

# CORPORATE TRAVEL UPDATES

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# Riya Group's CMD, GMJ Thampy Receives Golden Visa For UAE



**Mr. GMJ Thampy**  
CMD, Riya Group

*Thampy said that the Golden Visa would open new avenues for Riya Group and support its growth and expansion plans to cater to new territories in India and UAE.*

GMJ Thampy, the CMD of Riya Group, has been awarded the UAE Golden Visa for 10 years. The Golden Visa is testament to Thampy's four decades of excellent and value-added services offered to all types of travellers between India and UAE. The Golden Visa entitles the recipient to multiple entries for 10 years.

Commenting on the honour, Thampy said, "It is an absolute honour to be

acknowledged and appreciated by the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, UAE. We have worked closely with Emirates Airlines for years and are delighted that they recommended me for the Golden Visa. I was completely overwhelmed on receiving the Golden Visa without any application. The visa is offered only to high-profile individuals such as investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, medical specialists, and stalwarts in their industry. I am extremely honoured for being able to establish a trustworthy footprint in the travel space in the UAE market and offer extraordinary services to its nationals and travellers."

An established name in the UAE travel circuit, Thampy said that Riya Group would help in seamlessly enhancing the value of services in the UAE travel sector. He opined that the Golden Visa would open new avenues for the group and support its growth and expansion plans to cater to new territories in India and UAE.

Riya Group, a renowned travel company, has captured 20 per cent of the airline market in India as an airline consolidator. With a motive to build a strong relationship with suppliers and vendors across the travel and tourism industry, Thampy has sustainably scaled his enterprise to a leading conglomerate with an annual turnover of INR 15,000 crore. Having set up eight verticals under the Riya Group, the brand has built a strong presence in India, UAE, USA and Canada.





# Digitisation Key To Managing An Efficient And Effective Travel Programme: **Riya Business Travel Survey**

The findings of the survey conducted by Riya Business Travel indicate a clear preference in integrating risk advisory and duty of care into the approval matrix for travel.

Digitisation is the key to managing an efficient and effective travel programme to drive optimisation. Revealing its findings, the Riya Business Travel Survey 2021 highlights that Covid-19 has fast-tracked digitisation of service and delivery models of business travel across industry segments. This adoption of digitisation has led to a reduction of cost, fewer human errors, and has helped transform business processes while driving innovation and enhancing the experience.

The paradigm shift along with a strategic approach towards digitisation and its implementation will be the cornerstone of business travel programs worldwide in the foreseeable future. The report highlights a detailed coverage of the digital platforms used for trip planning, execution, payment methods to drive financial efficiency, and expense platforms for efficient accounting to match budgets with costs. The respondents constituted a mix of Fortune 500 MNCs, large Indian conglomerates, and small and medium business enterprises from industries that included IT, ITES, pharma, and healthcare along with manufacturing, automotive, consulting, oil and gas, as well as banking and financial services.

The insights provided by global and Indian multi-nationals in the survey indicate a clear preference in integrating risk advisory and duty of care into the approval matrix for travel. There is also a significant push towards automation with a focus on the adoption of new technologies and enhancing online adoption for fulfilment. Cost optimisation continues to be an underlying theme backed by controls and compliance underpinning the importance of managing cost-efficient programmes. While cost optimisation is on top of the list mainly for the automotive industry, the consulting sector highlights

the adoption of new technology as a priority along with the traveller's experience. Duty of care is the biggest requirement for the pharma and healthcare sector, followed by analytics and insights.

The needs also vary depending on the size of the companies. Companies with more than 50,000 employee base, prioritise adoption of new technology and traveller's experience, while organisations with a 2000-5000 employee base want to optimise cost and get analytics and insights. Companies with a 5000-50,000 employee base, rank duty of care high on their list, while corporations with a large employee base want to enhance their technology and improve the experience of the business traveller.

Travel risk advisory and duty of care are clearly focused areas for enterprises as they emerge from the shadows of the pandemic. The traveller's confidence needs to be built around updated travel information, risk advisory, and local support and assistance on the ground. The priority accorded by enterprises on this aspect clearly outlines the need for an integrated solution to meet the challenges around global health guidelines, critical traveller on-site support, and evacuation coordination.

Speaking to ETTravelWorld, GMJ Thampy, CMD of Riya Group, says, "Riya Business Travel on its part has been adapting and navigating through these tumultuous times by innovating and assisting enterprises in their efforts for digitisation of their business travel. It is with a view to understand the evolving trends and shift in priorities within business travel programmes that the 'Riya Business Travel Survey 2021' was conducted. The responses generated provide us critical insights into the travel trends of industry segments for enterprise travel within India. Valuable insights on Travel Policy, Key priorities, strategic industry direction have been analysed for a better understanding of characteristics based on industry segments and size of the enterprises."

