

India's inbound sector shows green shoots of recovery

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The resumption of international scheduled flights to India in March has helped to nurture a return in inbound business, inspiring business confidence among some Indian destination players.

Prateek Hira, president & CEO, Tornos India, said the inbound season beginning in October is looking very positive, with two large groups from the UK confirmed for November.

Wellness experiences in India are attracting a younger segment of travellers now. Inbound specialists say wellness products are in demand, and early trends are pointing to keener interest from younger travellers.

Abhilash K Ramesh, executive director, Kairali Ayurvedic Group, said travellers from German-speaking markets, North America and Japan are showing up for wellness experiences.

“Traditionally, the average age of our clients from European markets was 45 years, but this year we are seeing demand from those in their 30s,” shared Ramesh.

While there were expectations that India’s inbound recovery would be driven by short-haul markets, stakeholders are relieved to see that traditional longhaul source markets like Europe and the US were still biting.

Hira said it is now time for the tourism ministry and state tourism boards to “aggressively market India internationally”, and “send a strong message that we are

ready to welcome international tourists”.

While confidence is up, recovery will take time. Arun Anand, managing director, Midtown Travels, expects inbound performance to only match pre-pandemic numbers in 2023 at the earliest.

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