



CORPORATE **TRAVEL UPDATES**

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One World Signs Latest Sustainable Aviation Fuel Deal

Members of One World plan to purchase up to 200 million gallons of sustainable aviation fuel per year from Colorado-based renewable fuels producer Gevo.

The deal represents the second such joint commitment by the global airline alliance in four months. Delivery of the fuel is expected to commence in 2027, for a five year-term.

One World members Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, British Airways, Finnair, Japan Airlines and Qatar Airways expect to utilise the sustainable aviation fuel for operations in California including San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose and Los Angeles International Airports. Sustainable aviation fuel is a core pillar in the plan to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

In October, the alliance committed to a target of ten per cent sustainable aviation fuel use across the alliance by 2030. In November, One World announced a joint commitment to purchase more than 350 million gallons of blended sustainable aviation fuel from Aemetis for operations at San Francisco – making One World the first global airline alliance to commit to purchasing sustainable aviation fuel.

One World chief executive, Rob Gurney, said “Five months ago, we committed as an alliance to a target of ten per cent sustainable aviation fuel by 2030. This announcement of a second major sustainable aviation fuel offtake among member airlines builds further upon that commitment, while demonstrating the value that can be delivered when our member airlines work together.”

Gevo is focused on sustainability at every stage of production and has developed two alcohol-to-jet pathways that can utilise various feedstocks grown using renewable agricultural and sustainable farming techniques. These feedstocks are then converted, in some cases, to high-value nutrition products and energy-dense liquid hydrocarbons, including sustainable aviation fuel.



South Africa to Start E-visa Facility for Indian Tourists

The South African Tourism on Monday said it is eyeing 64 per cent year-on-year growth in arrivals from India in 2022, capitalising on strong consumer demand in the country through various marketing initiatives including roadshows.

India continues to be one of the top-three focus markets for South Africa, which has outlined a strategic road map to garner 64 per cent y-o-y increase in Indian visitors in 2022, the South African Tourism said in a statement. As part of post-pandemic revival plans, South Africa will introduce e-visas for Indians to attract more tourists, business travellers and moviemakers.

"We are glad to announce that we are on track to roll out e-visas in India in the coming months," South African Tourism Hub Head (MEISEA) Neliswa Nkani said.

The destination, which remains open to Indian travellers, is also processing tourist visas on priority.

India served as the eighth-largest international source market for South Africa and is expected to maintain its position in the top-10 this year as well, it said.

Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Pune continue to be top Indian source markets to South Africa.

Currently, several stopover flights fly from India to South Africa, including Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways, Air Arabia, Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways and Air Mauritius.

Travellers from India to South Africa will be required to produce a negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, not older than 72 hours from the time of departure from the country of origin to South Africa, the tourism board said.



Demand for Outbound Travel Spikes after Govt. Announces Regular International Flights from March 27

The aviation and tour-planning industry is looking at its best year for outbound travel since the pandemic with Indians starting bookings for their favourite overseas destinations, although high fuel prices and vaccine-related curbs remain potential downside risks.

Airlines and travel agents that ET reached out to say demand has seen a spike after the government announced resumption of regular international flights from March 27.

Air India and Vistara – the only two Indian airlines that operate to Europe and the Americas – said they are seeing a huge increase in demand.

“At Vistara, we are evaluating options and working on additional flights. We have already been observing good demand across our international network, especially on long-haul routes, and hope that the trend continues,” Vistara said in an email response to ET’s queries.

Air India said it anticipates ‘a good growth for leisure travel on mostly tourist routes in the coming holiday season, provided there is no threat of new variants.’

Mumbai based director of Riya Group, Manoj Samuel says, “Most requested destinations include Turkey, Middle East, Singapore, Australia and Malaysia. However, travel to the Middle East will see a drop during Ramadan, which begins in April, but it will pick up once again post Eid.”

Travel industry insiders say that the demand is for both long haul and short-haul international flights. “We are seeing a strong uptick of 20-40% in queries, with Europe’s Switzerland, France, Spain and the UK still heading the leader-board (40% increase), followed by short hauls like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Thailand, Maldives, Turkey, Egypt, Singapore (30%); and also long-hauls like Australia (20%),” said Rajeev Kale, president & country head, holidays, MICE and Visa.

Industry insiders and airlines, however, say that the 270-day validity of vaccine certificates is likely to affect the plans of various leisure travellers.

“We will have to see if this issue has any major impact on flights from India. Generally speaking, the elderly population is only eligible for booster dose now in India whereas the leisure travel segment comprises mostly families of all age groups – young and old,” Air India said in an email response.

Countries in Europe like Switzerland and Spain have announced that the vaccine certificates that are more than 270 days old will not be considered valid unless supported by a booster shot. In case of invalid vaccine certificates, the passenger will have to produce an RT-PCR-negative certificate.

“Leisure travel plans are for June and vaccine certificates of many Indians will expire by then (going by the 270-day validity rule). This will have a tremendous impact on demand. The key destinations in Europe will be out of bounds for many Indian travellers unless the government allows booster dose for all,” said Ajay Prakash, president, Travel Agents Federation of India.

While airlines plan to increase capacity as regular international flights resume, fares will continue to remain higher on international routes.

“Fares will only go down once airlines add capacity much in excess of demand, which is going to be high. Despite capacity additions, rising fuel prices and depreciating rupee are likely to keep fares up,” Prakash added.



