feel typically like work and balance is restored easily.

The challenges revolved mostly around the unpredictability of the situation and finding long-term solutions for the firm as well as clients. Even years of experience under the belt was futile as all of us had to start from scratch and adapt with the virtual platforms and digital innovations for executing campaigns and activities. These challenges were mostly overcome by stepping out of our comfort zones and embracing the new age mediums, thinking creatively and most importantly, having patience.

Women were already on the lead in various roles across the travel trade fraternity prior to the pandemic. However, most of us still are showrunners at work and also at home and the work-from-home situation gave us an added advantage to have the best of both worlds. This enabled a lot of women to undertake opportunities and work flexible hours even until now. It looks promising especially for young mothers and women working in remote areas of the country. Now that work-from-home has indeed become the new normal, even larger corporations will continue to adapt this mode of working and provide employees (both men and women) to adapt remote working wherein the gender balance as well as work-life balance will be highly maintained.

The paradigm shift in work-from-home culturally is twofold; not just women will be able to work flexible hours and juggle between familial and work responsibilities, but also the men will be able to adapt same mode of working as per convenience and hence assist their partners with household chores. This kind of support and understanding both from employer and families will be pivotal to encourage more women in the country to apply for opportunities in the evolving travel trade space and soon we will see the emergence of more such women-dominant firms like Intrepid Marketing and Communications.

MADHURI VERMA,

Director, Intrepid Marketing & Communications

‘Women are now constantly putting themselves forward for opportunities’

It took some time to comprehend the work disrupted by pandemic and to learn to navigate with the pandemic. I think each of us had to adapt our daily lives to respond to it. The pandemic affected physical and mental health, and also led to societal and economic consequences. Accepting the uncertainty due to pandemic, learning to slow-down, cherishing the small moments, investing in myself and to lead with understanding and empathy has strengthened me.

Though women are still underrepresented in the hospitality industry, but I feel, their presence is much more profound than ever. They are now fearless in voicing their opinions and are building their own path to success and unprecedented growth. Not only in this sector, but women with their passion, approach, and a penchant for hard work are breaking the glass ceiling in other industries, too. Gender-balance is changing, is in progress as some traits of the female leadership emerged during the pandemic like determination, inclusion, ability to adapt, teamwork, innovation in the use of technology and communication and information, which contributed to positive effects on performance. Female leaders also contribute to sustainability and diversity as a key goal. And, women are now constantly putting themselves forward for opportunities, whether leading a new project, participating in panels or conducting business meeting, etc. This has evolved significantly and industry will continue to embrace the change.



KAVITA GHAI

Head – Marketing, The Metropolitan Hotel and Spa

Visit Monaco to indulge in an impeccable romantic getaway

“Love does not consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction.”

-Antoine de Saint-Exupery



For all those who wish to gaze together in the same direction, there is no better view than what Monaco offers. The tranquil Mediterranean Sea, comforting weather, luxurious hotels, gourmet restaurants and experiences that will leave you speechless, there is nothing dreamier than the intimate atmosphere of the Principality of Monaco for a romantic getaway.

The Principality of Monaco is an ideal holiday destination for couples looking for a romantic getaway, far from the cacophony of everyday life and different from the buzzing holiday spots.

A stay in the Principality is the promise of unforgettable moments. Starting with the prestigious Suite Carre d'Or at Hotel Metropole Monte-Carlo, offers exclusive views over the Mediterranean Sea, the famous Casino de Monte-Carlo, Casino Square & gardens. For those who wish to be right in the heart of the city then experience the Hotel Hermitage - a haven of peace with



very pleasant romantic atmosphere; the Diamond Suite, here, with its sunny terrace and Jacuzzi offers a stunning panorama over Port Hercule and the Prince's Palace. Treat yourself to the iconic Hotel de Paris adorned with its most beautiful finery after a period of metamorphosis to offer an unprecedented experience. Sublime panoramas, refined decorations, the exceptional Diamond Suite Princess Grace and Diamond Suite Prince Rainier III, await you for the most unforgettable experience. Choose to stay at the Columbus Hotel; a hotel dedicated to visitors appreciating the local atmosphere together with the Monegasque way of life. If you and your partner are diehard racing fans then we recommend you to stay at the iconic Fairmont Monte Carlo is where the vibrant engines of the Formula one racing cars can almost be heard while approaching the establishment. The suites by Le Meridien Beach Plaza deliver comfort and relaxation with stunning views over the Mediterranean Sea making all your dreams come true. If blue suits you better, head to the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort with its exclusive rooms offering the only turquoise sand-bottomed lagoon and the deep blue sea which stretches as far as your eyes could see.

Sublime panoramas, refined decorations, the exceptional Diamond Suite Princess Grace and Diamond Suite Prince Rainier III, await you for the most unforgettable experience. Choose to stay at the Columbus Hotel; a hotel dedicated to visitors appreciating the local atmosphere together with the Monegasque way of life. If you and your partner are diehard racing fans then we recommend you to stay at the iconic Fairmont Monte Carlo is where the vibrant engines of the Formula one racing cars can almost be heard while approaching the establishment. The suites by Le Meridien Beach Plaza deliver comfort and relaxation with stunning views over the Mediterranean Sea making all your dreams come true. If blue suits you better, head to the Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort with its exclusive rooms offering the only turquoise sand-bottomed lagoon and the deep blue sea which stretches as far as your eyes could see.

Panoramic views over the sea, immersion in flowers and greenery or inspiration from legend and delight, all you must do is pick and choose. One thing is for sure: staying in Monaco means peace and quiet!

Well-being and Monaco have a long-lasting history. Cocooning spas with some out of the world therapies being offered by trained masseurs' promises to take all your stress away and leave your body as well as mind in an eternal space of peace and tranquillity. Starting from the famous Thermes Marins Monte-Carlo, a spa facing the Mediterranean Sea where you can let yourself carried into this haven of peace & luxury with prestigious partners enabling them to provide healthy slimming and customised anti-ageing treatments. You can also discover the unique Spa Metropole by Givenchy where you will be utterly pampered in its exceptional setting designed by Architect Didier Gomez. By the Sea, Monte-Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort offers a scene-changing experience with the Spa Cinq Mondes, a place of absolute peace dedicated to treatments for body & Mind, the spa lavishes beauty rituals and traditional massages in perfect accordance with ancestral ceremonies. At Monte-Carlo Beach, the Tigre Monte-Carlo is a promise of delight and magical escape combining Ayurveda with yoga, meditation and Pilates classes all conducted on the hotel private jetty.

For a couple visiting Monaco for the first time, there is nothing more romantic than enjoying a dreamy break on the legendary Rock and soaking up all the glamour and excellence of Monaco. It promises an experience like no other. For spending an ideal day in Monaco, start the day by having a breakfast at the Café de Paris with stunning views of the world-famous Casino de Monte-Carlo and Casino Square, or you can also choose to sit at Le Limun at Hotel Hermitage Monte-Carlo. Then, take a morning tour of the old town, Monaco-Ville, and explore the Oceanographic Museum or the Cathedral of Monaco. After watching the traditional Changing of the Guard at 11.55am, enjoy a scrumptious lunch at Antonio Salvatore's table at the newly-starred Rampoldi restaurant. Then, go for a walk to explore the Principality's beautiful cobbled streets. Have dinner under a starry sky at Le Grill, located on the 8th floor of the Hotel de Paris Monte-Carlo, Le Grill offers a magnificent panoramic view of the Mediterranean. You can also choose to sit at Yannick Alléno à l'Hôtel Hermitage Monte-Carlo, for stunning views of the harbour and old town. Here, tables are set in small lounge areas, and the ambiance is warm and welcoming. End your day with partying at some of the hottest spots in the Principality, enjoy a wide variety of live jazz, swing, blues, soul and French music performances at the Bar Americain or party at Jimmyz, a legendary club that has attracted celebrities, thanks to its outstanding setting, electric atmosphere and cutting-edge programming, or simply walk into the door of the Buddha-Bar Monte-Carlo, to take a trip to faraway Asia. The warm colours, Buddha statue and lounge



ambiance are perfect for relaxing and having a great time.

For a couple, the Principality of Monaco is the ideal place to enjoy the life to the full and have fun in complete peace.

MONACO IS FOR YOU.

'Women today have more opportunities to showcase their skills'



LUBAINA SHEERAZI,
CEO and Co-Founder, BRANDit

The pandemic disrupted our personal and professional lives, throwing us in a tizzy. With the saddle of juggling work and household responsibilities, the repercussions were significant. Being in the business of representation, we were faced with unexpected ambiguity. Tourism boards significantly reduced all planned activities to market their destination and were focused on following government protocols and measures, leading to travel restrictions. However, we did not let that dampen our spirit. We are always pushing ourselves to think differently for our clients and a practice I have been following for years. The pandemic was a different challenge altogether, but we were successful in adapting to change by thinking on our feet.

We were one of the first representation companies to use technology as a tool to engage and educate the travel trade fraternity by conceptualising and executing India's first virtual roadshow. We also used the digital platform to create brand presence via various tools like online webinars, trainings, etc. These tactics were not only cost-effective but also filtered the right profile of travel agents best suited for each destination.

While I was endeavouring to keep work in check, I was also grappling with a personal strain as my father was diagnosed with cancer at the peak of the pandemic. Alas, he lost his battle earlier this year. Very tough times indeed, but one has to plough through and keep the ball rolling. Though, it would not have been possible without the support of my family and team. We truly believe in facing any situation head-on, because the only way out is through!

Women are leading the way in the tourism sector and effectively continue to do so despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19. The pandemic has opened up avenues, presenting women with more opportunities to showcase their skills and apply their enterprising aptitude to better the tourism industry. We are already seeing a change with the growing number of women leaders within the industry who are pushing boundaries and making a difference.

