

TAFI files writ petition in apex court for cash refunds from airlines

Disha Shah Ghosh | Mumbai

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) has filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court (SC) seeking clear directives from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on cash refunds from airlines amid massive cancellation of bookings due to the lockdown and complete suspension of air traffic.

refusing cash refunds and instead forcing us to accept credit shell or refund vouchers. At a time when airlines globally are going bust, we fear the booking money being stuck with the airlines would turn into unsecured credit, and our credibility with the customer will only take a beating further."

Lulla said that earlier IATA followed a weekly settlement system, and airline refunds

were issued in 7 days. "However, IATA, through its 824r resolution is asking agents to file RA (Refund Application) which is a long process. The lifting of the lockdown has only complicated the matter further. When we were left with no recourse we decided to file the petition. We expect the petition to be taken up for hearing in 10 days." ♦

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PRADIP LULLA
President, TAFI

Pradip Lulla, President, TAFI, said, "Earlier we had intervened in a petition filed by Pravasi Legal Cell, which is an NGO. However, on Friday June 5, 2020, we filed a sole application in the Supreme Court against MoCA and DGCA. Refunds have become a contentious issue, and the matter has become even more complicated with the resumption of domestic flights. Policies are not stable, and our credibility as travel agents is at stake."

Citing examples of the US Department of Transportation and European Commission who have directed airlines to issue cash refunds or face sanctions, Lulla said it is surprising that the Indian regulator continues to be 'ambiguous' in its approach. "The charter of civil aviation clearly states that passengers are liable for cash refunds, treating it as a fundamental right. However, our demands have been falling on deaf ears with airlines

IAAI seeks clarity from DGCA, MoCA & IATA on carrying alcohol-based hand sanitizers onboard

TBM Staff | Mumbai

At a time when the aviation industry has started limping back to normalcy with the resumption of domestic flights, IAAI has pointed out to the urgent need of clear policy directives on carrying dangerous goods to ensure compliance and safety of aircraft with the Indian government allowing passengers to carry 350 ml of alcohol-based hand sanitizers on-board due to ambiguity in defining its chemical composition.

According to Biji Eapen, President, IAAI, there are serious security risks in allowing each passenger to carry alcohol-based hand sanitizers without any regulated guidelines on the chemical composition and characteristic properties. In the Indian scenario, several manufacturers and vendors are selling hand sanitizers containing ethanol or isopropyl alcohol with 60-95% in volume due to the lack of appropriate regulatory control by government authorities. The flashpoint of a flammable liquid may be altered by the presence of an impurity, wherein, chemical combination and percentage of volume determine the vulnerability of the product. And chemical engineers said that the frequent use of sanitizers inside the flight will

increase the vapour concentration of inflammable alcohol posing a high risk, Eapen said.

Raising concerns on the lapses in the Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) guidelines, Eapen has approached the Indian aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and IATA (International Air Transport Association) Safety & Standards. He is waiting to hear from them.

Talking about this, Eapen said, "This is a technical issue and requires clarity so that every stakeholder in the aviation business from aircraft manufacturers to airlines to cabin crew and ground staff is aware, and trained well. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers contain ethanol or isopropyl

alcohol which are flammable liquids and can be easily ignited in the air at ambient temperatures. Currently, there is no medical body to regulate the percentage of the components used in hand sanitizers, and the permissible limit of the liquid to be carried on an aircraft to assure the safety of passengers as well as the aircraft. What is required is complete clarity to manufacturers of hand sanitizers, and necessary directions on the volume of components to be used for carrying the liquid on an aircraft."



BIJI EAPEN
President, IAAI

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Staying Relevant with Changing Times, TAAI launches digital version of NamasTAAI

Prasenjit Chakraborty | Mumbai

The TAAI (Travel Agent Association of India) has unveiled the digital version of its bi-monthly magazine, 'NamasTAAI' in



Jyoti Mayal
President, TAAI

issue in the tourism industry," she said.

Describing the digital launch as path breaking, Sharma said that under the stewardship of Jyoti Mayal, the industry will see many such initiatives in the near future. She appealed everyone to extend their wholehearted support to Mayal for the growth of the association.

Commenting on the launch, Mayal, "This is the best time to launch our digital version of NamasTAAI. It is a wonderful magazine, and provides a plethora of information on important developments in the industry. Through the digital copy, our reach will be far more than our print edition. Apart from other activities, this digital version will provide every detail of what we have done in the lockdown period. My vision is to make it a complete knowledge platform, which apart from enhancing knowledge also increases the business of our members."

"The presence of past presidents shows how strong our bonding is. It will help reinvent ourselves," said Mayal.

Commenting on the launch, Sunil Kumar, Immediate Past President,

TAAI, said that launching of digital issue is a giant step and will help solve many challenges. "It has been our endeavour to empower our esteemed members and the launch is a testimony of that," said Kumar.



Meenakshi Sharma
Director General - Tourism,
Government of India

association with **TravelBiz Monitor**. The magazine in its new avatar was launched by Chief Guest Meenakshi Sharma, Director General – Tourism, Government of India, through video conferencing.

Besides the office-bearers and national Managing Committee, the Past Presidents of TAAI graced the momentous occasion. Unveiling the digital magazine, Sharma said that she excited to be in the midst of an august gathering that has vociferously taken up the issues of the travel & tourism industry. "The launch of the digital version of NamasTAAI is happening at an appropriate time. TAAI has taken the right step at the right time. It is time to show leadership," she said. She also appealed to the stakeholders to come together and find a solution to the various issues bothering the industry.

"I strongly believe that activity in the industry will start soon by adopting new normal," said an optimistic Sharma. She also congratulated TAAI for frequently interacting with the government during this difficult time. "Feel free to come to us with any new suggestion and we are ready to give you a patient hearing for resolving any



He also congratulated Managing Committee of TAAI for tying up with **TravelBiz Monitor** for bringing out the digital version NamasTAAI.

Another former President, Iqbal Mulla, assured all possible help to the association for the growth of the industry. "I am delighted to know the launch of the digital version of NamasTAAI, and congratulate Mayal and her team all the success."

