

# CORPORATE TRAVEL UPDATES

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# Why Bill Gates Is Wrong & Business Travel Won't Die In 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic will no doubt drastically change the way business gets done moving forward, especially when it comes to travel. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has even predicted that over 50% of business travel will go away permanently now that remote work and virtual meetings have become the norm.

While I'm sure he would offer Microsoft's Teams as a worthy substitute for face-to-face business deals, Gates' dire travel prediction substantially underestimates three key factors:



## ■ Human connection is how work gets done.

We are fundamentally relationship-driven creatures and even with the most advanced technology, when push comes to shove, business still gets done in person. By his own admission, Gates himself hasn't made a single new friend or business connection this year, and most of us can relate. We're talking with people we already knew through happy hours and team collaboration, but with conferences, trade shows and other networking events cancelled, new connections are much harder to come by.

## ■ There will be an arms race in sales.

Your CFO may be thrilled about the lower travel and entertainment expenses this year but ask them how they feel about sales numbers. Most won't be so thrilled because you can't have one without the other. Your sales team might say they're perfectly happy to sell virtually—it's much more convenient—but as soon as your competitor gets in the same room with a prospect, you've essentially lost the deal. Not to mention, there's a tremendous amount of upsell, expansion and retention that hinges on personal relationships. It's often over lunches, coffee or drinks that consultants and vendors learn about other challenges their client is facing and can offer support. That's how a one-off project turns into a long-term engagement. The reality is the weaker the relationship, the more likely you are to get unseated by your competitors, and if you're not physically there, your risk is much higher.

## ■ "Never travellers" will become travellers.

When everyone was in the office, we could easily meet up to brainstorm, either formally around a conference table or informally in the breakroom. With the loss of connection and the challenges of remote collaboration inherent in distributed work, innovation has slowed. At the same time, remote recruiting makes it tougher to onboard new employees and bring them into the fold. Companies need to get their teams together to push the organization forward. As a result, we can expect to see more in-person team building, project kickoffs and collaboration sessions with people who never travelled now hitting the road to meet up twice a year or once a quarter. Where you once had 20% of staff always on the road and 80% who never travelled, now you might have half or more who travel once or twice a year. Road warriors may travel less, but the volume will be heavily offset by large populations that may be travelling for work for the first time ever.

While it's true that the threshold for justifying travel may increase—companies will need to focus on the ROI—business travel will still be essential for growing sales, building teams and maintaining culture.

A good CFO isn't just thinking about the bottom line and cost savings but also how the talent experience and overall company growth comes into play. Getting people together is critical for rapidly building trust and relationships, rallying around a cause and re-energizing and motivating the team—all of which are critical for innovation.

So, how can companies prepare for this shift in business travel? By establishing smart policies, compliance standards and iron-clad record keeping.

# Why Bill Gates Is Wrong & Business Travel Won't Die In 2021

## ■ Map out a strategy.

While the stakes are higher and companies need to control costs, a hard “no” on all travel puts you at risk of losing ground to your competitors. Instead, establish a protocol for determining the business case for travel and how you’ll justify the expense, not only for new business but also teambuilding and on-boarding. New hires will want to know the rules of engagement up front—if they’re fully remote, how often will they get face time with their colleagues to build relationships?

## ■ Build inclusivity into the travel policy.

You may have many employees chomping at the bit to hop on the next plane. But for others who are high-risk or have challenging family/personal situations, like child or elder care, homeschooling, etc., it may be unsafe or impossible for them to travel anytime soon. You’ll need to be thoughtful about how you manage opportunities so that you don’t disadvantage that portion of your employees who can’t leave home.

## ■ Maintain records and compliance.

At the risk of adding insult to injury after a long year, 2021 will very likely be the Year of the Audit. With travel on lockdown over the last year or so, governments have been extremely lenient about tax and legal issues related to where employees are working. With most of them now facing massive budget shortfalls, don’t expect that to continue—they’re going to come calling and holding companies accountable. Companies need to stay on top of who is/has been where for both compliance and health/safety. Tracking employee location automatically, in real time, provides the most reliable, auditable solution to ensure and validate tax and legal compliance, as well as keep your employees safe.