**Get the white paper:**

[riyabusinesstravel.com/travel-trends-report-whitepaper](http://riyabusinesstravel.com/travel-trends-report-whitepaper)



# Ready To Fly Again: Travel Firms Expect Heavy Rush As US Lifts Curbs

Travel companies are expecting a heavy rush to the US following the withdrawal of curbs on fully vaccinated travellers from select countries, including India, on November 8.

The move will benefit those holding long-term tourist, business, and work visas. Also, new and extra flights by Air India and American Airlines are expected to provide better travel options.

Visa appointments (for fresh applicants) have been curtailed as part of local Covid-19 measures and there is no clarity yet on their normalisation.

“The US update on acceptance of fully vaccinated Indians without quarantine from November 8 is a welcome development for our business travellers and also the family and leisure segments. Flight capacity is currently limited to flights under the air travel bubble. Fares that are already over 60 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels may well see a further surge.

The White House announced the lifting of Covid restrictions for vaccinated travellers from 33 countries, making it easier for those flying between the two countries.

Those inoculated with FDA or WHO-approved Covid-19 vaccines would be accepted. The Joe Biden administration would separately issue orders and guidance documents to implement the new travel policy.

Travel restrictions for Indians came into effect on May 4 when the country was grappling with the second wave of the Covid pandemic.

Those restrictions meant that tourist or business visa-holders had to spend 14 days outside India in order to gain entry into the US. But the curbs did not apply to US citizens and permanent residents, among others. Students whose classes began after August 1 were allowed direct entry.

While traditionally November-December is the peak season for India travel from the US, this year there can be a rush on the outbound flights, too.

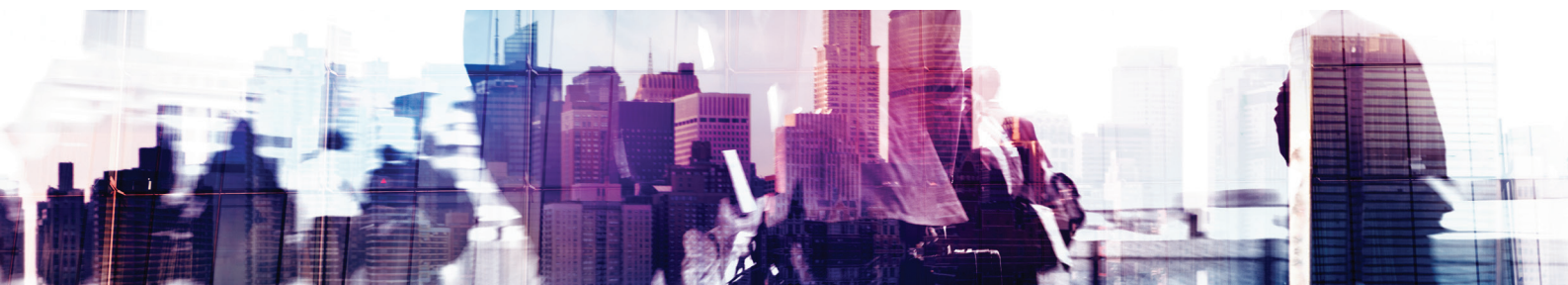
“International travel will gain momentum with the decline in daily Covid-19 cases across the country and the easing of travel norms by leading global destinations, including the US.

There is a jump of nearly 50 per cent in demand for US flights and we are hopeful that more routes and options will be available soon. There had been a significant jump in airfares in the recent past and as of now, rates have stabilised. We hope this trend continues as we expect more flight options.”

At present Air India and United Airlines operate non-stop flights to the US from Mumbai and Delhi. From November 3, Air India is increasing frequency on the Delhi-Chicago route from six to seven per week. American Airlines is launching new services between New York and Delhi from October 31 and between Seattle and Bengaluru from January 4.

“The US government decision to lift the travel restrictions is a positive development and now it should be followed up by increasing visa services in India. Visa appointments have been restricted due to local Covid-19 measures and staffing issues within the US Department of State, among others. This has impacted applicants of tourist, business, and work visas.

“New H-1B visas have been issued to those who qualify under the National Interest Exception policy. However, there are thousands of individuals who are approved and eligible to apply for H-1B visas and have been unable to join their new jobs in the US. Enhanced visa services in India are crucial to enable people to travel to the US.