'I firmly believe that where there is will, there is a way'

In 2018, I founded my own venture NUMEN HOSPITALITY to offer marketing and sales support to bouquet of hotels and resorts to the ever growing Indian hospitality sector. This was to provide Sales & Marketing quality support to the branded and Independent hotels. I have the privilege of having strong knowledge of the various segment of business like corporates, leisure, mice and weddings. I started doing well immediately after the inception of my company.

Unfortunately, Pandemic came in 2020 and hit the markets across the globe. Hospitality sector was worst affected. India was nowhere an exception but thanks to avid Indian travellers and domestic travel fraternity which have shown the growth in leaps and bounds. The times were really challenging, I sat back and decided not to quit. Perhaps, I decided to develop the domestic segment. Firmly believing that where there is will, there is a way, I got engaged on developing products which suits the Indian and family travellers and reaching out to the key operators for potential partnerships and there is no looking back.

NUMEN HOSPITALITY started doing well during the pandemic, my never give up spirit kept me going bringing lot of laurels & business within the country and Maldives. During the pandemic, I also worked on enhancing my skills-set to become more self-reliant with the innovations and ever changing market conditions. I did digital marketing course which helped to scale up the operations and acquisition of new markets and clients. As there were no physical meetings, all the marketing and business comes through the digital channels, I started making all the digital mailers and videos by my own. This helped me in increasing my presence and business growth.

NUMEN HOSPITALITY is currently managing portfolio of 16 hotels and supporting properties to develop the domestic business & revenues. I am empowering the fellow women by giving them employment. NUMEN HOSPITALITY is completing 4 years in March & it's an all women company.



NIDHI GUPTA,
Founder, Numen Hospitality

'Women professionals have it in them and they know how to exhibit it'



GITA CHAUDHRY,
Terra Tales

Honestly stating, the period of the last two years was not challenging at all. I have been a traveller all my life, but it is seldom possible for anyone to explore all exotic destinations across the globe and Nature has spread its countless bounties all around. In order to explore the explored, I started reading, viewing and watching these little known destinations via virtual mode. It helped me learn volumes about various destinations largely unheard of. My appreciation and admiration for Nature soared considerably. Further, I involved myself in gardening, exercising and listening to soothing numbers.

Such involvements helped me maintain a balance regarding screen time. Though the business was slow for all, these productive activities kept me on my toes in the most energetic and enthusiastic manner. I was able to stay productive, efficient and highly sane in all kinds of adverse situations that cropped up at different fronts.

Well, I cannot rule out the disparity based on gender that exists in every sector, though the magnitude varies. But women professionals in Travel and Tourism sector have been leaving their imprints for others to emulate and it is in existence for a long time. If we have to consider the pandemic situation as a blessing in disguise, we may put it this way: the meticulous approach, warmth, care, and human touch and concern women showcase have now a much greater role in running and operating this sector. These attributes will now act as potent fuel and women professionals have it in them and they know how to exhibit it beautifully. So, once they will be leading drives to draw the attention of a larger number of travellers and tourists, the boundless growth to them will be a beautiful reality beyond doubt.



'Tourism has a vital part to play in achieving sustainable development'

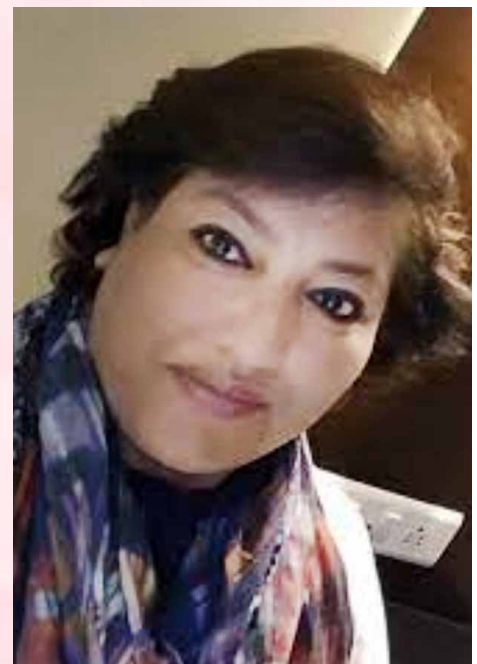
These 2 years have been so gruelling that insulation, contact restrictions, and profitable arrestment put a complete change to humans. These measures have hovered the internal health of the entire family. Anxiety, lack of peer contact and reduced openings for stress regulation were the main enterprises in the family that affected each one of us physically, mentally, and financially.

Life has always been challenging with women as handling effects at work and home. Still, once times have really been the toughest for all the women who are known to multitask. As the epidemic fleetly sweeps across the world, it has convinced a considerable degree of fear, solicitude, and concern at large and among certain groups, similar as aged grown-ups, care providers, and people with underpinning health conditions.

Women are known to be in no way – ending sweats to multitask because the challenge faced by working women is constant, whether they're working at the office or from home, they constantly attack their time between their particular and professional life. On the other hand, lockdowns and shut- campo related to the epidemic have redounded more constantly working from home now, further than one-third are working from home full-time. This redundant time at home is impacting in colourful ways, on the one hand, some women have further free time as a result of changes to exchanging and travel routines, and on the other, women are passing a number of redundant liabilities and commitments added on to their formerly busy lives. This is true of the vast maturity of women, whether they've caregiving liabilities or not. Majorly said, demands on the particular time and diurnal routine have changed due to the epidemic.

To conclude, the learning from this epidemic is that as employers and leaders, we must do all we can to help the women in our workforces acclimatize to the current gruelling work/ life reality. This coming time will prove critical and we ensure gender equality in the plant. Businesses must prioritize inflexibility, equity, and inclusivity if women achieve their career intentions.

Tourism has a vital part to play in achieving the objectives for sustainable development, in particular the commitments to gender equivalency and the commission of women of Sustainable Development Thing.



SANGEETA MANOCHA
CEO, Prime Connections

'We should give women more opportunities to fly'



NEETI BHATIA,
Director, Intrepid Marketing & Communications

We have been extremely fortunate to have active clients since the inception of Intrepid Marketing and Communications and thus never had a dull moment even during the lockdown. A lockdown is paradoxical for an industry that thinks, breathes, and lives on travel and accepting the sudden stagnation was the most difficult aspect of dealing with the pandemic. While other segments have gained momentum after a brief seizure, the tourism industry has continued to resume and shut periodically for two straight years. Adapting this unpredictability has been most cumbersome to plan activities and drive sales; however, identifying the right set of solutions and always having a back-up plan has been life-changing to overcome these COVID-19 imposed challenges.

I believe that most of us are extremely privileged to belong from supportive families and work environment, which may not be the case for women operating from semi-urban or rural cities of India. However, the work-from-home set up has been a gateway for women who are unable to travel for work or move to bigger cities to accomplish their dreams of working with bigger brands/companies. Fortunately, the culture is here to stay as even global MNCs are accepting remote working as a more permanent method of operating and here's hoping that it will enable and encourage more women to apply for jobs and restore gender balance.

Women have already been in the frontier in our industry for a substantial amount of time and the digital disruption has made it more accessible for everyone irrespective of gender. While as a travel industry, we should give women more opportunities to fly, literally speaking, the flexible mode of work-from-home will encourage more women to apply for jobs instead of wholly submitting to household chores.



'Be a role model for the next generation of young tourism professionals'

Current pandemic was a rare and unprecedented event. This has been an incredibly stressful time for everyone and many people are experiencing symptoms of anxiety, panic, and distress. While we all handle stress and anxiety differently, there are some vulnerable populations who are prone to experiencing an even stronger reaction to stress.

As a working professional and a mother of 2 daughters, it was the toughest times to cope with the pressure of ensuring that on one hand the needs of everyone at home is duly taken care off, but parallelly trying to keep the business afloat, where practically everything just went down like a sand bag.

During the lockdown the house work also increased as there was scarcity of house helps. Hence the work from home responsibilities along with responsibility of elders and children was tough to manage. It was a tough one to cope up with both priorities at home as well as keep the office running, with back to back e-meetings.

The only good part about this phase has been that we've learned to live with uncertainty and also work in a virtual environment, which I don't think anyone would have even imagined otherwise. So even though it was a tough and challenging phase for everyone, it also created lots of opportunities to do business in a new way.

The women entrepreneurs are important pillars of any economy and the pandemic phase has opened new opportunities for every woman who is smart, educated, passionate, but could not afford to work full time. Every such women should now take advantage of the current post pandemic situation and pick up learnings of pandemic and start working from home in the virtual environment.

Hence to look at the positive side of the pandemic, it has actually opened new doors and have created endless opportunities for educated women to venture into service sectors, especially the tourism industry, where you can tap customers and provide services, without having the need to attend physical meetings or an office and hence manage your work and home simultaneously.



REENA CHOPRA,
Director, Magical Holidays

'Women are natural at multi-tasking and pandemic made this more conducive'



SHEETAL MUNSHAW,
Director – India, Atout France

The work life balance challenge has always existed and has just been more pronounced in the recent times. The lines have blurred some for the better; some for the worse! While we have gained tremendously on travel time to meetings, to work places, to physical events, we have lost a sense of privacy and intimacy of our homes and on the human aspect of exchanges and interactions. One of the challenges faced are typically not having fixed hours and working through different time zones, working late hours as one doesn't need to physically be somewhere but we are constantly digitally tuned in through teams and zoom etc.

In a nutshell we're dealing with the same fundamental problem of time management and work life balance in its new avatar. While there aren't any magical solutions and it's a constant work in progress, the only way to work around it is to have some serious sense of discipline and most of all a genuine desire to strike this much talked about balance.

