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## ‘Travel sector may take years to return to pre-COVID-19 level’

Consolidation is inevitable, says Booking.com’s Mehrotra

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Even though some demand has started coming back, the travel industry may take years to get back to pre-pandemic business level, said Ritu Mehrotra, country manager – India, Sri Lanka, Maldives at Booking.com.

“Travel industry was one of the first industries to be hit and I think one of the last industries to maybe make a comeback,” she said in an interview.

“There are pockets where we are seeing demand coming up. We also feel that recovery will happen. It may take time,” she added.

She added that it may not



just take quarters but years for the industry to reach pre-COVID-19 levels.

Pointing out that globally over a dozen airlines have had to shut shop, she said that impact across sectors had been severe and she expected to see consolidation

in the travel industry.

“I think that the fittest will win the battle and it is very important for companies to have a razor-sharp focus on their operating costs and besides, consolidation is inevitable, in my mind,” she said.

Ms. Mehrotra added there was a need for greater collaboration between the industry and government.

“No one company or no one player in the market can beat this kind of a pandemic. To support recovery, the government will have to consider subsidising consumer holidays. This is something that we have seen in a lot of other countries like Thailand, Japan and Italy.”