Rajji Rai who couldn't join the video conference, sent his good wishes via an audio message, whereas Ashwini Kakkar was excited with the launch of NamasTAAI as a step forward to embrace technology in the changing times. Neeraj Gehi, the first female President of TAAI, was happy that the association has stayed relevant, and has been actively taking the cause of the industry forward at all possible forums. ♦

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No Succour for Tourism

The popular perception that the government 'cares' for the tourism and hospitality industry was shattered when there was no mention of the sector in the INR 20 lakh core economic stimulus package announced by the Finance Minister. This, despite the fact that tourism generated USD 240 billion or 9.2 per cent of our GDP in 2018, and supported 42.67 million jobs that account for 8.1 per cent of total employment of India.

Was it wrong for the stakeholders to expect stimulus package from the government? Recently, the Union Tourism Minister said that his Ministry's focus is on rebooting the tourism economy by reviving demand (domestic travel). It is imperative for the government to understand that the complete shutdown of the travel and hotel industry stopped the cash flow, and earnings for companies reached nadir. This also puts millions of jobs in jeopardy. Hence, government intervention was only to be expected to steer the industry out of the woods. Given the magnitude of the pandemic, it is essential to ensure cash inflow. This will help the companies to survive; revival comes as second priority.

The trouble for the industry got further compounded when the Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported sharp cuts on discretionary spending by consumers. What is even worse, the federal bank of the country does not expect much improvement either in the next fiscal. This is also going to affect the tourism and hospitality industry as they largely depend on consumer behaviour. The opening of hotels and restaurants with a stagger is not going to help unless consumers start spending.

Hence, hotel and restaurant owners must come out with attractive price propositions for food items to lure people. It is because no one knows what the future holds out. As a result, this will make the consumers think twice before shelling out hard earned money on items which are not considered essential. Not only that, consumers will also re-evaluate their existing lifestyles and make adjustments accordingly. Eating out in weekends may not be a priority for many in the changed dispensation. Along with assurance of sanitation and hygiene, offering a tempting price tag appears to be equally important. Hope, the sector will deftly address the issue, sooner rather than later. ♦

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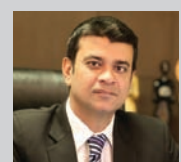
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NIMA calls on individual states to create dedicated policy framework for MICE Travel

Scraps all its chapters to create a unified national forum

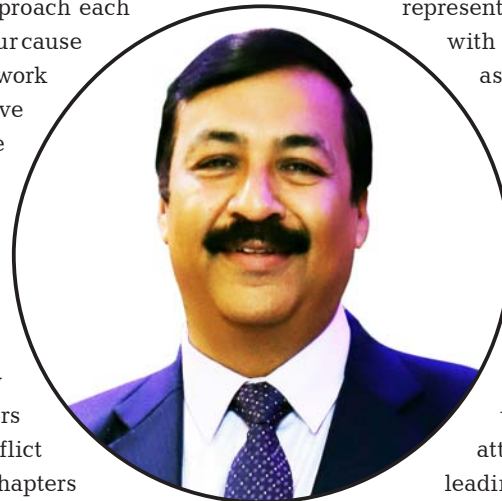
Disha Shah Ghosh | Mumbai

The Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA) has devised a strategy of individually approaching state governments to create a dedicated policy roadmap for promotion of MICE Travel. Some of the key areas that NIMA is urging the states governments to consider are industry status for tourism sector, special incentive policies, infrastructure development for MICE activities, focus on MICE for smaller, niche groups, and training and skill development.

Sharing the association's plans, Jagdeep Bhagat, National Coordinator, NIMA said, "We have realised that because of the vastness of the MICE vertical, the focus has always been on large conventions. What is missing is the importance accorded to the high-end incentive groups or niche corporate group movement of 40-50 pax. Moreover, the MICE segment is in dire need of skill development which is currently missing.

Therefore, we decided to approach each state individually to root for our cause of creating a policy framework for the MICE sector. We have already started talking to the state governments of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir will soon join the list."

Moreover, the National Governing Committee of NIMA has done away with the individual chapters to avoid creating a conflict centre. "We had existing chapters in Telengana, Vizag and a newly-launched in Mumbai. However, there has been a realisation that these sub-groups would only further complicate the process while making



JAGDEEP BHAGAT
National Coordinator, NIMA

representations to the government with the sheer number of associations approaching them. We decided to create a representation with the local administration and states as an umbrella body so that the process is effective."

He was of the view that fractured representation of issues was only diverting the attention of the government leading to scatted allocation of resources, and there was need for a common working ground for an adequate and effective approach. ♦

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Virginia Tourism Corporation successfully organises Destination Webinar in India

TBM Staff | Mumbai

Virginia Tourism Corporation conducted a successful webinar on June 03, 2020 for travel professionals across India. The webinar threw light on the myriad product offerings of Virginia, with its tagline "Virginia is for Lovers".

This live webinar highlighted Virginia as a year-round destination, with diverse geography and climate for all types of travelers. The two major gateways airports- Washington Dulles International Airport and Washington Regan International Airport located in Northern Virginia were

also highlighted, along with how easy it is to connect from neighbouring destinations like Philadelphia and Washington DC.

The webinar also put light upon some of the key tourism offerings of Virginia including its rich history, unique culture, magnificent mountains, beautiful beaches, outdoor craft breweries, wineries, and country music.

The webinar witnessed participation of over 460 travel agents and generated a lot of interest on the destination. It enhanced the participants knowledge about Virginia, which will assist them in curating itineraries. ♦



No recovery for adversely affected aviation sector before 2023: Moody's

TBM Staff | Mumbai

The impact of nationwide lockdown induced to combat the novel coronavirus has adversely affected the aviation sector. According to Moody's Investors Service, the air passenger demand will be critically depressed in 2021 globally and the airline industry will not see a substantial recovery before 2023.

Major factors such as health concerns, variations in corporate travel policies, possible restrictions on international arrivals and lower discretionary spending because of lower GDP, and higher unemployment figures will restrain air passenger demand into 2022, Moody's said in its statement.

It is a challenging situation to forecast about the air passenger demand in 2023 due to the uncertainty of the coronavirus pandemic.