Women have held strategic positions of leadership across all verticals in the travel industry since many years now. Women are natural at multi-tasking and the pandemic has only made this more conducive. The two key takeaways in my opinion are firstly there is no taboo or shame attached with working from home as it used to be pre Covid times wherein being in a physical space at works was the norm and those who worked remotely or on more flexible terms were not taken as seriously. The last two years have completely changed that perception and it is now an undisputed fact that people can perform and be efficient no matter what their location, so long as they are committed to the job. The second big shift is that men have been home bound and have had to also take on the challenge of juggling roles and multi-tasking and while that may have gone south for some, it has come out a complete winner for others whereby the balance of roles and complementing each other and empowering the couple/ the family has enabled a better environment and a renewed opportunity for everyone.

Lastly our sector is an ever evolving and dynamic one and we have largely embraced technology making it very viable without compromise to work remotely and stay proficient. All these factors put together will definitely make it a level playing field for women and provide new opportunities and challenges in times to come.

'Women entrepreneurship has steadily increased in the last two years in our industry'

Last 2 years were filled with uncertainty and anxiety thinking WHAT, WHY, HOW! However, after the first lockdown, we were more aware and knew that the virus will remain a part of our habitat. Hence, we must continue working around it. For me, to maintain the work-life balance came with the help of a lot of mental and emotional stability. There were many challenges I had gone through...emotional, personal, financial... As like many others, I have also lost a loved one, my husband, due to Covid. The biggest challenge was to handle my son and give him that confidence that I'm there and will manage everything as he was in shock because of my husband's sudden demise. Life is still tough but I am thankful to my family, friends and our industry friends for being there in the toughest phase of my life. It continues to remain challenging for me to find the balance everyday but one has to keep working on it! Direct energies towards work, family and welfare!

I strongly feel women are active in all fields in today's time. There is enough supply of the women workforce and the number of opportunities are growing. Women entrepreneurship has steadily increased in the last two years in our industry. They are emerging as strong competition to our male dominating industry, and they are doing a great job. They have the confidence to take the world in their stride... We are looking forward to many more coming our way...



VEENA ROBINSON
VP - India Sales, Discover Destinations

'Women in all spheres of travel and hospitality have been successful'



SHALINI KJ,
Travel Curator

The world has struggled and women have struggled more! Doing a double task handling - managing work pressure and managing the demands of all the roles we lead, in our personal lives has certainly been challenging. It certainly has been more exhausting than any of us could have possibly imagined. While our lives were actually thrown off balance, we were left stumbling and finding a path to walk upon, which was a huge task.

But I think maintaining a routine set me thru the day, after a few days of "holidays" in the initial phase. Getting life back on track was important. So my spouse and me decided to stick to a routine with waking up early, doing family workouts together like cycling/ walking at the park, badminton. Thereafter sticking with a set time table for each one of us and delegating duties to everyone in the house. I guess time just flew by, everyone was responsible for their own lives and we sailed through.

Covid has definitely been devastating in more ways than one, professionally as well as personally for lots of people. I feel women in travel have always had an upper hand. We have had so many women entrepreneurs and women in all spheres of travel and hospitality and have been rather successful at it. And we only grow, with women power in full force, there is nothing that can stop us from being successful and pursuing our dreams. As women in tourism, we must definitely encourage women professionals around us while being understanding towards their challenges and situations.

'Women leaders in India are now working on empowering women'

Embracing motherhood and becoming a first time mother during the pandemic as well as maintaining work life balance has certainly been challenging, but as a country Finland believes in celebrating motherhood, hence my entire team in India and Finland have been extremely supportive enabling me to handle both my roles effectively. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected women all over the World due to existing gender inequality. As per a study by McKinsey & Company, women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis than men's jobs. Women make up 39 per cent of global employment but account for 54 per cent of overall job losses. One reason for this greater effect on women is that the virus significantly increased the burden of childcare and household work, which is disproportionately carried by women. However despite these challenges, women in Indian tourism country continue to display incredible resilience and actively contribute to the success of the industry. Tourism plays an important role in promoting sustainable development, as it integrates social, economic and environmental aspects that highly impact humanity. Several women leaders in India are now working on empowering women and implementing gender equality in the tourism industry, which is the way forward as women's contribution to revival of tourism sector as well as their involvement in the decision making processes, will go a long way in ensuring an all-inclusive success story of Indian tourism industry.



SARA SODHI JUNEJA,
Country Manager –
India & UAE, Visit Finland



GEETA M MAHESHWARI,
Hospitality and Marketing Services

'Pandemic was the time when I could focus on myself and my skills'

Among parenting, running errands and working, the coronavirus has significantly altered the way we live our lives. For many people, the public health crisis has meant a sudden shift to remote work environments as officials stress the importance of social distancing but for us, it meant a complete shutdown of the industry.

As we are slowly transitioning back to normal, I believe it is a good idea for people of the industry to retrospect and see how the lessons learnt to ensure that tourism can function better in future. While there are certainly benefits to working from home, the transition can be difficult and finding balance within your life can become more complicated. In my case, there was a paradigm shift from working tirelessly to coming down to a sudden slump. But it is always said that every coin has two sides, although I had no business – I got the time to spend with my family, living with my in-laws always made the situation easy for me and my husband. It made sure that all of us were safe and sane when locked inside. Additionally, this was the exact time when I could focus on myself and my skills. I started attending webinars and made sure that the house was in order.

'Every challenge is an opportunity to learn, innovate, and perform'



AKANKSHA GARG,
Founder Director, Waxpol
Hotels and Resorts

Our everyday lives were set in stone prior to the outbreak! The daily hustle and bustle continued, as did the daily competition to see who could keep ahead of the curve. Then everything came to a complete halt! It was initially unclear what to do when staying at home because businesses were closed. So we decided to pull our socks up and get back to work. I got my entire team to regroup, rethink, rework, and re-strategize on how to move forward and use our resources properly to maintain business continuity. Adapting to a new way of life meant juggling family responsibilities while being professional at work. Multitasking has taken on new meaning. We were fortunate to be born at a time when communication brought family members closer together, even when they were geographically apart. It allowed you to reconnect with who you were before joining the rush, and with most organisations either closing or adapting to the new normal. Maintaining a work-life balance became easier as commuting times were cut, allowing for more meaningful time with family. For the past two years, I've thoroughly loved spending time with my son. It's been gratifying to watch him grow up and develop into a good person.

An open mind and a dedication to gender equality are crucial for the growth of any country's industry. Women bring a number of distinct advantages to the workplace as proactive multitaskers with traits such as attentiveness, task persistence, eagerness to learn and learning independence, flexibility and engagement, as well as better work organisation, as they learn more quickly and broadly while still maintaining a work-family balance.

Going forward, I do see a shift in the paradigm where women contribute soft talents into an organisation, and this will be critical to the industry's future.

'I personally rely on the wellness route to manage my mind, body and soul'

In the last two years, while the world struggled with the pandemic, it was not very challenging to maintain a work – life balance as I personally rely on the wellness route to manage my mind, body and soul. Wellness for me is not just a professional preference but also a way of life. In fact, the pandemic gave me enough time at hand, which I channelized into building a fitness regime and re working on the wellness strategy. Once the fitness levels were revved up, I got an opportunity to pursue some passions that I have been longing to but couldn't do because of paucity of time. I enhanced my blogging skills and started writing articles and a book.

There is no doubt that women have to work harder to achieve their work – life balance as we manage our work along with travel, home and family. However we have greater tenacity to multi skill and can achieve all of this quite easily. Mental health and tuning into your spiritual self plays a big role in how one evolves and grows in life. Women will always be very successful in travel and tourism, however they will have to enhance their digital skills and be more tuned into technology to propel them forward. This could be through social media channels to work on their digital presence and grow their brands respectively.



URVASHI MEHTA,
Head of Sales, Amal Tamara

'The tourism industry has many women entrepreneurs and decision makers'

Initially it was quite a challenge since our support system of working from the office was stretched and everyone had to get used to working alone from home. The way we worked also changed dramatically since there were a lot more zoom and team calls with our clients than we had earlier. I tried to balance my life by spending my free time at my farmhouse in Alibaug. Since our office was not open for long duration during the pandemic, I was able to spend more time there and do some projects which helped me to balance my professional and personal goals.

No doubt the pandemic has opened the doors of opportunities and innovations for many. There are many women at the forefront of the travel and tourism sector and have stood strong during the pandemic. The tourism industry has many women entrepreneurs and decision makers and, women at key operational roles. The stage of paradigm shift has already happened, and the industry does acknowledge the instrumental role played by woman in uplifting this sector. The Covid-19 has yet again proved that women are multitaskers and perform at the best even in tough situation. For instance, in the last 2 years, women have efficiently handled household chores and office responsibilities while working from home.



HUZAN FRASER MOTIVALA
Partner, Beautiful Planet
Destination Marketing



TAAI to hold its 66th Convention in Sri Lanka from April 19 – 22, 2022

On the invitation from Sri Lankan Tourism Promotion Board (SLTPB) and Sri Lankan Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), TAAI shall be holding its 66th Convention in Sri Lanka from April 19 – 22, 2022. A tripartite Agreement was signed on February 23, 2022 between the parties in Colombo.

BOTT DESK

TAAI will be organising its 66th Convention in Sri Lanka in April 2022. Sri Lankan counterparts shall be extending full support in terms of accommodation, logistics and all arrangements to welcome around 400-500 delegates from India's oldest and nodal Travel & Tourism Association, stated Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President of TAAI.

This convention shall not only strengthen bilateral tourism ties between the two countries but, will act as a catalyst in reviving the travel industry for both countries post the pandemic, she added. We shall create opportunities to sell products of Sri Lanka as a tourism destination but also shall be promoting Incredible India to local Sri Lankan stakeholder partners.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President stated that TAAI Conventions (Indian Travel Congress) are the most eagerly awaited events of the Travel and Tourism industry not only in India but in the overseas markets as well. The visibility this annual event of TAAI brings to the global tourism stakeholders is fantastic. Generally, 500 to 1000 TAAI delegates are offered an excellent opportunity to network; attended b2b interactions, promote or buy and more importantly take home some great learnings from the knowledge sessions and updated information from the destination. We are excited and are looking forward to a great opportunity

after nearly 2 decades to come back to Sri Lanka for our Congress.

