

### INDIA

#### FULL STEAM AHEAD

With the vaccination drive in full swing, India is leaving no stone unturned in preparing to welcome foreign tourists in the near future. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is deliberating a plan to resume inbound travel after recent discussions with top industry stakeholders. The government is in the process of outlining guidelines and standard operating procedures for international tourists visiting India on a fixed itinerary involving pre-booked hotels and domestic flights.

Guests will need to book their fixed itinerary journeys through a recognised tour operator for the duration of their visit. They will either have to present a vaccination completion certificate or a Covid-19 negative test report at least 72 hours before scheduled travel. They can also get the Covid-19 test after arrival at the airports where the service is available. As of now, the international commercial flight ban remains extended until 28 February 2021. We will keep you updated as this develops.

Restrictions on movie theatres, swimming pools, schools, and other public areas have been eased. By next month, more relaxations will come into effect. Domestic tourism saw another boost with many people heading out on mini breaks during the Republic Day long weekend. As many organisations continue their Work from Home policy, remote working vacations or "workations" also continue to be in vogue. The country is also making great strides in fighting off the virus and Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the only state/Union Territory in India to be coronavirus free as on 03 February 2021!

#### NEW LAUNCHES

While we wait for inbound tourism to resume, continued new launches in the hospitality and aviation sectors show just how resilient the industry can be. Indian low-cost carrier SpiceJet has recently announced the addition of 20 new domestic flight routes that will start from February 2021. These flights will make travel convenient between Pink City of Jaipur and other cities of India. These will also offer unique routing choices for travellers when they come to India.

The Wyndham Ahmedabad Shela is the latest offering from the Wyndham Hotels & Resorts. The hotel will provide easy access to the main attractions of the city as well as major transport links. The hotel is the chain's latest endeavour in solidifying their presence in Gujarat.

#### ONLINE IS A WONDERFUL THING

Say what you will about the potential evils of the internet it has been one of the greatest boons for the travel and tourism sector in the past months. With lockdowns and social distancing restrictions, travel and cultural events, festivals, and even travel marts are choosing to take themselves online to reach out to the world. The Jaipur Literature Festival, Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival, Hornbill Festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Kerala Tourism Mart, and India Travel Mart are only some luminaries that have chosen to go virtual this year. Even Sri Lanka chose to take its safari online with the Couch Safari initiative last November.

Armchair tourism has never been as attractive as now, when you have the time and leisure to do all the research with these online events and live vicariously for now. Once the borders open, pack your bags, revenge travel is waiting!

For detailed statistics and latest updates, please [click here](#).