

India travel business back to pre-pandemic levels

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Long stays between 3 and 7 days account for 54 per cent of the global searches while stays above 8 days account for 20 per cent of the searches on travel portal Booking.com. The portal's India business is back at 2019 levels, and is already "moving in the right direction towards normalcy.

With leisure travel making a strong comeback, the company's April 2022 bookings are already better than April 2019 levels, Commercial Director for APAC, China & Oceania, Ritu Mehrotra said.

Booking.com saw gross bookings at around \$27 billion globally. March 2022 was the first month when Gross Bookings exceeded \$10 billion in a single month, up by 17 per cent versus March 2019.

According to Mehrotra, "India is already a percentage point higher", with domestic travel picking up and international travel starting to pick up. Business travel, incidentally, is also "creeping back". Metro destinations have been among the first to pick up, while leisure locations such as Goa, Ooty, Mcleodganj, Manali, Rishikesh and Gangtok are among the popular summer destinations.

International travel destination preferences include the UK, US, France, Italy, Thailand, Canada and Singapore.

“Average daily rates at hotels are up, and people are choosing flexibility of stay where change of travel plans are possible; sustainable travel and longer stay durations are other upcoming trends. Hybrid models of work and leisure for a weekly or monthly period are also being witnessed, and it looks as if these will be here to stay,” she told.

Among some of the recent trends, Indian travellers have started looking up for pet-friendly accommodations and, accordingly, the company has opted to include a new filter in its booking window.

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