TAAI has a large membership who is actively involved in several industry verticals, and thus its focus is to promote these effectively and connect members with opportunities for all stakeholders i.e., Airline Ticketing, Outbound Tourism, MICE and Specialty Events, Adventure sports, Rail Journeys and Self-drives, Cruises, Destination Promotion, Wellness and Weddings etc. said Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary General.

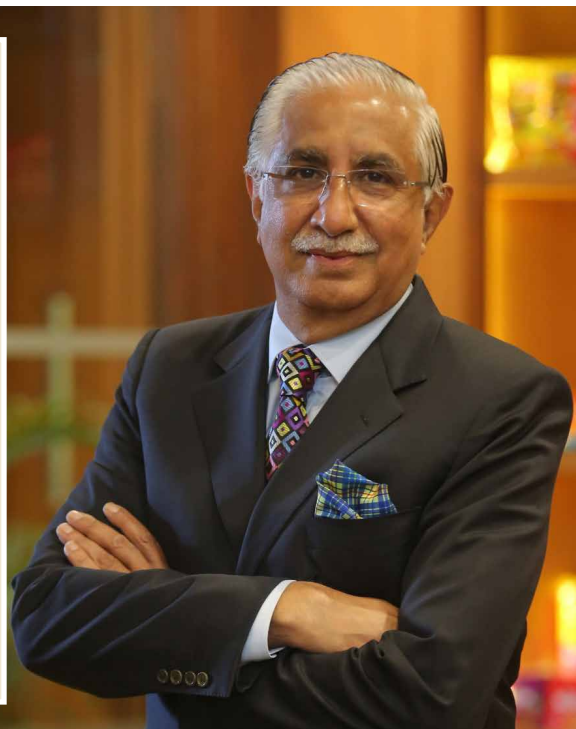
TAAI does these conventions for Facilitation of Bilateral Tourism, Interactions with Dignitaries i.e., Diplomatic Missions, Governments, High Commissioners, Ambassadors, etc. and Networking Events / Knowledge Sessions / Round Tables added Shreeram Patel, Hon. Treasurer.

The 66th Convention shall be historic, creating greater opportunities and enhance travel and tourism from and to India, to create opportunities post the crisis of the pandemic.

Present on the occasion from SLTPB and SLAITO to sign the MoU were Managing Director of SLTPB Ms. KPP Siriwardana, Mr. DP Daluwatte, Director Events, President of SLAITO Mr. Thilak Weerasinghe, IPP Mr. Maheen Kariyawasan, along with their core teams and committee members and the 4 National Office Bearers of TAAI.

FAITH chalks out a comprehensive Indian Tourism Vision 2035 plan

FAITH policy federation of all the national associations representing the complete tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India (ADTOI, ATOAI, FHRAI, HAI, IATO, ICPB, IHHA, ITTA, TAAI, TAFI) has released an India tourism vision with a vision statement, goals and a tangible execution path to begin today for the country commemorating the 75th golden year of Indian independence. Here's a look at its recommendations and what the members associations have to say for India Tourism Vision 2035



PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY

Mr. Nakul Anand, Chairman FAITH, recently hosted an interactive and virtual national media briefing wherein he, along with other association heads, chalked out a tourism vision plan for 2035. FAITH has also requested the Tourism Minister to take up the GST rates issues of tourism, travel and hospitality with the Group of Ministers (GOM) evaluating the entire GST rates structure. The Federation has stressed that since the Indian tourism, travel and hospitality industry is just starting to come out of its worst phase, this is the right time to incentivise both tourism demand and tourism supply through rationalisation of GST measures. While feedback on this request is awaited, here's a look at all that the Federation highlighted under the India Tourism Vision 2035 –

FAITH's Vision Statement for Indian tourism

- To make Indian Tourism preferred and loved by global and domestic tourists
- To create economic and wealth creation opportunities for tourism, travel & hospitality entrepreneurs for India
- To position Tourism rightly as social economic job and infrastructure creator for India
- To become a role model sector for sustainable and inclusive growth

FAITH Vision 2035 lays down the following key headline action goals –

- Target 75 million Inbound Tourists
- Aim for US\$ 150 Billion of foreign exchange earnings from Inbound Tourism
- Aim for 7.5 Billion Domestic Tourism Visits
- Target 15 Crores of Direct and Indirect Employment from Tourism in Public and Private sector in Hotels, Travels Agencies and Tour Operations, Tourism Transportation, Food Services, Destination Management and Services that are looking after tourists
- Target US\$ 225 Billion of Economic Revenue from Domestic Tourism
- Target US\$75 Billion capex direct and indirect annually
- Target US\$ 1.1 Trillion + + economic impact direct and indirect)
- Enable 75 Million Outbound Travellers from India

FAITH Tourism Vision 2035 proposes 4 Strategic Pillars to achieve the goals

- Shared National Tourism Approach
- Value Accretive Regulations
- Investment Drivers
- Market Excellence

FAITH urges MoT to raise tourism GST concerns with GOM

- Hotels to be allowed to charge IGST which will enable seamless availability of credit across India to all travel agents and tour operators and will thereby lead to building up a sustainable domestic holiday and meetings and conventions business within the country.
- Tour operators to be enabled a special

presumptive GST rate of 1.8% with full GST setoffs. The current rate of 5% without setoffs structurally implies that tour operators have an inbuilt margin of around 27.8% which is an inherently flawed assumption in the internet economy.

- Travel Agents be also allowed the option of exploring the reseller model for charging as they are distribution arms for airlines. This option will enable travel agents to structure optimal partnerships as per their business requirements between their clients and their airline partners.
- Tourist transporters be allowed the provision for availing GST setoffs on interstate Tourist transport taxes, taxes on parking fees and on taxes on fuel which is their biggest input costs.
- Restaurants should be also allowed the option of charging GST at 12% with full Input tax credits and the rate should be delinked from any room tariffs if they are part of hotels.
- GST refund on purchases by foreign tourists to be implemented as already enacted under GST – Tax Refund for Tourists (TRT) Scheme of the IGST Act and its applicability should be ensured across all the product and tourism services availed by them in India. This will prevent India from exporting its taxes on tourism and will increase our global competitiveness in world tourism.
- Tourism, travel and hospitality players must be allowed to get a refund of any unutilised GST credit lying with state governments which will enable them to get much needed liquidity.



‘We are confident that Indian tourism is the next global champion sector for India’: Rajiv Mehra

BOTT DESK

In 2019, pre-Covid Indian inbound tourism, recorded 17.8 mn plus international travellers to India. Out of these 6.8 mn plus were Indians visiting their friends and relatives and 10.9 mn + foreign tourist arrivals. In the pre-Covid period India had a global share of 1.2% international travel. This is not commensurate with the size and scope of India can offer.

In the post-Covid period our vision is to double India's share of inbound tourism to 2.5% in the medium term post normal and then double it again to more than 5% in the medium - long post that. This will rightfully put Indian tourism in the global league where it belongs.

But that journey begins today and today the inbound tourism industry is grasping for survival since 23 months. With all key source markets such as North America and West Europe just showing signs of just emerging from the severe grasp of Covid we do not see a full resumption to inbound tourism till October 2023 – 24 and that too is conditional upon no further variants.

To survive till then, the inbound tour operators need to have an operating cash subsidy to pay salaries and operating costs as had been effectively done in other countries. In the new Foreign Trade Policy which is being planned a duty credit similar to earlier SEIS rate should be made effective at 10% for the next 10 years. The inbound tourism, which earns foreign exchange needs to be treated at par with merchandise exports and needs to be zero rated on GST.

The GST on tour operators should be 1.8% with full set offs which is calculated as 18% GST on a 10% margin. Currently at 5% that too without setoffs it effectively comes to 18% on a 38% margin which is penal. This has made India travel one of the most expensive globally. The commercial flights need to resume in full to ensure affordable rate travel. Multiple entry tourist e- visa needs to be effectively issued. The policy of free e- visa should be extended to 2024 till full resumption of inbound tourism happens.

There is no denying that Covid has severely impacted the travel and tourism sector and one of the worst affected under it has been the Inbound Tourism. At the FAITH national media briefing, Mr. Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) & Honorary Secretary, FAITH, shared an action plan clearing stating the points that needs to be worked upon in order to revive inbound tourism in India.



OTOAI urges Govt. to remove restrictions on Booster Vaccination; stands disappointed with Union Budget announcements

BOTT DESK

In their letter to the Health Minister, OTOAI has urged the honourable Minister to open up the Booster Vaccination for all and not put any restriction. This decision is vital and gains prominence in the light of the recent development, wherein the Schengen Countries have introduced a new Travel Rule. As per the new Schengen rules, the validity period of all vaccination certificates has been reduced from 270 days to 180 days. According to this new rule, all Indian Travellers who have taken their second dose of Covid Vaccination in April 2021 will no longer be eligible to travel to the Schengen Countries. France, for example, has reduced the vaccination validity to 120 days starting February 15, 2022.

Mr. Riaz Munshi, President, OTOAI said, "Many people, who received their Vaccine in the month of April / May will be considered unfit to travel. These travellers will be unwelcomed in many countries, which have made Booster dose compulsory for travellers. Some of these countries are – France / Netherlands / Kuwait / Croatia / Greece / Austria and more. This long gap between Second Vaccine dose and Booster dose not only disqualifies people from travelling but also instils a sense of fear in them to undertake an international holiday."

Covid has immensely impacted the entire world but travel sector has been one of the worst affected. It was the first to face the brunt and is still struggling to remain relevant in the times of constantly evolving guidelines and travel advisories. Thus, for the very survival of the travel and tourism sector, OTOAI urged the honourable Minister to look into its request and not put restrictions that hamper the growth of Outbound Travel.