Moody's further said that most of the airlines have enhanced their liquidity at the cost of increasing debt burdens,

however powerful airlines supported by the state have significantly improved liquidity since March. Airlines with high ratings have adequate liquidity to survive on average for about 450 days at current low activity levels. However, the situation can be difficult for the weaker airlines with insufficient liquidity if the grounding continues till next year that is 2021. ♦



NEW APPOINTMENT

Gregg Caren, President and CEO, PHLCVB

Caren most recently served as the Executive Vice President, Sales and Strategic Business Development for ASM Global. Caren has more than three decades of industry experience, and served in various senior leadership positions.

In his new role, Caren will oversee the PHLCVB's efforts to promote and sell Philadelphia as a premier destination for meetings, conventions, sporting events, overseas travelers, and group tour visitors. He will also serve as the chief liaison for the PHLCVB's tourism and hospitality partners, including the Pennsylvania Convention Center, as well as national industry associations, and the City of Philadelphia.



International tourist numbers could fall 60-80% in 2020, UNWTO Reports

- International tourism down 22% in Q1 and could decline by 60-80% over the whole year
- 67 million fewer international tourists up to March translates into US\$80 billion in lost exports
- UNWTO has outlined three possible future scenarios depending on how the crisis unfolds

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a 22% fall in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020, the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows. According to the United Nations specialized agency, the crisis could lead to an annual decline of between 60% and 80% when compared with 2019 figures. This places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

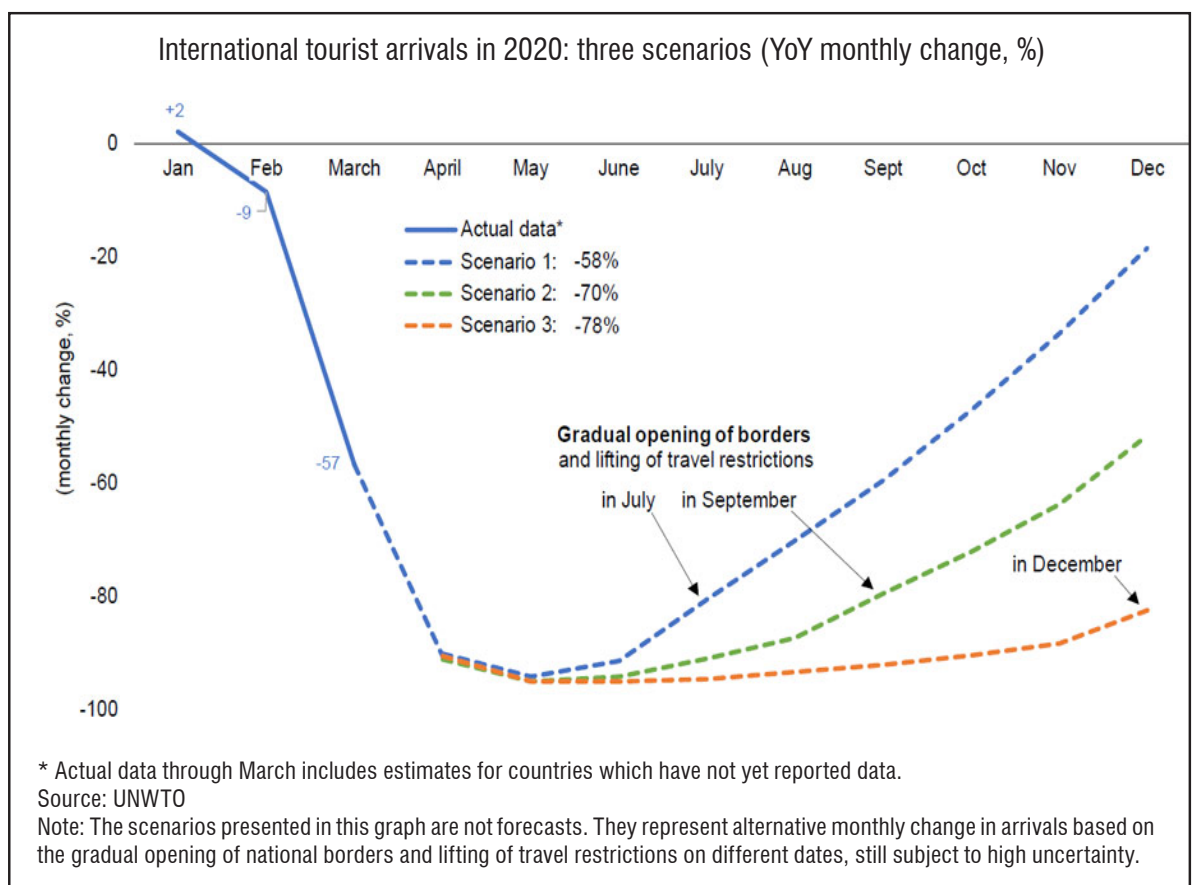
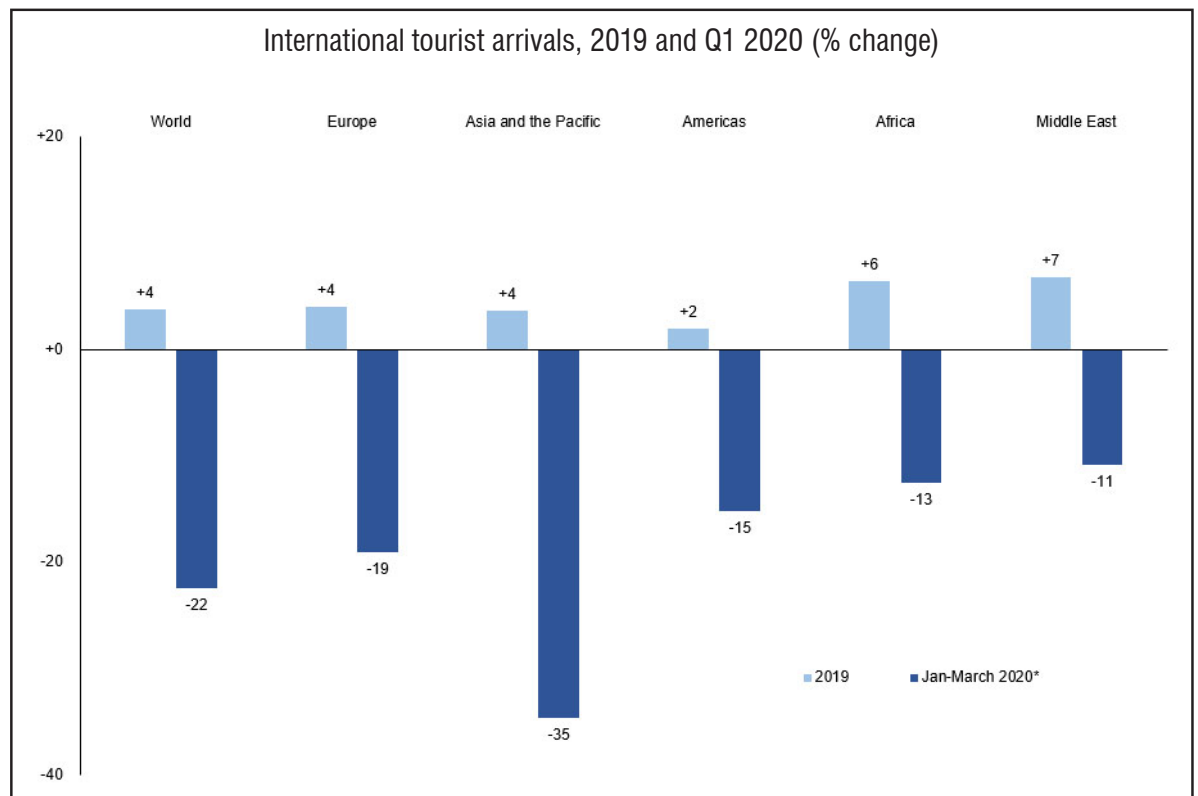
UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said: "The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy."

