

Centre & tourism cos promote safe holidays to offbeat locations

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New Delhi: With leisure travel slow to recover from impact of Covid-19, governments and travel companies are going the extra mile to prioritise safety even as they give travellers access to unchartered territories and new experiences.

Even as the Union tourism ministry has pushed the 'Dekho Apna Desh' message and promoted domestic tourism through the 'Incredible India' platform, minister of state (independent charge) for tourism and culture minister, **Prahlad Patel** said, "Going forward, the focus will be on domestic tourism. The year 2021 will be the year of India and we want to ensure that every stakeholder participates."

With the push from the Centre, state tourism departments too have taken to social media to entice travellers to undertake short trips to lesser known destinations in their midst. Portals like MakeMyTrip, Thomas Cook India, Club Mahindra and SOTC are among the travel companies that have tied up with government-certified pathology labs to provide Covid-negative certification for travellers. In addition, while Thomas Cook India and SOTC have set up a 'Safe Holiday Helpline', a free service to guide and assist people in holiday planning, visas, country spe-

Fire in Guj Covid hosp ICU, no one hurt

Panic gripped state-run SSG Hospital in Vadodara after a fire broke out inside the Covid facility's ICU ward on Tuesday. A short circuit caused the fire, according to preliminary reports. No casualties were reported as all 38 patients in the ward could be promptly evacuated. "Fire started from a ventilator unit, but thanks to the training imparted to the hospital staff, they themselves extinguished it and started evacuating patients," said chief fire officer **Parth Brahmabhatt**. TNN

cific updates, and on-ground health measures required ahead of travel,



'MeTripping', a travel start up, offers technologies like the 'Travel Safety Index' for up-to-date information on the health and safety situation in any city in the world.

The lull in travel has also given travel companies like Booking.Com time to redraw strategies and segregate domestic destinations based on hobbies. So while Bengaluru, New Delhi and Hyderabad are the top endorsed destinations for food by Indian travellers, Puducherry, Shimla and Rishikesh are identified as the top three for walking, and Jaipur, Ooty and Varanasi for photography.