Meanwhile, the association stands united in its disappointment regarding the Union budget. "It was a good budget as far as economic growth is concerned but has been disappointing for the travel and tourism sector. We had good expectations from the Budget this year, which overall has been a disappointing one. The tourism sector has once again been ignored completely. The Government has totally side-lined the trade and the only positive mention has been the E-Passport, which will facilitate international travel. There was no mention of TC and GST, which are the biggest hindrance in the development of tourism," shared Riaz Munshi.



The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) recently wrote to Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister for Health, Government of India, couple of months back, urging the honourable Minister to open up Booster Vaccine for all who have been double vaccinated and remove the 270 days (9 months) wait period, which is currently applicable. Meanwhile, the office bearers of OTOAI stand unanimous in their disappointment on the announcements of Union Budget 2022-23.

Himanshu Patil, Vice President, OTOAI feels that the recommendations put forward by the travel and tourism industry to support recovery did not receive mention – including tax rationalization, GST holiday, exemption of TCS on outbound tour, the inclusion of Outbound travel in LTC and more. "Tourism sector in India provides employment to 8 – 10% of the total population and is one of the leading sectors for an engine of economic growth. We should have definitely received some benefit in the budget," he said.

"The tourism industry has made several recommendations to the government and holds a lot of expectations from the government in the union budget like restoration of ITC on GST, abatement of TCS on outbound travel but nothing concrete has been announced and no attention has been given to the tourism industry once again! Unfortunately, the new budget has failed to cheer up the industry and left it disheartened,"

shared **Shravan Bhalla, General Secretary, OTOAI**

Vineet Gopal, Joint Secretary, OTOAI was also extremely disappointed with the Union budget. "Industry, especially the outbound tourism sector had a lot of hope from the Finance Minister for some kind of relief. More direct and immediate support was expected."

Lastly, **Sidharth Khanna, Treasurer OTOAI** said, "It has been a dispiriting budget for the industry. The travel industry, which has been acutely impacted by the pandemic, is once again neglected by the government. The number of efforts we have put up with the finance ministry made us believe that they are surely going to announce something fruitful and positive for the travel industry. We were expecting exemption of TCS and reduction in GST, but unfortunately, it's extreme turmoil that nothing has been done about it. This union budget leads the travel industry disheartened."



'Our immediate aim should be to double our MICE share to 2.5% of the world': Amaresh Tiwari

BOTT DESK

The global MICE industry is estimated to be upwards of \$800 billion and India's share pre Covid was estimated to be around 1 %. MICE sector has the strongest direct correlation to the GDP more than any other tourism sector. Thus our first objective post Covid, in medium term would be to double our MICE share to 2.5% of the world and then doubling it over medium to long term.

In the global international congress associations rankings our goal will be to take India's rank to the top 10 in the world from 28 where we were pre Covid. We will also request central and state governments to aim to benchmark the MICE infrastructure of our Indian cities to the top global mice cities. Pre Covid, we had 1 city in the top 100 rank. Our goal must be to be having 3 Indian cities in the top 100 in the medium term post Covid and 6 – 10 cities in top 100 in the medium to long term.

We need to recognise MICE Tourism as a distinct business segment and create MICE India Brand a sub-brand to the main brand Incredible India. This needs to be aggressively marketed worldwide. We must target global congress, conventions and conferences, and social events we need to create a global MICE bidding fund with a corpus for R500 crores to enable our entrepreneurs undertake techno economic bids for events which have a bid cycle of 2 years plus. We need to create city convention bureaus in each of our main cities, which will work with ICPB as their hub to carry out a global bidding activity.

Industry Status should be given to MICE Infrastructure by states so that Convention centres and hotels. This will enable power and utility rates levies at Industrial rates amongst other benefits. Infrastructure status for financing of MICE Infrastructure, currently this is available only to 3 star and above hotels located outside the cities with population of 1 million and above.

Institutional Support should be extended by the government for the MICE Events. ICPB as bureau acts as an agent, representative, marketer, leader and co-ordinator for MICE Industry. Market Intelligence is another key aspect. The MoT will work with states to develop Data Collection and analysis mechanism for MICE Industry.

In the post – Covid era we also need to incentivize Indian corporates to undertake domestic MICE and to prevent Indian MICE events from going abroad. For that we need to offer a 200% weighted income tax expense benefit to Indian companies which are undertaking MICE events in India.

We need to enable IGST for our hotels, which will complete the end to end GST chain and companies get GST setoffs for companies undertaking MICE events in states other than their state of registration. Also our GST rates are one of the highest in the world and to revive we should move immediately to a 12% GST rate for all MICE related events with full set offs and gradually to below 10% in the medium term with full set offs.

Of the Special Tourism Zones being planned by tourism ministry we look forward to a mega tourism zone, which should be fully integrated world class MICE city. As the virtual MICE become the order of the day, we look forward to each state recognising this and supporting both physical and hybrid MICE activities on a structured and financial basis.

Indian tourism has globally unique cultural phenomena. Between all states collaboratively and centre we must ensure that Indian MICE has the unique advantage of being bundled with the natural and cultural assets of India.

FAITH recently released an Indian Tourism Vision 2035 highlighting goals and a tangible execution path to begin today for the country commemorating the 75th golden year of Indian independence. Mr. Amaresh Tiwari, Vice Chairman, ICPB, shared an impressive action plan for boosting the MICE sector in India.



'We must make income tax exemption available on travelling within India': P P Khanna

Indian domestic tourism is already the second highest in the world with almost 2.3 billion domestic tourism visits. On a medium to long term basis there should be the steps taken by Indian states in collaboration with one another and with the central government to double Indian domestic tourism. Mr. P P Khanna, President ADTOI talks about the action plan needed to boost Domestic Tourism.

BOTT DESK

The GST on tour operators should be 1.8% with full set offs. Currently it is at 5% that too without setoffs which implies tax on tax and defeats the purpose of GST.

We must make income tax exemption available on travelling within India to make domestic tourism part of mainstream Indian economy. This should ensure that Indian citizens can get income tax credits for upto R1.5 lakhs when spending with GST registered domestic tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers and transporters anywhere within the country.

For quick recovery in the post – COVID era this should also incentive Indian corporates to undertake domestic mice (meetings, incentives, conferences & events) and to prevent Indian mice events from going abroad. This needs to be enabled by offering a 200% weighted income tax expense benefit to Indian companies which are undertaking MICE events in India. This will not only fast track revival but will also enable Indian domestic tourism which was at almost 2.3 billion domestic tourism visits to grow three to four times in the medium to long term. Each of our Indian states and union territories are unique and have the potential to create multiple tourism zones of excellence. We must, between

centre and state, jointly target up to 10 centres of tourism excellence in each state must be set up going up almost 350 + Tourism centres of excellence in the country. These can leverage the Swadesh & Prasad schemes for effective tourism development. Tourism is complete only when there is full connectivity.

The Government must also offer an immediate one-time grant to the domestic tourism travel and hospitality companies whose businesses have been severely affected due to the pandemic to enable them to settle their statutory liabilities, rentals, levies and taxes. This will prevent such affected enterprises from going bankrupt.



'India has the potential to become the world capital of soft & hard adventure': Tejbir Singh

BOTT DESK

Be it Our 7500 kms of coastline, our Himalayan range with some of the highest peaks in the world, our portfolio of 400 + Perennial, seasonal rivers backwaters, part of 14500 km of inland waterways, our 25-30%, forest cover which covers more than 0.1 million sq km of wildlife reserve being inhabited with almost 8% of world mammals, 6% of world's bird & flora life, our world unique mangrove Sundarbans delta and 5% of country which is covered by our million year old, 0.2 million sq km desert area.

We are a blessed country being only one of the 17 Megadiverse countries of the world. Each state of India has the potential to become a centre of excellence in natural and adventure tourism.

Yet, in the \$750 bn + world adventure tourism industry which is poised to touch \$ 1.5 trillion in the post covid world, India currently has a negligible share. We look forward to working closely with the central & each of state governments to move towards a vision is to get

at a respectable market share of 5-10% in the medium to long run in the world adventure tourism market which is commensurate with our natural assets. At the outset, we must have a sustainable and responsible development plan around each vertical of natural heritage tourism be it in mountaineering, cruising, trekking, wildlife & reserve forests based activities, snorkelling, para gliding, white-water rafting, conservatories, para gliding, ballooning, desert safaris and so on. These sustainable plans must be based on carrying capacities of the destinations and framed around sustainable guidelines developed by experts of our association ATOAI & those which have also been recommended by tourism ministry. Adventure and natural heritage tourism happens in remote hinterlands. We need to have a robust hub and spoke, all season, inter- modal connectivity model across air, rail, road or water connecting such destinations across the country.

We want to become one of the top ten nations in adventure tourism ranking in the post covid world and must accordingly have an enabling policy mechanisms such as search and rescue, satellite phone connectivity, x visa, global insurance recognition and more.

India has one of most unique natural heritage of the world.

Our country is rated as the 9th most competitive in natural and cultural tourism by World Economic Forum resources. It has the potential and resources to be so much more. **Mr. Tejbir Singh - Alternate Board Member to FAITH ATOAI & Vice-Chairman FAITH shares more...**



'Sustainability has to be at the heart of rebuilding the tourism industry': Ajay Prakash

BOTT DESK

In 2019 we were smiling with 11 million inbound tourists, close to 30 million outbound and over 2 billion domestic tourists. Who could have anticipated the devastation that 2020 and 2021 would bring? Business took a nose dive, Cash flows became negative, refunds were hard to come by and the industry struggled to stay afloat.