Available data reported by destinations point to a 22% decline in arrivals in the first three months of the year, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. Arrivals in March dropped sharply by 57% following the start of a lockdown in many countries, as well as the widespread introduction of travel restrictions and the closure of airports and national borders. This translates into a loss of 67 million international arrivals and about US\$80 billion in receipts (exports from tourism).

Although Asia and the Pacific shows the highest impact in relative and absolute terms (-33 million arrivals), the impact in Europe, though lower in percentage, is quite high in volume (-22 million).

International Tourism 2020 Scenarios

Prospects for the year have been downgraded several times since the outbreak and uncertainty continues to dominate. Current scenarios point to possible declines in arrivals of 58% to 78% for the year. These depend on the speed of containment and the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders. The following scenarios for 2020 are based on three possible dates for the



gradual opening up of international borders.

- Scenario 1 (-58%) based on the gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions in early July
- Scenario 2 (-70%) based on the gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions in early September
- Scenario 3 (-78%) based on the gradual opening of international borders and easing of travel restrictions only in early December.

Under these scenarios, the impact of the loss of demand in international travel could translate into:

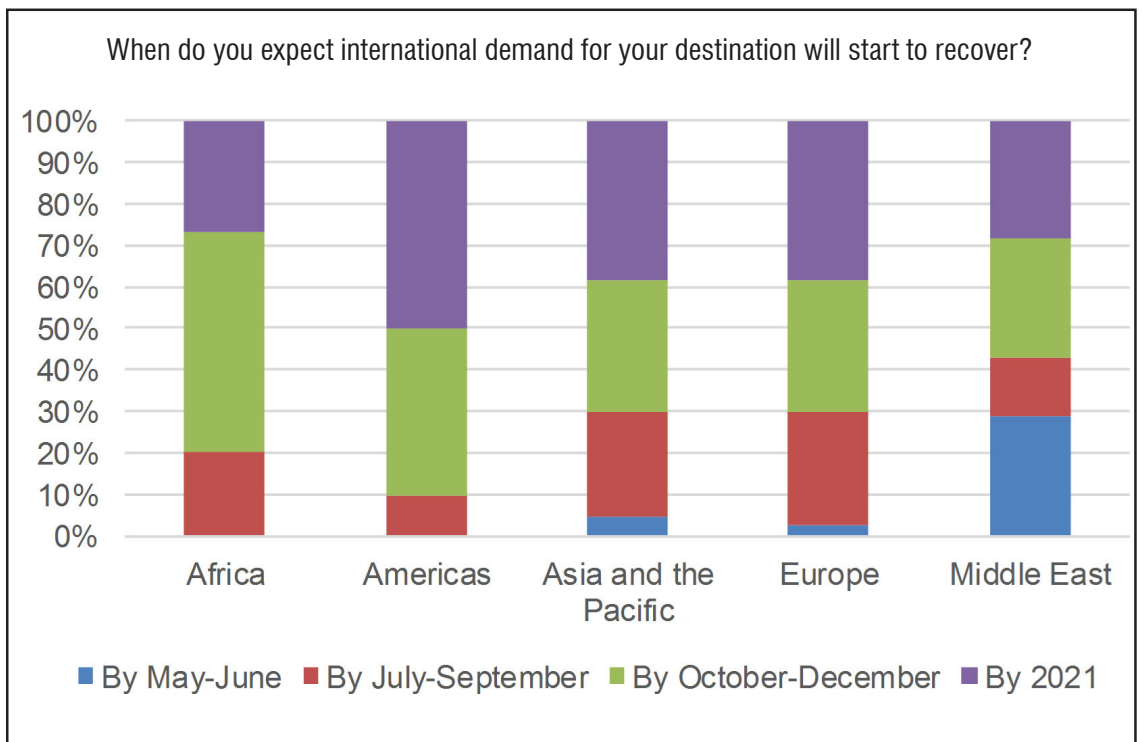
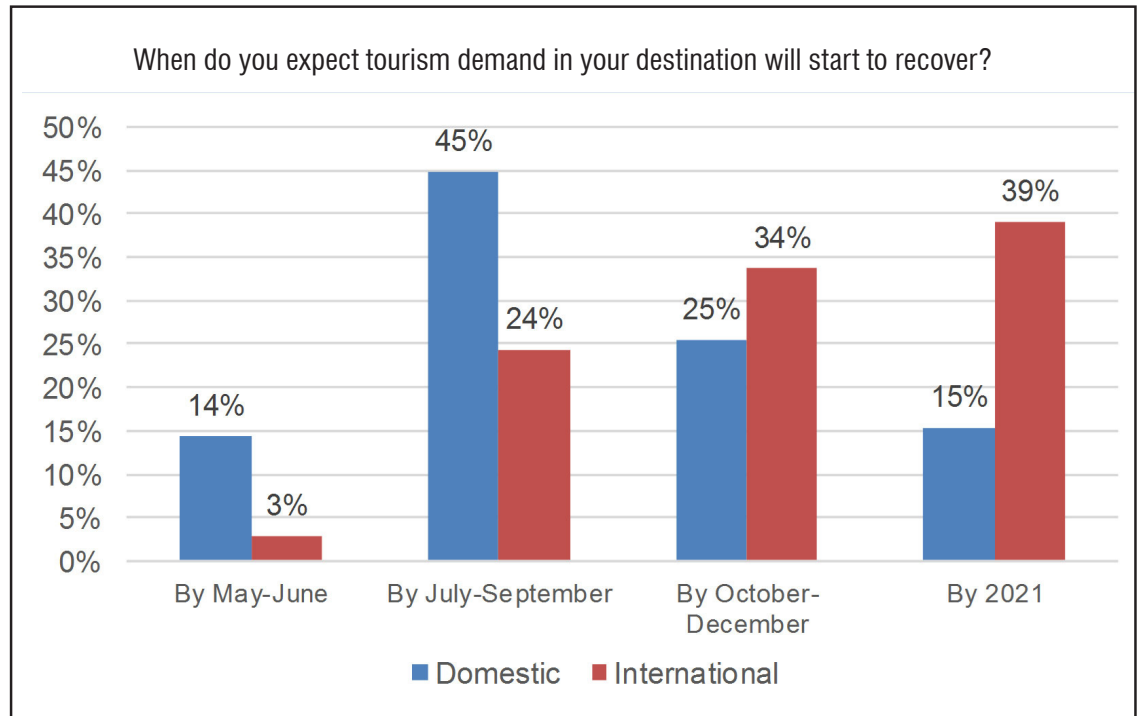
- Loss of 850 million to 1.1 billion international tourists
- Loss of US\$910 billion to US\$1.2 trillion in export revenues from tourism
- 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk

