

## **Bird Group organizes first webinar under it's Leadership Initiative series called 'Covid 2020 & Beyond'**

New Delhi 14.04. 2020: With everyone grappling with the health and economic impact of the Covid19 crisis, Bird Group has decided to look at the future beyond. At the industry webinar led by Delhi based travel conglomerate Bird Group, leaders from both private and public sector brainstormed on short and long term measures to revitalize the aviation and hospitality sectors that are severely hit by the Covid-19 and the subsequent country-wide lockdown impairing all economic activity.

An increased focus on domestic travel with enhanced check on variable costs to drive revenues in aviation business coupled with mandatory health checks before boarding a flight and bringing aviation turbine fuel under GST are some of the steps needed to help the travel and aviation sector bounce back, said noted industry experts at the web-enabled seminar 'Covid- 2020 & Beyond'.

Laying stress on augmentation in government and private sector association to tackle the ongoing crisis Radha Bhatia, Chairperson, Bird Group said, "We are committed to pursuing the vision of building an advanced international tourism platform that brings together decision makers and leaders of the global tourism industry, bridges the gap between different countries and regions, and forges partnerships among industry operators from both the public and private sectors. We firmly believe that this initiative would to be a key driver for India's tourism and economic progress. Together, we can build a strategic foundation on which a healthy and sustainable tourism industry will develop."

Speaking at the webinar, Ajay Singh, CMD, SpiceJet said that the government has to take into account both short term and long term steps to remedy the situation. He also talked about the need for bringing ATF under and to fix a lot of anomalies to reduce costs in airline industry. Crisis as he pointed out is the best time to bring reforms and we should do it and should utilize this time to reform the airport structures to make it more profitable.

The speakers also observed that till the time passenger revenue gets a leg up, the cargo business would assume a much more important role in driving the overall revenue of the aviation industry. Ms Tulsi Mirchandaney, MD, Blue Dart Aviation Ltd said that we need to cut variable costs to stay afloat. She emphasized on working with a leaner work force and to curtail costs to make both travel and aviation sustainable. Raising the cause of travel operators, Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI said that the tourism industry is mostly an unorganized sector which needs reforms to make the sector organized. She opined that we will not see green shoots in the industry atleast before nine months, and hence appealed to the Government of India and Ministry of Aviation to take adequate steps to revive the sector and help the travel agent community at large by recognising travel operators as part of the industry akin to aviation.

It also emerged during the course of industry wide dialogue that the efforts to make the sector come out of the woods will only frutify when people are less apprehensive to travel. At the webinar, Ashwani Lohani, Former CMD Air India and Chairman, AP Tourism spoke on the fact that people will be apprehensive to travel for a long time, but domestic travel could gain heft through coordinated efforts by private sector and government. He shared that as India's air passenger penetration in the global market is quite low, the aviation industry will make a comeback after a reasonably long struggle and dark period.

The other honorable speakers on the panel included Mr Sujit Banerjee (Secretary General, WTTTC India Initiative) who talked about the global perspective on reviving tourism and Dr. Sanat Kaul (Chairman, International Foundation for Aviation Aerospace and Drones) who shared his inputs on the future of drones, challenges and opportunities.

Under this initiative on bringing the industry together, Bird Group will soon be organizing another webinar to discuss key matters and the challenges that we are dealing with in these unprecedented times.

Webinar youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiePqaWcnKw>

### About Bird Group:

Founded in 1971 in India, Bird Group is amongst the largest and most diversified group of various entities within the industry. With businesses as diverse as pioneering back-office processing to representing many of the world leading airlines, from managing the backbone of the technological framework for airline IT and distribution to managing crucial relationships of international service providers, Bird Group has ensured that a comprehensive portfolio of service offering has been created to add value to an extensive client base and add new potential customers. Today Bird Group's core business includes Travel Technology, Aviation Services, Hospitality, Retail and Education.

For more information please visit: [www.bird.in](http://www.bird.in)

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