The reasons for business travel have not changed—we still depend on personal connections to get work done—and for that reason, we can expect to see a rebound in travel as soon as it’s safe and people feel comfortable.

But as travel returns, which it no doubt will, it will bring with it a whole host of new complexities around keeping costs and risks low. Companies will need to be prepared with a sound strategy and technology to support it in order to stay on top of the competition.



# Preferred Availability And Special Traveller Amenities – Riya Hotel Program

Finding the right hotel to suit your traveller needs, company budget and policy can sometimes be a challenge in the midst of rising hotel prices and reduced availability. In today's dynamic marketplace it is imperative that clients are provided with the best deal possible and finding the right hotel to suit traveller needs. With this in mind the program allows client access to our unique multi supplier booking facility. We have contracts in place with several leading suppliers and hotels ensuring that we can consistently deliver the most competitive rates. Our technology based tool compares each supplier's price and selects the best available rate for a hotel every time a new search request is made. Thus ensuring the most competitive rate is displayed to the traveller. This also means access to greater room allocation at each hotel, thus saving time shopping around different sites.



## Highlights



Unique multi supplier booking facility ensuring competitive rates and greater availability



Over 70,000 hotels worldwide ranging from 2 to 5 star



24hr online booking facility with instant confirmation



Choice of currency



Call centre manned 365 days a year



Very competitive rates



Dedicated groups department



After sales support from an experienced customer service department.

# Indian Carriers Will Have An Advantageous Position In The Post-Covid World: PS Kharola

*Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary - Civil Aviation, feels that in the post-Covid world, people will avoid travel through hubs and prefer direct connectivity, helping domestic carriers to expand in the aviation sector*



Speaking at the Leadership Conclave of the India Tourism Mart (ITM) 2021 on 'New Age Tourism and India's Prospects as an Aviation Hub of Asia', Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary - Civil Aviation, GoI, has said that Indian carriers will be at an advantageous position in the post Covid aviation market because of the huge domestic travel base. Kharola said that airlines which have a vast domestic travel base will be surviving and will be ready to move out whenever the skies open up.

Indian aviation sector, he said, has shown extreme resilience even under quite stressful conditions because of the vast domestic market. He said that 75% of the domestic demand is back and will soon reach the pre-Covid levels.

Another major change that Covid has brought in aviation is the change of perception for air travel. Kharola said that air travel is now more considered a luxury by Indians and this will work in the advantage of tourism in coming times. People want to save time on travel and spend more time at the destination, he said.

Kharola said that in the post-Covid world, people will be avoiding travel through hubs and preferring direct connectivity. This will support the Indian airline players in their international expansion, he added.

He clarified that the intention of the government is not to over regulate the aviation sector but to introduce efficient regulation to improve the quality. He said that all services provided by DGCA have been shifted to the electronic mode to improve efficiency and transparency.

He asked the travel trade to understand the changes that are happening in the aviation ecosystem, such as faceless and contactless services, and try to create value ads to remain relevant.

# Caravan Renting To Pace Rapidly In The Indian Travel Market

Caravan tourism is an emerging concept in India and quite popular across the globe owing to the freedom and flexibility it provides.

Caravan Tourism is gradually taking off in India. With Covid-19 situation, the travellers are now seeking more private and exclusive experiences. Caravan renting is thus coming as a rescue especially for those domestic travellers who are now not being able to travel abroad for vacations. Quite recently, the government of Karnataka has given the go-ahead for a caravan tourism project where travellers can hire a fully-equipped vehicle with a range of modern furnishings and facilities. Similarly, many new caravan start-ups have popped across major cities. Caravan rental start-up based out of Delhi, Carvan Travelers Private Limited launched in October last year aims to upgrade comfortable travel experience within the country at an affordable price.