This is by far the worst crisis that international tourism has faced since records began (1950). The impact will be felt to varying degrees in the different global regions and at overlapping times, with Asia and the Pacific expected to rebound first.

Experts see recovery in 2021

Domestic demand is expected to recover faster than international demand according to the UNWTO Panel of Experts survey. The majority expects to see signs of recovery by the final quarter of 2020 but mostly in 2021. Based on previous crises, leisure travel is expected to recover quicker, particularly travel for visiting friends and relatives, than business travel.

The estimates regarding the recovery of international travel is more positive in Africa and the Middle East with most experts foreseeing recovery still in 2020. Experts in the Americas are the least optimistic and least likely to believe in recovery in 2020, while in Europe and Asia the outlook is mixed, with half of the experts expecting to see recovery within this year. ♦



Jurgen Bailom, President and CEO, Jalesh Cruises sheds light on their plans for guest safety with additional sanitization measures and fleet expansion in an conversation with Disha Shah Ghosh.



The ship can only navigate when in speed, and according to the international port regulations, no ship is allowed on the port or the port premises during a hurricane, tsunami or a cyclone. Since this was the first cyclone coming from the Arabian Gulf in 129 years, even Karnika had to leave.

With regards to the arrest, it is because of a dispute that we have with the fuel company, and it is a pretty much, standard procedure, because when we entered the Covid-era the fuel prices had plunged sharply, however, the price we were charged was completely different. It's a dispute, and the oil company has filed a court case, and because of Covid-19 and court being closed, the matter couldn't reach a logical solution. Six to seven more ships which are in Mumbai are going through the same; and there isn't anything significant. The issue will be sorted out very soon.

Q The current situation is unprecedented. What kind of impact do you expect on the cruise industry globally considering you have spent over three decades working on ships?

The impact is very unprecedented and huge. It is not just impacting the cruise industry, but every sector of tourism. Unfortunately, the cruise industry got singled out due to couple of incidents of cruise companies which perhaps didn't manage the crisis really well.

Generally, we as an industry are resilient, and this is not the first time we have dealt with a health outbreak, however, not in terms of damage and pandemic. In the past, we have dealt by Ebola, Zika Virus, SARS, etc. We are taking a bad ruff for everyone else failing because cruise ships are the cleanest environment, more so than hospitals. Everyone is now using hand sanitizers; however, we have been using them mandatorily since more than 20 years in all public areas and at the entrance of restaurants. All the measures that are now being implemented have been basic standards in the cruise industry since almost two decades now.

On board we are in a controlled environment, and employees on the ship are staying there all the time and they are the healthiest people with fully certified medical assessment,

'We need all service providers to be prepared to start cruise operations'

and they undergo random medical checks. On top of it, the environment we have on the ship is clean and very healthy. However, if a virus is brought on the ship, and it spreads all over, then it becomes a problem because of the controlled space. Overall, the ship in general is the cleanest environment, and is a safe heaven. Besides the existing systems and process, we will implement all additional measures to offer a safe and healthy environment for families and guests of all age groups.

Q At a time when the lockdown was announced Karnika faced some problems with regards to de-boarding its crew members, and its subsequent arrest. Your comments?

There is a process and procedure in place to hire crew on board. The ship came from Dubai without guests in the beginning of March. We decided to support the Indian government's decision and lead by example, and we put the ship on self-quarantine for a month. We never had a COVID-positive case on board; and we didn't have an asymptomatic case on the ship until now. Cruise travel was suspended in India till

September, and majority of our crew was from across India and some are international nationalities like Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Ukraine, Russia, South Africa, Nepal, etc. Our 700 crew members represent 40 different nationalities. Each of these countries has a different protocol for their citizens to return home. And we were working to send 400 of our Indian crew home, but every state has a different process and procedure, and it was never aligned. Therefore, it took some time, but we wanted to ensure we send our crew home without any fear of outbreak. Until then the ship was the safest environment, and it was our responsibility to ensure that the crew reached home safely and was not held up anywhere. Eventually, all of them went home safely.