# India High Cost Environment For Airlines; Critical To Empower AERA: IATA

*Since the beginning of the pandemic in February last year, AERA has rejected the demands of operators of major airports such as Delhi and Mumbai for a major increase in tariffs for third control period, which began on April 2019 and ends on March 2024. For example, AERA had in December 2020 rejected the Delhi airport operator DIAL's demand to increase base airport charges by 424 per cent.*

India continues to remain a high cost environment for airlines to operate in and it is critical to empower the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) further to safeguard the interest of passengers, said Philip Goh, Regional Vice President for Asia Pacific of global airlines body IATA.

AERA decides what tariffs – such as base airport charges, landing charges, parking charges and passenger service fee – can major Indian airports charge an airline or a passenger for a particular period after considering the airports' expenditure and revenue projections for that period.

Goh told PTI in a statement last week, "Over the past year, with the third control period tariff reviews for India's major airports, AERA has demonstrated its effectiveness as an independent regulator." "At a time when the government is planning on a big thrust on monetisation of airport assets under its National Monetisation Pipeline, it is critical that AERA is empowered further to safeguard the consumer interest," he added.



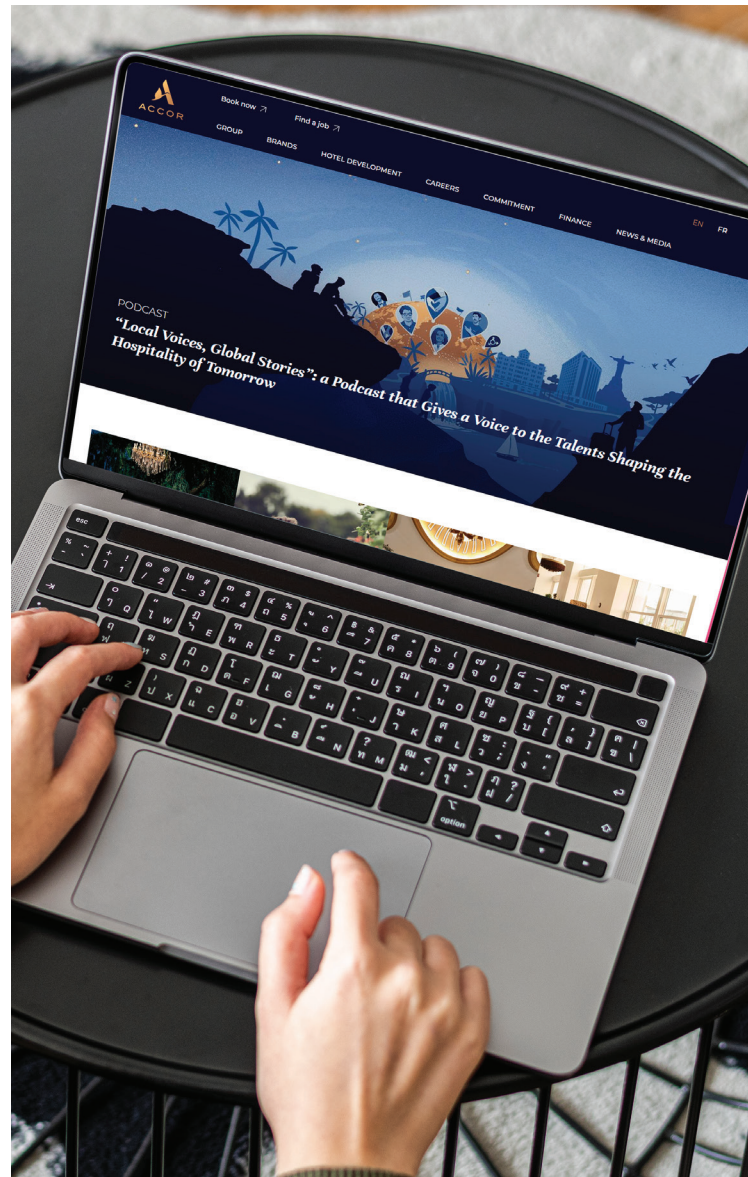


# Accor Launches New Website To Showcase Its Impressive Collection Of Branded Residence Offerings

*New website launched to showcase the group's growing residential offerings across a vast portfolio of brands*

Accor, a world leading hospitality group featuring one of the industry's most diverse and fully-integrated hospitality ecosystems, has established itself as a global leader within the red-hot branded residences sector. The group currently operates 70+ branded residences around the world under 16 brands – from the upper echelon of the luxury market to premium and midscale brands, with an increasing number of highly compelling lifestyle offerings. A new website showcases the group's impressive collection of branded residence offerings at [accor-residences.com](https://accor-residences.com).