The Caravans come with a well-stocked Kitchenette, Utensils, Refrigerator, Drinking Water, 200 litres of water for other purposes, washroom, camping tents, a portable music speaker, pillows and quilts, among other things.

One doesn't have to book a separate accommodation for their trip as the vans can be their humble abode for the road trip! We charge on a per-day basis. The charges for a 5-person Caravan is INR 6,000 per day (inclusive of the Driver that we provide and GST). The charges for a 3-person Caravan is INR 5,500 per day (inclusive of Driver and GST).

For both the vans, the fuel, state and toll taxes are to be borne by the travellers.



# 57% Of Indian Travellers Intend To Travel Somewhere They've Already Visited

With far-flung travel off the charts for now, 57% of Indian travellers intend to travel somewhere they've already been previously for its familiarity

57% of Indian travellers intend to travel somewhere they've already visited: As Covid-19 continues to be a part of our lives, in our current, more restricted world, local travel will continue to be a popular choice amongst travellers, states a survey by Booking.com. As travellers get more comfortable exploring closer to home destinations, new trends for local getaways are climbing to the top of travel agendas.

## ■ Travel like a local

With domestic travel rising as it remains easier, safer and more sustainable, Future of Travel research findings, 49% of Indian travellers plan to explore a new destination within their home country. The survey conducted by leading digital travel platform also reveals that 52% of Indian travellers still plan to travel within their own country in the medium term (7-12 months' time), with 41% planning to do so in the longer term (in over a year's time). Srinagar, Digha, Manali, Goa and Alibaug are some of the top trending Indian destinations for Indians travelling from Feb 1 to Feb 28, 2021 as compared to the same time last year.

## ■ Staycations to see surge

When it comes to local travel, 50% Indian travellers will take the time to appreciate the natural beauty of their home country. Whether travellers decide to stay local or not, 57% Indian travellers intend to travel somewhere they've already been previously for its familiarity. Doorstep delights offer both cost and time savings for travellers, and we are likely to see destinations and accommodations respond with extra add-ons to their travel offerings such as historic and cultural heritage tours to educate and entertain visitors. New, more novel experiences such as guest chefs and bespoke cocktails could also be in the mix to help win local tourists' affection.

## ■ Travel with your pets

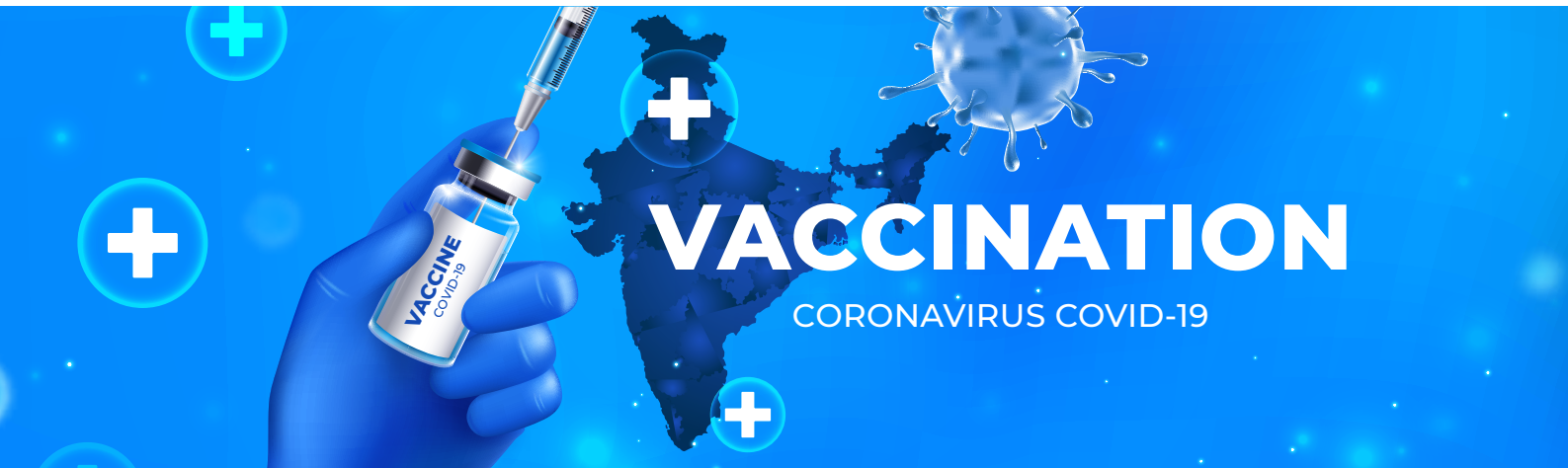
Travelling with furry companions has been top of traveller's minds in recent months, with the use of pet-friendly' filter more than doubling since travel restrictions<sup>†</sup> began. With no sign of slowing down, the trend to travel with pets is one that we are likely to see continue throughout 2021 and beyond.