So as we build back in 2022 and look to the future, our primary vision for our travel agents fraternity is to first ensure their security and their protection while making efforts to identify opportunities for business expansion - enabling them to provide the best tourism experiences.

No future is safe till our present is safe Aviation forms the backbone of the tourism industry but airlines were hit equally hard and some of them went belly up. Unlike agents who give a financial guarantee to IATA before they're allowed to issue tickets, Travel agents' payments to principals is unsecured credit - so there's no protection for agents, or travellers, if an airline goes bankrupt. We need to ensure that some mechanism - whether escrow or guarantee or underwriting or pay-as-you-fly - some system needs to be in place to ensure that travel agents' and travellers' money stays secure. We have broached this idea and we look forward to working further with the Government on this.

Irrational taxation which inhibits growth is another area that needs to be addressed if we are to achieve the ambitious targets that we are setting for ourselves. The GST structure needs a major rethink because currently it imposes multiple taxes on the same end product like a tour package, with no input credit or offset. The TCS has made Indian businesses uncompetitive - We have become 5 to 10% more expensive as compared to an overseas service provider offering an identical product.

If we are make UDAN a reality - Udey Desh ka Aam Nagrik, airfares need to be affordable. One way of doing that is to bring ATF under the ambit of GST. This is a long standing plea along with the demand to accord infrastructure or industry status to tourism

Another suggestion that TAFI has made is to create a combined visa for India and the neighbouring countries - just like the Schengen visa, which can significantly grow the pie. Apart from Bangladesh, our biggest inbound markets involve long haul travel, the opportunity to combine a trip to India with a visit to our friendly neighbours would be a great inducement and would significantly increase numbers.

But moving on from the things that need fixing to enunciating a vision for the evolution and development of tourism, one thing is clear, no matter how much technology may evolve - the much anticipated bullet train and the hyperloop could well be passe 20 years from now and people just could be teleporting like the Star Wars "Beam me up, Scottie," - people will travel. To travel and explore is an innate human need and that's why tourism is such a resilient business because it fulfils that basic need to connect.

The traveller of 2035 is going to be nothing like the traveller of today but given the lessons of the pandemic, sustainability has to be at the heart of rebuilding the tourism industry and India with a rich culture and heritage, as a repository of ancient wisdom, can take a lead globally. Yoga and Ayurveda are just two of the amazing streams of wisdom that India has offered to the world. "Sarv Dharma Sambhav" is another.

Times are changing, business models are changing, travellers too are changing, and we need to keep pace. The pandemic has forcefully driven home the reality that it's a VUCA world - Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. And that's the way it's going to be. **Mr. Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI** shares his action plan for achieving Vision 2015 for Indian tourism.

'Hotels & restaurants across India needs to be declared & treated as an industry':

Garish Oberoi

BOTT DESK

Tourism is one of the important sectors in the country that account for around 10% of GDP and employing roughly 90 million people. The tourism and hospitality industry in India carries an extensive potential to be the key driver to accelerate socio-economic development of the country. To achieve this, tourism should be declared as a priority sector in the country with special incentives and benefit to help the sector to attain its true potential.

Our vision is to make India the hospitality and cuisine capital of the world. To make this possible and to place India on the pivotal position on the global ecosystem for entrepreneurship and business models, we need an enabling environment from state governments and the central government.

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

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

Restaurants too have an 18% and also 5% slab but which is without setoffs. The 18% category needs to be abolished and there needs to be an option made available of GST at 12% with full set offs. Additionally, there needs to be no linkage to room tariffs above ₹7500 as it currently exists.

Fuel and power costs, liquor license fee and property taxes are all various forms of very high-cost input indirect costs on hotels & restaurants. These needs to be made available as input costs setoffs for GST to truly make us one country, one tax. These will make our hotels and restaurants truly cost effective and will stimulate demand. E- Single window clearance at a national level must be enabled for hotels & restaurants through hospitality Development Promotion Board and all

existing licenses, permits, permissions must be thoroughly examined for redundancies and standardised at a national level. This will bring down the cost of pre openings and also annual costs of compliance and make us more globally competitive.

For a sector like hospitality, which is highly capital-intensive business where running costs are too high and the margins are shrinking every passing day. In such scenario, access to credit facility at affordable rates and compliances remain a big concern for the industry. Tax incentives/tax holidays for developers setting up tourism projects should be provided to promote tourism sector growth in the country in a big way.

One of the key corrections which are important for revival of hospitality is attracting domestic MICE tourism. However, hotels need to be able to levy IGST to enable them to give GST credits to Indian corporates who do Inter-state events and do not take these events international. This will streamline the complete GST chain and boost inter-state corporate mice demand for hospitality.

Liquor excise policies have to become more pragmatic in states. They have to take cognizance of the number of days the restaurant or the bar is open, there should not have any hikes and instalment-based payments should be permitted by the states. Any state which has increased the liquor excise fees should roll it back immediately considering the past 23 month's state of the industry.

Today hospitality covers both conventional and also alternate accommodation such as B & B, guest houses, short term rentals and so on. It is thus critical to ensure that there is a level playing field in terms of compliances and entry requirements among all sub segments of accommodation providers.

India is perhaps the only country in the world where hospitality & accommodation products can be created around diverse segments of tourism be it adventure, pilgrimage, heritage, mice, forest, cruise, hills accommodation, sports etc.

We are just about to emerge from the darkest moments and the turbulence and distress due to the pandemic. Being the worst hit industry, the hospitality and restaurants have been constantly dialoguing with the central and state governments.



Mr. Garish Oberoi, Former President, The Federation of Hotels & Restaurant Associations of India and Treasurer, The Hotel & Restaurant Association of Northern India at the FAITH Indian Tourism Vision 2035 shared the association's vision to make India the hospitality and cuisine capital of the world. Here are his thoughts, in his words...

Marriott expands in India with Fairfield by Marriott Goa Calangute

Fairfield by Marriott, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary brands, recently announced the opening of Fairfield by Marriott Goa Calangute. Situated in the heart of North Goa, inspired by the beauty of simplicity and warm hospitality, the 169-room hotel delivers an inviting and seamless experience to travellers visiting the beach capital of India.

BOTT DESK

"We are excited to introduce our eighth property in Goa – Fairfield by Marriott Goa Calangute. Our portfolio continues to gain strength in line with our vision to be the largest travel company globally," said Mr. Neeraj Govil, Senior Vice President – Operations, Asia Pacific (Excluding Greater China).

Adding more he said, "The launch of this property consolidates our presence in Goa. We look forward to bringing a diversified portfolio catering to different requirements at varied price points. Goa holds a major attraction for both domestic and international travelers and with our solid presence we are geared to dominate the hospitality space with our offerings and service elements in the state."

Located less than 1 km from the famous Calangute Beach, Fairfield by Marriott Goa Calangute houses 169 spacious, modern and well-equipped rooms and suites. All the rooms offer incredible views of the pool or the hillside, each with its own balcony and patio seating. Inspired by Goan architecture and culture, each room is designed using local materials



and sports an earthy colour scheme complemented by bold graphics and eye-catching textures. The hotel boasts an ambience that focuses on the warmth and simplicity of delivering inviting and seamless experience to guests. Set amidst the picturesque Goan hills, guests are serenaded by the calm and, cool atmosphere that envelopes the entire hotel.

Dining options comprise three distinct venues, Kava, the all-day dining restaurant, offering a fresh take on local Goan delicacies and international favourites. Guests can also enjoy an alfresco dining experience at the Kava Bar, the hotel's outdoor pool bar, and its private dining patio. The Market offers 24-hour Grab-and-Go services for quick bites while on-the-move.

The hotel features smart meeting spaces spread over 2200 sq. feet, ideal for business meetings, social gatherings and celebrations. Other leisure amenities at the hotel include an outdoor swimming pool and a 24-hour fitness centre packed with state-of-the-art amenities allowing travellers to keep up their fitness regimes

Lemon Tree Hotels signs a new hotel in Mukteshwar in Uttarakhand

Lemon Tree Hotels announced its latest hotel signing – Lemon Tree Hotel, Mukteshwar, in Uttarakhand.

This hotel is expected to open in July 2022. The property is owned by M/s The Alpine Chalet Resort and shall be managed by Carnation Hotels Private Limited, a subsidiary and management arm of Lemon Tree Hotels Ltd.

BOTT DESK

A legendary brand, WelcomHeritage has played an instrumental role in highlighting the storied rich heritage and cultural ethos of the various destinations where its properties are located.

Despite industry-wide challenges caused by the pandemic, WelcomHeritage's outlook for 2022 looks set to build upon the success of the past year. Withstanding all the challenges, the hospitality chain managed to add highly anticipated new hotels including WelcomHeritage Elysium Resort & Spa, Shimla, WelcomHeritage Badi Kothi, Allahabad and WelcomHeritage Cheetahgarh Resort & Spa, Bera in its portfolio in 2021. It added 85 keys to its overall inventory in the last year.

the utmost thought, planning and discernment. The year 2021 was a very successful year for us despite the challenges brought by the ongoing pandemic. We are looking at 2022 with much optimism as we plan to open a number of new properties and continue to create experiences that bring people together to celebrate life," said Mr. Manghani.



"We approach every endeavour of ours with

WelcomHeritage unveils expansion plans for 2022

BOTT DESK

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WelcomHeritage is forging ahead with the expansion of its hotel portfolio in some of the most exquisite tourist destinations in the country. Spearheaded by its CEO, Abinash Manghani, WelcomHeritage is embarking on an exciting expansion journey this year.



WelcomHeritage is planning to continue the brand's expansion around the country with four planned openings in 2022 including WelcomHeritage Azora, Fort Kochi, WelcomHeritage Ayatana, Ooty,

WelcomHeritage Desert Resort, Mandawa and WelcomHeritage Parv Vilas, Solan. When operational, these properties will add 171 keys to the existing inventory of 903 keys of WelcomHeritage.