Travel Will Go Big & Green in 2022

Major travel and hospitality companies are beginning the year with confidence as COVID-19 cases go down again and major tourist destinations lift travel restrictions. Businesses are already seeing trends and signs of what to expect for the rest of the year, many of which point to the industry going big and green in 2022.

A tipping point

Hilton, as one shining example, believes its third quarter will eclipse the peak of 2019. Another major hotel chain, Marriott, claims Business Transient will “roar back” this year. The travel industry is not just being hopeful — it is also being realistic.

“If you think about what causes a downturn, it’s primarily the pandemic,” BWH Hotel Group CEO David Kong said. “Think about the fact that we have got testing in place. We have vaccines in place; although, it may not be at what doctors would like to see, but then you have therapeutics. Therefore, all that bodes well for the company and I think next year is going to be a banner year. I’m quite sure that, by the end of next year, we will be back at 2019 levels.”

Travel and hospitality businesses expect leisure travellers to experience an overwhelming sense of wanderlust, a “new sense of urgency,” according to Stephanie Papaioannou, vice president at the luxury travel company Abercrombie & Kent.

“Guests feel they have lost two years, and older clients are concerned about having fewer healthy years left to travel,” she said.

Expedia has already proven its point. The company calls 2022 the year of the GOAT (aka the “greatest of all trips”). A survey featuring 12,000 participants from a dozen countries discovered that 65% of respondents intend to “go big” with their next vacation.

Amadeus, too, has witnessed a staggering rise in searches surrounding “epic destinations,” per a company report. It’s a trend expected to only grow, based on the “mood of travellers.”

“We have people just say: ‘Look, what if another pandemic happens? What if I’m locked in again?’” said Decius Valmorbidia, president of travel at Amadeus. “There’s a psychological effect that now is the moment.”

The new bleisure travel

It is called bleisure travel, combining personal travel with remote work, and it is becoming more common with many employees yet to return to the office due to the pandemic. Business trips that include a weekend have increased by 15% since 2019, according to corporate travel manager TripActions.

“Many of our customers that we’ve historically called leisure travellers are actually flying for reasons beyond just vacation,” American Airlines President Robert Isom said. “They may travel to a beach or a mountain destination, but they’re actually going to work remotely for the week. The lines between leisure and business travel are definitely blurred.”



Bonjour India 2022, a Gift from France to India

Bonjour India 2022 will show case in 19 Indian cities a program of 120 events created in collaboration with French and Indian partners

The Ambassador of France to India, H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Lenain, today announced the 4th edition of Bonjour India 2022. A moment for furthering people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, in its fourth edition in 2022, Bonjour India celebrates 75 years of India's Independence and 75 years of the establishment of Indo-French diplomatic relations, a milestone moment in any nation's history.

Besides projects narrating the shared history of the two countries, through photography, science and letters, Bonjour India will also be an opportunity to ring in some positive vibes, build communities, foster social interaction and create opportunities for diversity, joy and amity after a long time since the pandemic overtook the world.

Speaking about Bonjour India, Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain said, "Bonjour India is a gift from France to the people of India when the country celebrates the 75th anniversary of its independence. India and France have enjoyed a close cultural partnership for decades, thanks in particular to the network of 14 Alliances Françaises throughout India. During this festival, we will honour the past exchanges and create new collaborations."

Ambassador Lenain further added, "We believe that our two nations can grow closer by appreciating cultures and co-creating art, amalgamating views from both the countries. I look forward to coming together with the most creative people from our countries, resulting in greater creativity and enrichment. I believe that the free exchange of ideas between our two countries will plant the seeds of new thoughts that will help tackle the challenges that lie ahead."

As much as Bonjour India is supported and funded

by the government of France, the festival has a tradition of receiving the support and contribution of numerous partners, Indian and French, public and private. This has played an important role in enriching the festival and bringing diverse communities together. More specifically for the present edition, enterprises and brands, whether small or big including BNP Paribas, Pernod Ricard, Airbus, JSW Group, Saint Gobain, Tata Sons, Godrej, Safran, Accor, Om Books International, Chaudhry Nummero, Bira91, L'Opéra and many others came together to support culture in a bleak economic scenario because of their conviction in the power of the arts, in the essential quality of culture in bridging people and in the strength of Indo-French relations. They are a part of Bonjour India to be part of the celebrations around the 75-year milestone moment for Indo-French diplomatic relations and India's 75th Independence year.



MICE Will Act As a Catalyst in the Revival of the Tourism Sector: TAAI

A positive trend can be seen in the corporate world across the globe, with employees coming back to their offices. With their return, MICE seem to be a vertical, under tourism, which will certainly flourish once again. The global MICE industry, pre-pandemic, has been the most significant one in terms of the contribution towards GDP and jobs creation. For instance, a whitepaper issued by Singapore Tourism Board (STB), PCMA and UFI in 2017 highlighted the contribution of the sector globally which was \$1.5 trillion to global GDP, and 26 million jobs.

Citing to the track record of the sector and with supporting numbers, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that MICE industry plays a crucial role for the businesses embroiled in the travel trade sector. Be it events of national or international level; corporates, industrialists etc., have always been keen to meet and discuss business opportunities. Therefore, support and organises events, seminars, conclaves, conventions, exhibitions, which in turn provides various industries with an opportunity to deliberate upon areas of major concerns.

"Now, post-covid, when restrictions in terms of travel, hygiene or maintaining a social distance are being liberalised and business is coming back on track, we see a humongous opportunity for the travel trade to serve its old and existing customers by way of providing the best of the best services keeping all protocols and precautions in-tact," Mayal added.



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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

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Accommodation



MICE



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Visa



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