## ■ A renaissance of the road trip

The desire to explore closer to home is fuelling a renaissance of road trips to rediscover forgotten local gems, a renewed passion to support local business and communities as they seek to rebuild, and inspire a newfound sense of pride in the history and beauty that's just around the corner.



# What We Know About India's Covid Vaccines?



## **Is a COVID vaccine scheduled anytime soon?**

The COVID vaccine was launched on 16th January, 2021. The first group includes healthcare and frontline workers. The second group to receive COVID 19 vaccine will be persons over 50 years of age and persons under 50 years with comorbid conditions.

## **Is it mandatory to take the vaccine?**

Vaccination for COVID-19 is voluntary. However, it is advisable to receive the complete schedule of COVID-19 vaccine for protecting one-self against this disease and also to limit the spread of this disease to the close contacts including family members, friends, relatives and co-workers.

## **Will the vaccine be safe as it is being tested and introduced in a short span of time?**

Vaccines are introduced in the country only after the regulatory bodies cleared it based on its safety and efficacy.

## **Is it necessary for a COVID recovered person to take the vaccine?**

Yes, it is advisable to receive complete schedule of COVID vaccine irrespective of past history of infection with COVID-19. This will help in developing a strong immune response against the disease.

## **Out of the multiple vaccines available, how is one or more vaccine chosen for administration?**

The safety and efficacy data from clinical trials of vaccine candidates are examined by Drug regulator of our country before granting the license for the same. Hence, all the COVID-19 vaccines that receive license will have comparable safety and efficacy. However, it must be ensured that the entire schedule of vaccination is completed by only one type of vaccine as different COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable.

## **Will the vaccine introduced in India be as effective as the ones introduced in other countries?**

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine introduced in India will be as effective as any vaccine developed by other countries. Various phases of vaccine trials are undertaken to ensure its safety and efficacy.

If one is taking medicines for illnesses like Cancer, Diabetes, Hypertension etc, can s/he take the

## **COVID-19 vaccine?**

Yes. Persons with one or more of these comorbid conditions are considered high risk category. They need to get COVID-19 vaccination.

## **What about the possible side-effects from COVID-19 vaccine?**

COVID vaccine will be introduced only when the safety is proven. As is true for other vaccines, the common side effects in some individuals could be mild fever, pain, etc. at the site of injection. States have been asked to start making arrangements to deal with any Covid-19 vaccine-related side-effects as one of the measures towards safe vaccine delivery among masses.



At Riya Business Travel, expect professionalism and transparency. Over the years, we have built strong ties with airlines, airports, hotels, and ground transportation companies worldwide. When you choose us as your travel partner, reap the advantages of our global network across the travel industry. Choose from a plethora of products and services to meet all your travel needs at any domestic or international destinations.



### **Mission**

Generate the 'perfect trip experience' for the traveler and exceed the company's travel program goals through service excellence and value based solutions.



### **Vision**

Be a sustainable global partner of choice by continually evolving with the changing dynamics of customer centricity.



Air



Accommodation



MICE



Land Travel



Insurance



Visa



Forex



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