With regards to the rest of the question, the story is different from what it is projected. When there is a cyclone or a depression or a weather calamity with a certain amount strong winds, because of the height of the ship being 14 floors and about 20,000 sq feet of area, if the ship and the crew are stationed on the port, there is a fear of ship capsizing.

Q The cruise industry in India had just started to gain visibility among travellers as well as recognition from the government. What kind of efforts will be required for cruise travel to restart post monsoon, especially towards gaining consumer confidence?

We are a little fortunate and unfortunate at the same time. Corona started during the period when we were to move the ship to Dubai; and what we did during this period, we rebuilt our entire reservation systems, our sales strategy and build APIs. We have been working very hard behind the scenes to implement our new sales structure which will go live very soon. Besides that, we were working with health officials and port authorities and key departments in the government to come up with SOPs for port operations and cruise operators in regards to Covid-19.

Moreover, we have developed our own 'Healthy Waves' health programme for sanitization and social distancing on the lines of our environmental programme called, Clean Waves which we are proud of. Instead of having one show at night,

we will have four-five shows in a day to space out the audience.

We will offer day-long check-in process and the same procedure will follow for the disembarkation day. We have a complete medical facility onboard, and our kitchens, restaurants and casinos are sanitized three times a day – for every single item. We are making sure guests are aware of this; we take temperature measurements for our crew daily. The challenge is this virus is asymptomatic, and unfortunately one realises days later to have infected 300-400 people. Sooner or later, we will have a procedure in place to have a vaccination before travelling once it's available.

We are fortunate that we are operating in India and follow the same regulations required for all businesses.

Q Cruise ships hire multi-national crew. Will COVID-19 have any impact on your crew hiring process?

We already hire 60-70% of Indian crew. The challenge is behind the scene talent onboard that is not available in India. The requirement of medical certificate and assessment is in place and that will continue.

Q Jalesh had plans to introduce its second ship. What's the status on that in the current scenario?

Timelines have shifted a bit because of priority. Our plans have not changed, and our hunger for growth is the same. I won't be able to say that the ship will be here in October-November because we need to first get our existing ship to start sailing after dry dock. From September, we have to ensure all the ports, destinations and tour operators are prepared to operate. We need airports, taxis, hotels, buses and all other service providers to be ready. It will require a little bit more effort; and the travel & tourism in India is very strong; we will work closely with the trade to start the restart process.

Q With regards to the India Cruise Lines Association (inCLA), what are the developments?

inCLA is in touch with all the Port Chairmen as well as state governments. This year is going to be busy for inCLA with regards to drafting SOPs, offering suggestions to the governments, and bringing cruise travel back on track. ♦

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NEWS ROUND UP

Global experts constitute 'Start-Up Mentor Board'

Aim is to offer support through mentoring, collaboration & financial assistance

TBM Staff | Mumbai

With COVID-19 pandemic worse impacting global travel, players in the industry across verticals are looking at newer measures to begin business recovery. With work from home and video conferencing becoming the order of the day, technology seems to be increasingly becoming an inseparable part of the business process.

At this crucial juncture, experts from across varied sectors across different parts of the world have come together on a common platform, 'Start-Up Mentor Board' (SMB). The idea behind constituting SMB is to mentor, guide and assist travel, tourism and hospitality start-ups in using digital technology to scale operations.

These mentors are well-known business leaders from diverse backgrounds in business transformation, technology, digital and e-commerce. They bring their strengths in emerging technologies, market place models, payment solutions and IT infrastructure & consulting, besides a wide integration and connect with the global travel eco-system in terms of collaborations, alliances and business synergies.

The Board is spearheaded by Ashish Kumar, a well-known thought leader and Co-Chairman of FICCI Travel Technology Committee. The Board comprises Bharti Maan, who has lead start-ups to scale rapidly, Patrick Richards, an experienced travel industry leader in the UK



, Anuj Jain, who has lead technology based transformational initiatives, Kartik Sharma, an artificial intelligence practitioner, Karthik Venkataraman, a digital transformation & an e-commerce visionary, Jure Bratkic, who has lead innovative solutions in the USA and Kyasha Bhoola, with advanced insight in the travel industry across Africa.

Commenting on this initiative, Kumar said, "The pandemic has flattened the world; more so the travel & tourism industry. Obviously, with all of us there is a strong desire to give in terms of our knowledge and intellectual property (IP), which will help carry us across the line." He spoke about his initiative 'Coffee with Ashish' on Facebook, an interactive session held twice a week, where he speaks to business leaders across verticals on business strategies, marketing plans and recovery from crisis. These sessions leverage the power of technology and social media for a wider reach.

Kumar believes that technology and automation are the new normal. Embracing technology across business processes is the only way forward, and therefore the SMB will play an instrumental role in assisting players in the space by sharing knowledge, experience, case studies and business plans.

Sharing his views, Richards stated, "Today's business challenge to "do more with less," is daunting and will only be achieved deploying technology. The board felt a calling to put its collective professional experience at the

disposal of smart entrepreneurs; lending them a hand to develop great new market ready solutions." ♦

IAAI seeks clarity...

CONTD FROM PG 01 ►

Initially, the ICAO and IATA allowed passengers and airline crew to carry alcohol-based liquid sanitizer up to 100 ml in carry-on baggage or in person under the provisions "Medicinal or Toiletry Articles". However, on May 13, India's Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, through an addendum allowed passengers to carry alcohol-based liquid hand sanitizers up to 350 ml in their carry-on baggage or person, for travel from and within India. "However, these eligibility or additional allowances available to the passengers are neither mentioned by MoCA in its Guidelines/SOPs nor publicised in the media."

Further, IATA and ICAO have permitted airlines to carry alcohol-based liquid/gel hand sanitizers as a part of aircraft property for use in galleys and toilets, with the approval of the regulator.