"Accor's activity in the hotel-branded residences sector is a perfect example of the Group's entrepreneurialism, innovation and powerful drive to lead the industry in any venture in which it gets involved," said Jeff Tisdall, SVP of Development, Residential and Extended Stay, Accor. "Accor brands like Raffles and Fairmont have been pivotal in the evolution of branded residences for nearly two decades. Thanks to these trailblazing frontrunners, we've been able to apply the expertise we've acquired by introducing private residences to a number of our brands in recent years. Accor now offers the industry's most comprehensive portfolio of branded residences, introducing inspiring new visions for homeownership across a wide spectrum of consumer segments."





# Government Appoints Tourism Officers In **20 Indian Missions Abroad To Boost Overseas Marketing & Promotions**

Union Tourism Minister, G Kishan Reddy, has thanked the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for speedy response to his request to appoint dedicated tourism officers, who will work to promote tourism to India in key foreign markets.

Fast-tracking its approach to attract more and more foreign tourists into the country, the government has announced to appoint dedicated tourism officers in 20 Indian Mission, mainly Embassies and High Commissions which are key tourism source markets for India. The designated officers will be the point of contact for the Ministry of Tourism and other tourism stakeholders.

Sharing the information on Twitter, Union Tourism Minister, G Kishan Reddy, thanked the Union External Affairs Ministers for accepting his request and clearing the appointment of tourism officers in countries such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia and others.

The list of Indian Missions where the tourism officers have been appointed includes Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Oman, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, The Netherlands, UK, and the US.

The Ministry of Tourism through its eight offices overseas endeavours to position India in the tourism generating markets as a preferred tourism destination, to promote various Indian tourism products vis-à-vis competition faced from various destinations, and to increase India's share of the global tourism market. These objectives are met through integrated marketing and promotional strategies and synergised campaigns in association with the travel trade, state governments, and Indian Missions.





# India's Journey of Administering 100 Crore Vaccine Doses

*The journey of administering 100 crore 'Made in India' vaccines - Covaxin and Covishield - to the citizens of India started on 16th January 2021 under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.*

*Since the dawn of the pandemic, India has shown its commitment to protect its citizens by taking on this arduous and formidable task involving enormous resources, unstinted support of the States/UTs, untiring efforts of Health Care Workers, Front Line Workers and proactive participation of all stakeholders.*

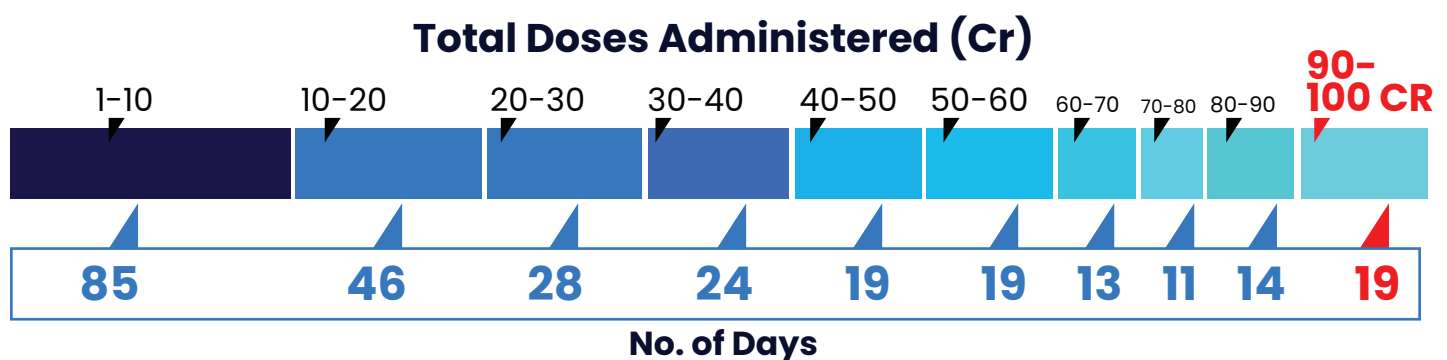
*100 crore vaccine doses is an unprecedented accomplishment, and the world applauds India.*

*At MyGov we applaud and celebrate the determination of the Indian citizen, towards overcoming this pandemic.*

*May everyone be healthy and free from illness.*



## INDIA NOW A VACCINE BILLIONAIRE



### Top States

In total Doses (cr)

Uttar Pradesh	12.3
Maharashtra	9.4
West Bengal	6.9
Gujarat	6.8
Madhya Pradesh	6.8

### Top States

Doses Per 100 Adult Population

Himachal Pradesh	160.2
Jammu & Kashmir	149.2
Kerala	141.2
Gujarat	139
Uttarakhand	136.6



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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