

A lot depends on international travel

► Contd from page 3



Jatinder Taneja
VC, PATA India Chapter

“ At present, we don't have big expectations from year 2021. From what we are observing, while domestic tourism has already begun, the inbound business will still take time to start. Even as the vaccine's discovery gives us as well as the industry hope to revive, the path is not free of challenges. In my opinion, making the vaccine available for everyone and administering most of the world's population is something that will surely take time. We are hoping for some inbound business to start from August 2021. ”

“ Year 2021 is like a silver lining to a dark cloud that has engulfed our country, the tourism industry in particular. We can see light at the end of the tunnel because almost 60-70% of domestic flights are operating and we hope that in 2021, all air bubbles will turn into scheduled international flights and visas will start getting issued. We are hopeful of good news, as not only in Russia and America but also in India, the vaccines are in stages of completion and distribution. This has given us a lot of hope and we are confident that by the end of 2021, we should be back to pre-COVID days. ”



Subhash Goyal
Secretary General, FAITH



Sandeep Dwivedi
COO, InterGlobe Technology Quotient

“ According to me, year 2021 shall emerge as a progressive year for the travel and tourism industry, swapping limitations with innovations. We expect a huge demand for travel to begin as soon as the endearing no-more COVID-fear is affirmed through vaccination. A strong collaboration between technology and travel is also anticipated, leading to a reformative metamorphosis of how travellers interact with the industry during several touchpoints, including check-in, boarding, lounging, dining, flying and most importantly, returning to out-of-home activities. ”

“ There will almost certainly be a travel recovery early this year as our industry has faced and survived similar challenges before, like the 9/11 attack, the 2008 recession, as well as SARS and NIPA. Even though nobody can predict what will happen in the future, one thing is sure that we won't be able to travel as freely as before. We at IAAI believe that learning from past experiences, industry stakeholders will try to understand the value, virtue and goodwill of unity within the industry, and work together for a speedy recovery of travel and tourism. ”



Biji Eapen
National President, IAAI



Ankur Bhatia
Executive Director, Bird Group

“ There hasn't been any help from the government, but we are hoping that in the Budget this year, the government will at least not give short shrift to the sector that employs millions. With the vaccine almost here, we are hoping that the sector will revive in 2021, but that also depends how soon international travel starts and domestic airline capacity returns to pre-COVID levels. It's important that international flights resume as most of the countries around the world have a defined quarantine procedure and passengers can decide accordingly. ”

“ We should not hesitate in taking tough measures, lesser credit in the market and having an online portal. Hence, we should all embrace technology. Going forward, the travel industry will definitely see a boom, maybe starting April. It's possible that leisure travel may see a revival sooner than business travel, which will take a little longer. It may take a few years to come back to normal though. This also depends on different markets, as international travel from India may recover slower than travel within Europe or America. I think, domestic travel in India will continue to see huge growth. ”



Deepak Narula
Managing Director, GRNConnect



Mahendra Vakharia
MD, Pathfinders Holidays

“ The biggest learning for me personally is the reinforcement of my belief that spending time to build and nurture relationships is very important and always helpful in life. We are simple actors in the drama called 'life', and have to play our role as given by the director (the supreme power), nurture and respect Mother Earth and take care of her. My expectation for 2021 is hope that the human race will be wiser from the experience and impact of the last nine months of the pandemic and realise what wrong we were doing and rectify it for the betterment of the human race. ”

“ I believe that in 2021, there is going to be a massive change in the way of working. The first and foremost example is digital communication, which has given a way to all corporates to carry on their meetings without organising a physical event. They don't have to hire a hotel or take the staff to a destination to carry on the meetings. Work-from-home is a culture that is here to stay, so is online food delivery. Even the way people do weddings has changed. Money transactions are already happening online and this goes for all kinds of payments. ”



Lajpat Rai
MD, Lotus Trans Travels



PP Khanna
President, ADTOI

“ We are looking forward to 2021 as a tourism growth year for our country. Tour operators have a lot of expectations as domestic tourism has started growing slowly, but we are also expecting moratoriums and loans from the government and banks. Only then would we be able to survive and revive. While MOT is supporting the tourism and hospitality industry, we expect Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Commerce to also support us. Till the vaccine is launched, there will be a fear in the minds of people. However, it will still take another 5-6 months to see full growth in the tourism industry. ”

“ We have high expectations from 2021 and we have started preparing for the upcoming holiday season as well. We are also working on new business strategies to tap the burgeoning domestic market that is looking for relaxing and safe holidays. Our properties' USP is their location, which offers natural social distancing, a greener environment and huge spaces, thus naturally adhering to a COVID-safe environment. In 2021, we will also be adding new properties to our existing portfolio and we hope that the year will be a fruitful one not only for us but for the entire hospitality industry. ”



Abhinash Manghani
CEO, WelcomHeritage



Homa Mistry
CEO, Trail Blazer Tours

“ If we do 50% of the business we used to do pre-COVID, we are home. We know that the same business will not happen in 2021, but if we are able to achieve 50% of that, I think we would have achieved enough for 2021. After that it should be normal. Hence, we are holding on and are positive that things will bounce back and continue smoothly. We have seen many problems before, like Mumbai attacks, Tsunami, 9/11, 2018 economic crisis, plague, etc. We survived earlier and I am sure we will survive now as well. It might take time, but things would be fine. ”

“ Sometimes travel companies have extravagant expenses like marketing, freebies, giving credits, exploiting the suppliers, and giving unnecessary benefits to customers. With the COVID-19 pandemic having exhausted resources, all this will end, I hope, because it only reduces margins and in such a situation, you stand nowhere. Hence, in 2021, I am sure the market will correct and I think operators will have a responsibility among themselves because many of us will be out of business. Hence, it is necessary to work in a sustainable way. ”



Ravi Gosain
MD, Erco Travels

Contd on page 27 ►