As per ICAO, IATA and DGCA regulatory protocols, all airport, airline, and ground handling staff should be properly updated and trained with the new changes in DGR regulations according to their job responsibility. Since classroom training is not possible, IAAI with its training partner Speedwings Aviation Academy is providing a free DGR-based learning program "Guidance for Ground Handling during Covid-19" to all airlines, airport and ground handling staff. ♦

Leisure travellers keen on domestic holiday post lifting of lockdown: Holiday Readiness Report

According to the Holiday Readiness Report jointly conducted by Thomas Cook India & SOTC Travel, 45% respondents will defer their holiday to 2021 while 14% are keen to travel this year. The key travel drivers for respondents are reputed tour operators and hotels. **TravelBiz Monitor** presents highlights of the report.

Travel Is Set To Rebound - Indians Will Continue To Travel



Travel Period Preferred



Key Travel Drivers

72%

respondents preferred reputed brands - including tour operators, hotels, etc.

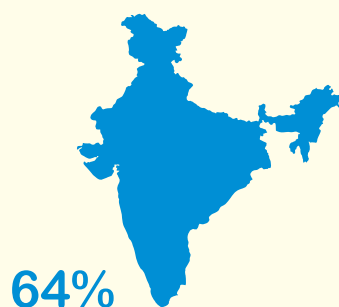
75%

respondents said Health & Safety is a key factor

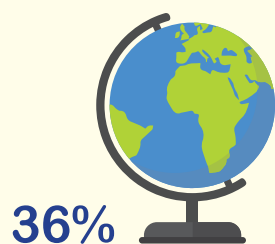
35%

willing to increase their spends to ensure higher levels of Health & Safety

Domestic Tourism Set To Take Centre Stage



respondents are likely to take a Domestic Holiday



likely to take an International Holiday

Top Destinations



Preferred Travel Destinations in India

Kerala, Goa, North East, Ladakh, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, (Bhutan - Indian Subcontinent)

Europe remains a favourite (Switzerland, UK, France, Germany, Czech Republic etc.)

