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World tourism won't return to pre-covid levels until 2024: UNWTO

Tourism arrivals around the world are not expected to return to their pre-pandemic levels until 2024 at the earliest, the World Tourism Organization said. The highly contagious Omicron variant, though mild, will "disrupt the recovery" in early 2022 after last year saw four percent growth over 2020, according to the Madrid-based UN agency's World Tourism Barometer.

Tourism revenue in 2020 was 72 per cent down on the previous year -- which closed with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. "The pace of recovery remains slow and uneven across world regions due to varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates and traveller confidence," the UNWTO said in a press release.

In Europe and the Americas, foreign visitor arrivals surged by 19 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, last year over 2020. In the Middle East, however, arrivals declined by 24 per cent in 2021, while in the Asia-Pacific region they were 65 per cent below 2020 levels, and 94 per cent down on pre-pandemic levels.



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DGCA extends suspension of scheduled international passenger flights till February 28

The suspension of scheduled international passenger flights in the country has been extended till February 28, aviation regulator DGCA said.



In a circular, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stated, "The competent authority has decided to extend the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 hrs IST of February 28, 2022." This restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flight specifically approved by the DGCA, it mentioned. Flights under air bubble arrangement will not be affected, it noted.

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Thailand may resume quarantine waiver for foreign travellers

Thailand is considering bringing back a quarantine waiver for vaccinated visitors, its health minister said recently, as part of a proposed easing of some Covid-19 measures soon.

The "Test and Go" policy, which allows visitors to skip the mandatory quarantine if they test negative on arrival, was suspended late in December over concerns about the spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant. "We will propose measures that can be done safely and are medically sound," Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said. "If approved it can start by Feb. 1," he said of the quarantine waiver.



EaseMyTrip forms exclusive partnership with FlyBig

EaseMyTrip has announced an exclusive partnership with Flybig, India's newest regional airline. Through this partnership, Flybig's airline tickets will be exclusively sold by EaseMyTrip. The partnership marks the first time that a Scheduled Commuter Airline (SCA) is exclusively partnering with an online travel platform, for flight bookings, making EaseMyTrip India's first online travel company become a general sales agent (GSA) for a domestic airline. All the bookings of Flybig by any other online travel portals will also go through and be processed by EaseMyTrip. Speaking about the partnership, Nishant Pitti, CEO & Co-Founder, EaseMyTrip stated, "Air travel is witnessing a major boom across Tier 2 and 3 cities, and we are delighted to partner with Flybig during such a critical juncture for the industry."



Goa tops Indian travellers bucket list: OYO Survey

A majority of Indians would prefer to go local and explore domestic destinations instead of international ones this year with Goa topping the bucket list followed by Manali, according to OYO Travelopedia.



OYO Travelopedia, the annual consumer survey by OYO to study travel intent and expectations among its user base across some of its core markets, including India, Indonesia and Europe, took responses of nearly 3,000 people in December 2021. As per the survey, 61% of Indians would prefer to go local and explore domestic destinations, while 25 per cent would like to try international as well as domestic trips in 2022.

Ahmedabad Airport to remain shut for 9 hours daily till May 31

A part of Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport will be closed for nine hours every day which started from January 17 due to planned 'recarpeting work' on the runway. At least 52 flights arriving and departing from the airport will be rescheduled during the entire duration. As per the airport officials, the work will go on till May 31 this year. The resurfacing work will be carried out on all days, barring Sundays and public holidays, from 9am to 6pm.