Pride Group of Hotels signs 'Pride Biznotel' at Gir, Gujarat

BOTT DESK

Pride Group of Hotels has now signed 'Pride Biznotel' at the renowned lion den at Gujarat's Gir National Park. The property will come into operation from April 2022. Pride Biznotel Gir will be the group's 12th property in the State of Gujarat. Pride Biznotel brand is a moderately priced, upscale, full-service hotel that meets the discerning needs of a Business, adventure and leisure traveller.

"We are extremely delighted to sign Pride Biznotel at Gir, the home to the majestic Asiatic Lions. The property will be located very close to the Gir National Park, giving wildlife enthusiasts a unique opportunity to spot the king of the jungle in his natural habitat. Rich in flora and fauna the region is also home to various species of birds. Gir has gained immense popularity and is frequented by both domestic and foreign tourists throughout the year. Pride Biznotel Gir will offer the most fascinating hospitality experience at one of India's most famous holiday destination" says, Atul Upadhyay, Vice President, Pride Group of Hotels.



With its presence around 40 great locations, 4,000 rooms, 80 restaurants, 107 banquets, conference halls, thereby reinforcing itself as a one-stop destination for MICE. Currently, Pride Hotels operates and manages a chain of hotels under the brand name "Pride Plaza Hotel" an Indian Luxury Collection, "Pride Hotel" which are conveniently centrally located business hotels, "Pride Resort" at mesmerizing destinations and Mid-Market segment hotels for every business "Pride Biznotel". Locations are prominently at: New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nagpur, Bangalore, Chennai, Rajkot, Goa, Jaipur, Indore, Udaipur, Bharatpur, Mussoorie, Dapoli, Puri, Gangtok, Anand, Manjusar (Vadodara) Upcoming locations are: Alkapuri (Vadodara), Nainital, Jim Corbett, Jabalpur, Daman, Rishikesh, Aatapi, Surendranagar, Dwaraka, Bhavnagar, Bharuch, Agra, Somnath, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Neemrana, Rajkot, Bhopal and Haldwani.



Oceania Cruises celebrated the float-out of its new 67,000 ton, 1,200 guests Vista on February 25 at the Fincantieri shipyard in Sestri Ponente, Italy, bordering the famed seaport of Genoa.

Oceania Cruises floats new ship Vista at Fincantieri shipyard in Genoa, Italy

BOTT DESK

Shortly after the ceremony, held in full compliance with the current health regulations, the massive building dock began filling with water and Vista became one with the sea for the very first time. Presiding over the ceremony were Giuseppe Torrente, Shipyard Director for Fincantieri; and His Excellency Monsignor Tasca, Archbishop of Genoa. After the blessing of the ship, the shipyard's Madrina, Miss Anna Trucco, released a bottle of prosecco against the hull to invite good fortune for the ship and all those that will sail on her. "Vista is Oceania Cruises' most anticipated ship in the history of our company, and I am thrilled to be here with our partners from Fincantieri as the ship morphs from blueprints and steel to into reality. Vista is truly a ship of dreams, and we cannot wait to welcome her inaugural season guests next

year," stated Howard Sherman, President and CEO of Oceania Cruises.

Luigi Matarazzo, General Manager of the Merchant Ships Division of Fincantieri, stated, "More than 10 years have passed since we delivered Riviera to our friends of Oceania Cruises, from the same Sestri shipyard. The launch of this new ship therefore represents an important milestone not only of her construction, but also in the consolidation of the relationship with the shipping company. I am sure that Vista will give life to a new class of ships that will stand out for its refinement and technological advances."

Vista will sail her maiden voyage from Rome to Barcelona on April 14, 2023, followed by twelve additional European voyages prior to commencing sailings from the United States to the Canadian Maritimes and New England, the Panama Canal, and the Caribbean.

Cordelia Cruises launches first ever cruising experience from Tamil Nadu to Sri Lanka



Cordelia Cruises offers an experience that is beyond traditional travel experience, it makes you feel the epitome of everything luxury, warm and great. Best Cuisines, Best Entertainment options and all-day-around entertainment and activities on board!

BOTT DESK

Cordelia Cruises, the only one of its kind holiday destination, makes her debut in Chennai. It is from here that you could opt for a scintillating holiday by sea to Sri Lanka. The itineraries they offer are versatile with options that are spread over a number of days as well as room categories to meet everybody's needs and requirements. Take your pick from a 2 night, 3 night or 5 nights schedule and then sit back and surrender to the sounds and sights of the sea.

When you choose to cruise with Cordelia, you are opting for what could easily be one of your 'safest' travel options. Every crew member is double vaccinated. As for our guests, a double vaccination certificate is mandatory as is a negative RT-PCR report. This report is scanned on arrival. All Covid protocols are being strictly adhered to on board. From wedding and private events to a family holiday, Cordelia Cruises caters to experiences of all shapes and sizes. We are not only 6 months old today but have also served over 45000+ happy guests.

Fiji is open for fully vaccinated Indian travellers

India has been included as part of Fiji's 'Travel Partner' country list by Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport - Fiji, effective March 2, 2022. Thus, Indian Tourists can now travel to Fiji via the currently open transit routes of Singapore and Australia, to enjoy a "quarantine free" holiday in this picturesque paradise known for its incredible scenery and warm, welcoming people.

Travellers from India to Fiji must be fully vaccinated (Children under 18 can travel with a vaccinated adult), providing a negative PCR test taken within 2 days prior to departure or a negative RAT test taken within 24hrs prior to departure. Once they arrive on Fiji's shores, travellers can enjoy the best of Fiji knowing that everyone they interact with is adhering to the

highest health and safety practices.

"We are delighted to be able to welcome visitors from India once again. India continues to be one of our most prominent emerging markets and we look forward to receiving Indian travellers seeking premium and personalized experiences. In the coming months, we aim to capture a greater share of India's outbound travel market which will help shore up the long-term prospects of both our tourism sectors. From breath-taking sunsets to luxury vacation stays and our warm hospitality, we can't wait to welcome our Indian visitors to experience what it feels like to be in Paradise. Fiji is now open for happiness!" said **Brent Hill, CEO Tourism Fiji**.



GNTB presents future international strategies with "Barrier-Free Tourism Day"



For the 10th time, the German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is giving impetus to how the international travel industry can meet the growing demand for 'Travel for All' with its "Barrier-Free Tourism Day". The GNTB will focus on best practices for barrier-free planning and implementation of tourism facilities and events, the barrier-free experience of tourist attractions and the integration of new digital communication channels such as augmented, mixed and virtual reality at the 2022 barrier-Free Tourism Day.

Petra Hedorfer, Chair of the GNTB's Executive Board said, "Accessibility is a central element in the design of high-quality and sustainable tourism. All travellers benefit from the associated service orientation – people with impairments as well as older people or families with children. Our diverse inclusive offer already makes an effective contribution

to the socially responsible tourism of the future and strengthens our position among the international competition. The Accessible Tourism Day is an excellent platform to share the GNTB's know-how on the topic of inclusion and to network international experts with partners in German tourism."

Mr. Romit Theophilus, Director for India, The German National Tourist Office said, "Accessibility is just one of the things at which Germany excels. Visitors with disabilities can enjoy a carefree holiday in Germany, as their needs are already well and truly looked after in many of the country's regions. Thanks to steadfast commitment from the policy-makers and accommodation providers, accessibility has been increased over recent years and the necessary information provided for people with disabilities to plan their travel."

Saudi Arabia seeks to build ski tourism industry

Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, has launched Trojena, a new global destination for mountain tourism. The location is part of Neom, a new futuristic city in the country, and forms part of an unlikely plan to develop the tourism sector in the region.

bin Salman said, "Trojena will redefine mountain tourism for the world by creating a place based on the principles of ecotourism. It also confirms our commitment to be part of the global effort to protect the environment. Trojena will be an important addition to tourism in the region, a unique example of how Saudi Arabia is creating destinations based on its geographical and environmental diversity.

This forward-looking vision will ensure that mountain tourism will be another revenue stream to support the economic diversification while still preserving its natural resources for future generations." Trojena features a unique architecture where the captivating landscapes of Neom mountains "coexist in harmony with the tourist sites developed within them," offering a new and "unprecedented tourism experiences".

Outdoor skiing is a unique feature of Trojena that will provide an experience never before witnessed in the region, especially in Gulf countries known for their desert climates. Amateurs and professionals alike will be able to enjoy the many ski runs of various difficulties with an array of contrasting and breath-taking views, a statement from developers said.



'Why there is a need for global level certification across the globe'

Abhishek Biswas

There is something that we can all agree upon and this is the vast and unforeseen impact the COVID-19 sanitary crisis has had on all our lives. Covid-19 has affected every sector of the globe and the hospitality, travel and tourism sectors have been hit hard but we can't ignore the impact on society & environment.

The pandemic has pushed businesses across sectors to change the way they operate. Like so many industries, hospitality will also see both subtle and substantial shifts in the post-pandemic era. Some are already apparent today. It further emphasizes the changes which the big companies will have to bring about in terms of their services.

On the consumer side, if we look at, people are looking for trust, safety, assurance while traveling, including contactless check-ins and check-outs, and an added emphasis on hygiene and unadulterated environment. Consumer behaviour and eventually consumer spending have been, and will continue to be altered and business plans need to adapt to these new circumstances.

The recovery process after post-pandemic will be challenging as there is a need for trust & assurance that plays a pivotal role in enabling organizations to recover and rebuild in the near term, and thrive in the long term. Inclusion of certification to a hospitality industry would enhance the value and will help in reopening of establishments to a return to some degree of normality. Consumers need to trust that organizations are taking sufficient & appropriate action to protect their health. Every hospitality-sector business will need to actively engage with consumers and communicate the steps they're taking to keep customers and employees safe and demonstrate how they're living up to those commitments at every point of interaction.