38%

41%

Short Haul: Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai & Abu Dhabi

Preferred International Travel Destinations

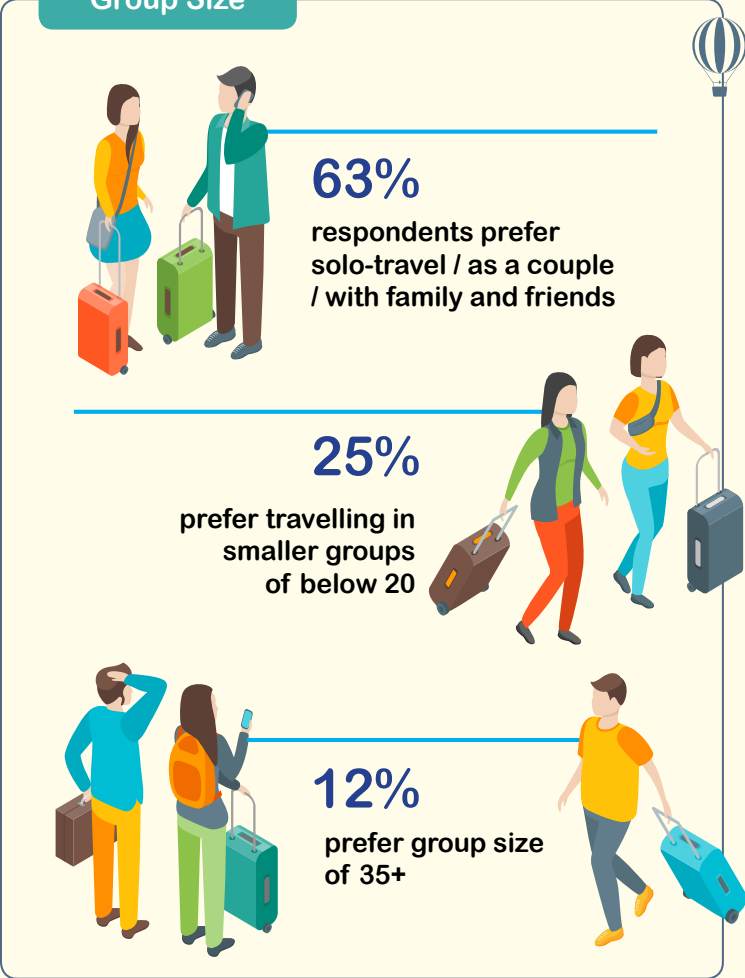
Australia & New Zealand

20%

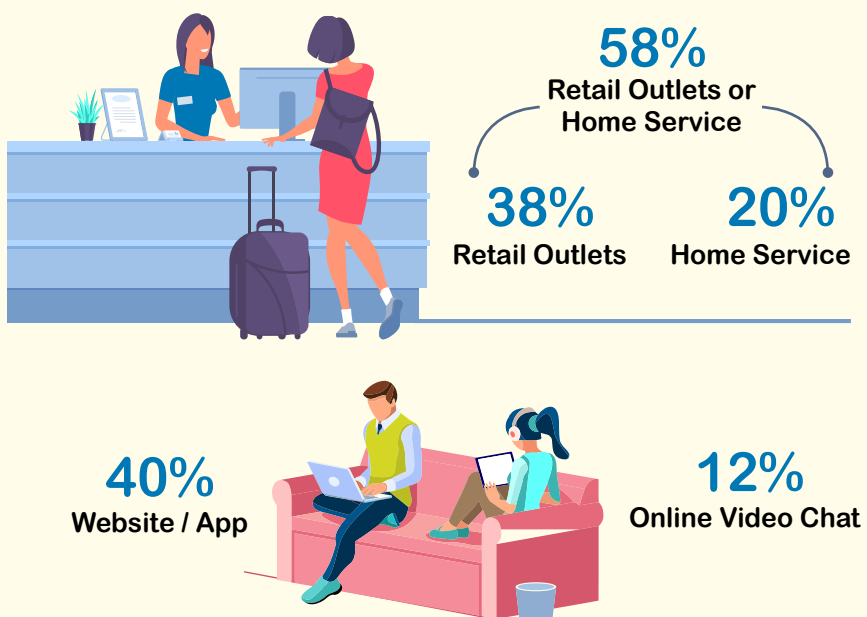
16%

United States of America

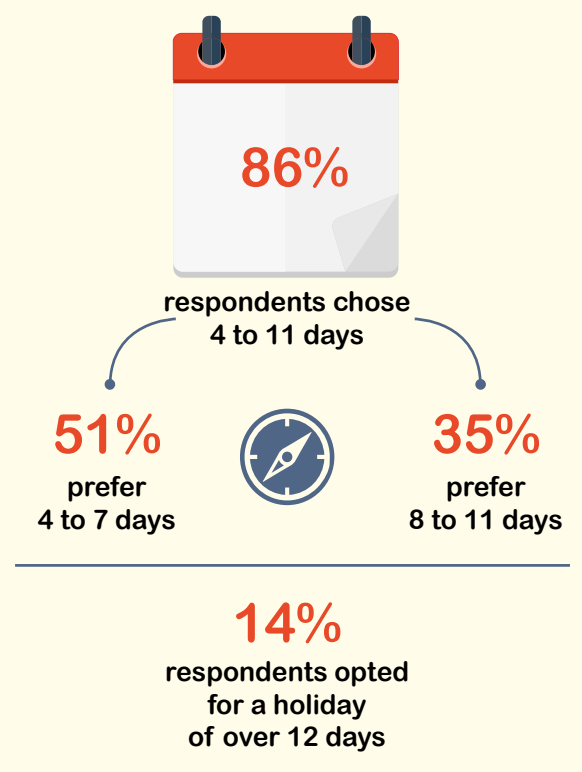
Group Size



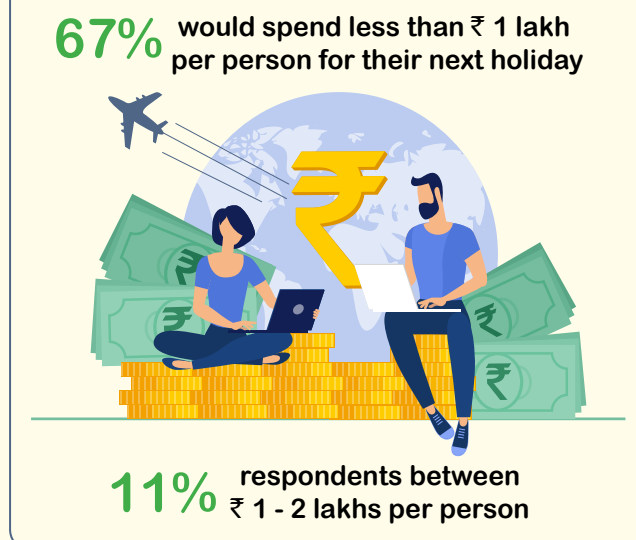
Booking Channels: Travellers Prefer A Human Touch / Reassurance



Duration of Holidays



Shift in Holiday Spending Patterns – Value Centric / Pocket Friendly Holidays



For certain questions respondents were given a choice to select multiple options, hence percentages may not add up to 100%

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84% Indians cutting back on spending: IndiaLends Survey



The pandemic has created an unprecedented dent on the Indian economy and is expected to severely impact consumer spending. According to a survey conducted by personal loan provider, IndiaLends, 82% salaried professionals are struggling to make ends meet, and therefore may cut down on non-essential spend. Travel that is largely considered a discretionary spend may see a massive hit, and this will further damage the prospects of tourism businesses that have been already dealt a body blow with the lockdown and border restrictions, globally.

TravelBiz Monitor offers insights of the IndiaLends Survey.

The pandemic caused by COVID19 has severely affected the financial health of salaried and professional individuals in India. Over 82% are struggling to make ends meet, according to a survey.

Online lender IndiaLends that surveyed over 5,000 salaried individuals said 94% of people are being extra careful about how they spend their money in the next few months. About 84% said they were cutting back on spending. 90% expressed concern about their savings and financial future.

The survey also revealed that 72 % of respondents would opt for a personal loan in the immediate future to meet high-priority expenses such as debt repayment, essentials and medical, education fees, and home repairs and renovation. As per the report, 71% of its customers had existing loans out of which 45% had applied for a moratorium due to their inability to repay their debts.

Gaurav Chopra, Founder and CEO, IndiaLends, said, "The pandemic has changed the way we all function, affecting our physical, mental,

emotional, and financial wellbeing. Salaried individuals and professionals, in particular, are coping with the potential burden of job losses and pay-cuts. The impact on their income and savings has seen a growth in demand for retail loans."

Chopra added that individuals need to examine their financing options such as a personal loan or line of credit and plan accordingly for the weeks and months ahead. To alleviate the hardships of borrowers, the digital lender is making the application process easier and convenient and ensuring quick disbursement of loans through a touch-less and contact-less system.

The economic uncertainty and the state of individual finances have also impacted investments. Over 76% of the respondents said they are in no position to consider fresh investments at this time.

On future of expenses, over 40% of the respondents felt that their focus on expenses for essential items would increase. Over 70% said they would spend less on non-essentials including entertainment, luxury and lifestyle in the post-COVID period. ♦





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& SECURITY



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TWICE A YEAR



WATER SAMPLES
CHECKED SEVERAL
TIMES A DAY



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THOROUGHLY SANITIZED
ON REGULAR BASIS



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*TERMS & CONDITIONS APPLY

Be responsible.

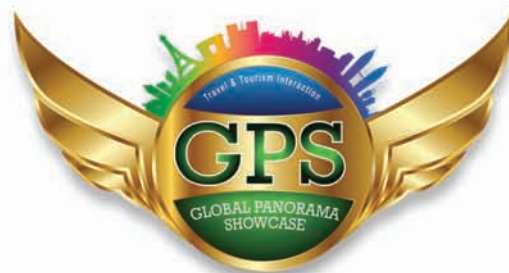
Act now to stop the Corona-tion.

BE SAFE:

1. Isolate yourself. Observe Self-quarantine
2. Don't hoard. Essential services will remain open.
3. Follow official directives to the tee.
4. Ensure and protect citizens above 60.
Don't let them leave the house anyway.
5. Be considerate with employees.
Try to avoid pay cuts.

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AND RE-CHARGE THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY SOON.

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