

INDIA

TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY

Indeed it is!

With the vaccine being approved in the UK and USA, things are certainly starting to look up. More countries are cautiously, but surely starting to line up to get their citizens inoculated as soon as possible. In this season of miracles and joy, this sure comes as a great blessing.

Good news abounds in this holly jolly season with Taj Hotels unveiling their latest venture Taj Chia Kutir Resort & Spa amidst the lush bosom of a Darjeeling tea estate. You can now experience signature Taj hospitality while basking in the sun-dappled Himalayan terraced tea garden.

United Airlines has also announced the launch of their daily non-stop flight between New Delhi and Chicago. This happy development has the industry excited with new prospects once regular travel resumes. In even better news, Sri Lanka has finally announced the opening of its air space for commercial and charter flight operations from 26 December.

Nepal too is opening its air space to foreign tourists from 17 December. Nepal and India have also entered into an air bubble agreement where the national carriers of the two countries will carry passengers between Delhi and Kathmandu from 17 December.

Within the country, states are opening up their borders for tourism once more with Meghalaya slated to welcome tourists from 21 December. The majestic fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh are the latest additions to UNESCO's list of world heritage cities.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

So what is travel going to look like this winter? An interesting survey conducted by Booking.com revealed that a whopping 68% of Indian travellers have considered a chance to extend their stays at a destination if they are able to work remotely. Access to high-speed internet, privacy to work without distractions, and cleanliness are the top priority amongst these digital nomads. They are willing to invest in long stays as long as they have their requirements fulfilled. Something to mull about, is it not?

Another survey showed that the travellers are now keener on refundable travel deals and tickets for booking their holidays. While the winter vacation has gotten everyone excited to set off, the parameters for choosing a destination have changed concerning social distancing, on-premise activities, safety, and hygiene. People are ready to spend more for the assurance of premium sanitisation facilities. While these are only indicators, the surveys do give us a hint of how travel may be in the coming months.

TO BELIEVE IS TO FIND THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE THAT LIES WITHIN US

As the year draws to a close, we would like to thank all our partners for their steadfast support in all our endeavours. We have taken this time to put our heads together and create some truly remarkable projects that are close to our hearts. From Women's Only Tours, to itineraries that encourage the concept of slow and immersive travel, and not to mention our Sustainability Action Plan, the year has been one of fruitful planning.

The courage that you have shown us has let us forge ahead without hesitation. It has helped us hone our strengths and emerge with new hope and new plans for the coming months. With this said, we are going on a break from 21 December and will resume operations on 4 January. We will use this time to reflect, rejuvenate, and come back stronger than ever.

The recovery rate of COVID-19 cases in India continues to increase and it currently at 95.31% as on 17 December and the number of new cases reported has continued to drop steadily.

Statistics: Number of cases reported in India stands at 9.9M, with 9.4M cases of recovery. India has reported a 1.45% death rate as on 17 December. For detailed and latest updates, please [click here](#).