They will need to respond and adapt to consumers' changed behaviours and expectations. And they will need to manage the operational and financial implications of doing business in the new normal. Those that do so effectively will be well positioned to overcome the challenges and seize the opportunities that are emerging in a changing business environment.

Companies that adapt their offerings to reflect changing preferences and behaviours demonstrate their desire to listen, understand, and respond to their customers. In the near term, this can help deepen consumer trust in the organization, fostering the kind of bond that can drive future growth and success. Consumers will remember the brands that paid attention and "took care" of them.

In a world where the competitors are increasing, certification offers hope about the credibility, validation of services, increased marketability, improved reputation, trust and confidence among consumers. Providing assurance should be the purpose of certification as it represents a third party stamp of approval that a product, service or system conforms to specified standards. It can enable companies to enhance their reputation and open up new markets, or simply ensure that they are able to operate.

The writer is founder at Sattvik Council of India



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IndiGo partners with MakeMyTrip for 6E Holidays

IndiGo is launching an air and land bundled package offering on its website and mobile app and has collaborated with MakeMyTrip to power this platform. IndiGo passengers will be offered a wide selection of air and land packages targeting various segments of travellers ranging from leisure, pilgrimage, adventure and business travellers.



BOTT DESK

IndiGo will use its extensive flights inventory across the network in conjunction with MakeMyTrip's vast inventory of hotels and activities, to offer a rich collection of holiday packages under 6E Holidays. IndiGo aims to offer a hassle-free holiday booking experience through its website and mobile app with a well-rounded and extensive range of holiday offerings.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo said, "We are delighted to collaborate with MakeMyTrip for 6E Holidays. This partnership will enable our passengers to seamlessly book flights, hotels and various activities bundled under one product. At IndiGo, we strive to offer unique experiences and this holiday package offering will enhance the travel experience of our customers.

Mr. Kumar further added, "With receding Covid wave, we expect a strong summer travel season after a gap of two years. These packages will help customers take advantage of best deals for their choice of destinations."

Speaking about the partnership, Vipul Prakash, COO, MakeMyTrip said, "This tie-up between leaders in Indian aviation and Indian online travel space only means incredible value for customers who are looking to book their holidays after pandemic-forced time spent indoors. We are going to leverage strong product capabilities and decades of experience that is sure to provide a delightful holiday booking experience for those looking to travel within India and even overseas. We will continue to deliver on our promise to offer incredible value to travellers across the country."

SriLankan Airlines adorns aircraft livery with 'Raid Amazonas 2022' insignia

SriLankan Airlines adorns one of its aircraft with customized livery to reaffirm its status as the official airline of the much-awaited 'Raid Amazonas 2022.' Raid Amazonas 2022 is an annual sporting event that features a large number of French female athletes competing their way to victory through multiple sports events and activities against the backdrop of an iconic tourist destination.

BOTT DESK

Every year, the event highlights an attractive tourist destination through inherent features such as its ecological beauty, citizens' way of life and culture, which are prominently showcased to the world through global media that follow the athletes in their trail.

The 20th edition of the event will take place in the areas surrounding the iconic Sigiriya rock fortress, rich in ecological beauty, cultural heritage and attributes of authentic village life in Sri Lanka. The first leg will take place from 13-23, March 2022 and the second leg is scheduled from 27 March – 6 April 2022. Over

550 participants are expected to join the event, including athletes and officials. The SriLankan aircraft with the special livery features iconic Sigiriya, the vibrant and unique backdrop of this year's event. This aircraft will be deployed to bring in athletes and officials from Paris to Sri Lanka for the event and would also continue to fly to many of the airline's other destinations in its scheduled operations, thus portraying Sri Lanka's stature as a sports and adventure destination.

SriLankan Airlines, a forerunner in the country's tourism promotion endeavors, expects this to inspire many discerning travellers from France to explore Sri Lanka in the future, supported by the airline's direct connectivity between the two countries.



ASTRO SPEAK

Tarot Card Reading is the art and science which helps understand the present status and the future course. It helps to apply course correction, if required. Tarot card can be used for shaping Career, Health, Finance, Business, Relationship, marriage, match-making etc. Ms. Richa Srivastava, a renowned Tarot Card reader conducts exclusive Tarot reading under her banner – Tathaastu. Here are her predictions for the New Year 2022.



Know what your stars say about 2022



ARIES (March 21 – April 20)

A professionally satisfying time. Good time to invest. Support from senior or colleagues will come your way. Follow a healthy routine. Include Yoga and walk in your regime. Relationship with partner Will strengthen further.



Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Taking stress will adversely affect your health. Take rest from your busy schedule. Incorporate meditation as a part of daily routine. Re-evaluate your actions at work place and make necessary changes as required. Challenging, busy and hectic schedules. Keep calm and hold back yourself in your relationship.



Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

Your hard work will pay dividends. If looking for job change or own venture, this is the time. Your investment decision will be good. You may offer support to needy. Take care of yourself and spend quality time with family.



Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

Remove anxiety. Be positive and look on the brighter side. Conflicts at career front will be resolved through honest conversations. Plan to manage your finances. Goal will be achieved and bond will be stronger with partner.



Leo (July 23 – August 21)

Follow a healthy routine. Include Yoga & walk in your regime. Travel for work is expected. New venture is imminent but be cautious and avoid risky investments. Think positively and identify the right opportunity for yourself. Appreciate & give time to your partner.



Virgo (August 22 – September 23)

Time to move forward with positive attitude. Quick healing from illness is expected. Maintain focus with concerted efforts. Search for the new job will take some more time. Spend time with family.



Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Take rest from your busy schedule. Incorporate meditation as a part of daily routine. Re-evaluate your actions at workplace and make necessary changes as required. Keep patience and have faith. Spiritual indulgence is beneficial.



Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

Be careful on health front. Take cautious decision on professional front. Avoid any risky investment. Avoid any conflict with anyone. Take time off for spending time with family. Include Yoga and meditation in your daily routine.



Sagittarius (November 23 – December 22)

You will be busy this week. Spend your money wisely. Respond intelligently to the questions asked by people. Be optimistic in this phase. Take a break and do your research, as you have to work hard to make things happen. Mind and heart are at conflict. Learn to control the emotions. Spend some time with your spouse.



Capricorn (December 23 – January 20)

Time to move forward with positive attitude. Quick healing from illness is expected. Maintain focus with concerted efforts. Search for the new job will take some more time. Spend time with family.



Aquarius (January 21 – February 19)

Your wish will come true, soon. Good time to start a new venture. Put your ideas into action now. In case you have had health issues, it's time to focus on healing. Enjoy life with family and friends.



Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Take precautions while travelling this week. Do not undertake dangerous assignments. Avoid dwelling on any negative thoughts. Do not rush to decisions wrt partnerships and business. Chances of promotion are eminent. You will need to change behaviour to maintain happiness and prosperity in personal relationships. Have to be extra careful in matters related to finance

India and Australia sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tourism cooperation



India and Australia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tourism cooperation in the field of Tourism on 11th February 2022 in New Delhi. The MoU on behalf of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, was signed by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles and on behalf of Government of Australia it was signed by The Hon Dan Tehan MP, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Investment.

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The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of tourism will enhance cooperation and encourage Expansion of bilateral relations in tourism. The MoU will facilitate Exchange of information and data related to tourism, Cooperation between tourism stakeholders, particularly hotels and tour operators, Cooperation and exchanges between training and education providers in tourism and hospitality, Investment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, Visits of tour operators and wholesalers, media and opinion makers, High quality, safe, ethical and sustainable tourism development, Interest in major cultural, artistic and sporting events, Opportunities for traveller education on applicable laws, rules and instructions in each other's country and Enhanced tourism engagement in multilateral fora.

Australia is one of the most important tourism generating markets for India (ranked 4th in terms of Foreign Tourist Arrivals to the country in 2019 and contributing 3.4% in total tourism share of foreign tourists in the country). The signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Australia will be instrumental in increasing tourists' arrival from this important source market.

India and Australia had previously signed a Memorandum of Understanding on tourism cooperation in the field of tourism on 18.11.2014. Under the framework of the said MoU three meeting of Joint Working Group Meeting on tourism between India and Australia were conducted. This above Memorandum of Understanding had expired in the year 2019.

The MoU facilitated promotion of tourist traffic between two countries. The number of Australian visited India has increased consistently in the last few years. In 2016, there were 2,93,625 Australian tourists visited India which increased to 3,67,241 in 2019 and Number of Indians visited Australia also increased consistently from 2,62,250 to 5,89,539 in 2019. From 27th November 2014, India is offering Electronic Tourist Visa to the citizens of Australia.

Presently, Ministry of Tourism has MoUs with 45 countries. The present MoU between

India and Australia in the field of Tourism is expected to give a fillip to tourism promotion post pandemic between two countries. Meanwhile, in order to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the State Governments, Union Territory Administrations and various implementation agencies, the Ministry of Tourism has constituted Swadesh Darshan Awards in different categories. The awards will highlight best practices including achievement of planned objectives, innovative approach, adoption of sustainability principals in planning, design and operations, efficient project monitoring, ability to attract private investments in peripheral development and efforts undertaken to ensure optimal operations and maintenance etc. To begin with, the Ministry of Tourism has decided to invite entries under - Best Tourist Interpretation Centre, Best Log Hut Facility, Best MICE Facility, Best Cafeteria, Best Craft Haat/ Souvenir Shop facility, Best Sound and Light Show and Best Waterfront Development (Beach/ River/ Lake etc.).

The Ministry of Tourism has asked the State Governments/ UT Administrations to submit their entries online. The Ministry of Tourism under its flagship scheme of 'Swadesh Darshan' has sanctioned 76 projects in 31 States / Union Territories of India for more than Rs.5500 Crore. As part of this scheme, tourism related infrastructure has been developed at more than 500 tourist destinations.

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