

***President Speaks**



President AJAY PRAKASH

Dear TAFI'ites,

After two years of struggling to survive, finally Financial Year 2022-23 ended on a positive note for almost all our members and the new financial year gives us hope that business will be even better going forward. But, as always, our industry is never short of challenges – visa woes, high airfares, RHC issues, cash flows being affected on account of clients stretching credit lines and a marked shortage of skilled manpower.... And, as if this wasn't enough, we've been hit by a sledge hammer in the form of the new TCS rate which is to kick in from 1st July.

We had been representing for the abolition, or at least a substantial reduction, in the prevailing rate of TCS on outbound tours but we got hit instead with a huge increase! At 20% + GST, neither of which is enforceable on overseas entities, the Indian travel agent/tour operator has been knocked out on pricing vis-à-vis any travel services provider who is not registered in India. Is this what the FM meant when she said that the government was moving Tourism into "Mission mode?"

Our representations to the Ministry and our meeting with the Finance Secretary yielded no relief; our suggestions of a reduction in the rate or a reasonable threshold below which TCS would not apply were ignored – in short, despite our best efforts, the ever-Aatmanirbhar Travel & Tourism industry and its backbone, the travel agents, have been left to fend for themselves.

But your Association, with your active support, will continue to address all issues. The JBGA, a visionary program envisioned by previous Presidents of TAFI, remains an excellent program for members. We are also, simultaneously exploring the possibility of reviving insurance in lieu of bank guarantees to IATA. Our Conventions & Hotels committee has negotiated special rates for all TAFI members with a number of Indian hotel chains. Our website has been revamped and we have added a number of free skilling courses; I seriously encourage you to visit the TAFI website at TafiOnline.com and make use of the resources available for you and for your staff.

The Chapters have a huge role to play in the Association fulfilling the aspirations and needs of our members. The Chapters are our hotline to the diverse local issues and your regular meetings and feedback are vital. I would urge all Chapter members to get more involved, to take a greater interest, to attend meetings regularly, to even call for meetings if they are not held at least every two months, and to make sure that your inputs/suggestions/issues are put forward to the national MC. The Chairman of our Gujarat Chapter sent out a poignant WhatsApp message on the subject to the extended NJC a few days ago; I would like the Chair or the Secretary of every Chapter to cascade it to all their members. Any Association derives its strength from its members – TAFI needs each one of you to step up. Chapter elections and the election for the national MC are coming up in the next few months. Let us use the opportunity choose teams that will work together for the betterment of the industry.

All good wishes,

Ajay Prakash

***TAFI had tied up with 9 Hotels for their members, more in the pipeline**

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is in the forefront as an Association representing more than 1400 tour and travel business organizations pan India. We are glad to inform you that our members contribute 70% of all the outbound & Inbound travel from & to India.

TAFI's Hotels and Conventions Committee aim to deal with Hotels and Resorts for Communications on behalf of Members, get Special rates for the entire membership, Solve their issues & many more.

TAFI Has a Special rate Tie-up with Following group of Hotels and Resorts.

1. Best Western Hotels & Resorts
2. WelcomHeritage Hotels
3. Lords Hotels and Resorts
4. CLARKS Hotels and Resorts
5. Sarovar Hotels & Resorts
6. Spree Hospitality
7. Radisson resorts (GOA)
8. Howard Hospitality & Wellness
9. NILE Hospitality..... Also, in talk with few more resorts' groups

Hotels and resorts offer Special Rates for Members across India. Rates are based on Low Season, Shoulder Season, High Seasons, we have done contract up to March 2024 with Dedicated contact numbers & mail IDs of each Hotels and Resorts for easy communications / RSO Name and Number.

In return TAFI offers Mileage in Website, Social Media Handlers and exposure in the Indian Travel Medias. They also have chance to do presentations in Chapter's Bi-Monthly Meetings as we have 12 Chapters across India.

To avail the offer and special rates and easy communications, members will have to follow below guidelines:

All TAFI members' mail signature must be having TAFI logo Membership number for TAFI members recognition.

The same has been informed to the respective hotel groups for clarifications and fast reservations.

Hotels and Conventions Committee:

Mr. Seeraj Singh Sabharwal – **Chairman**, Mr. Abbas Moiz - **National General Secretary**, Jigar Dudakiya – **Deputy Chairman**, Mr. Anil Punjabi – **Member**, Mr. Shailendra Khare – **Member**.

***Training on the US Visa processing, jointly organized by TAFI, TAAI & Skal on 4th Apr**

On 4th April, 2023 at American Library, training on the US Visa processing. It was attended by the Visa Officer and their colleagues. This event was organized jointly by TAFI, TAAI, SKAL & about 40 members participated in this event. Mr. Anil Punjabi had coordinated with the TAAI & SKAL and held this event successfully. This session was hosted by Visa officer American National Mr. Jay R McCann and two of his office colleagues. He informs that effective 30th May 2023 there will be an increase in the Visa fees from \$160 to \$ 185 for Non-Immigrant Visas (NIV) such as B1/B2s and other non-petition based NIV such as student and exchange Visitor Visas. Also deliberated on Drop Box applications, that applications could be made & dropped at any location Pan-India.



***TAFI-TN met with Mr. Bill Wright, Director of Tourism & Sales from Explore Fairbanks:**



L to R Ms Lakshmi Davey, Mr. Bill Wright, Mr. S. Baskar, Mr. Arul Lazaran, Mr. M. Anandaveloo & Mr. Lalith Jain

On Invitation from Lakshmi Davey, Commercial Assistant, U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Consulate – Chennai TAFI TN Chairman, Mr. Arul Lazaran, along with National Management Members Mr. S. Baskar & Mr. Lalith Jain and Education and Communication Head Mr. Anandaveloo met Mr. Bill Wright, Director of Tourism & Sales from Explore Fairbanks, Alaska, USA at Hotel Courtyard by Marriot on 27th March. The meeting was pleasant and very cordial and many unknown facts about Fairbanks, Alaska, was enlightened the TAFI Team. Fairbanks is 196 miles away from Artic Circle. Fairbanks is a home rule city and the borough seat of the Fairbanks North Star

Borough in the U.S. state of Alaska. Fairbanks is the largest city in the Interior region of Alaska and the second largest in the state after Anchorage. Fairbanks is arguably the most popular destination for visitors who want to see the Northern Lights. It's situated underneath the aurora oval, so viewing is great right from town. It's also a great basecamp for trips beyond the Arctic Circle. You can see the lights from August 21 to April 21. At 65 degrees north latitude, Fairbanks is renowned for the northern lights, also known as the aurora borealis, the midnight sun, and sunsets and sunrises that last forever.

***TAFI Gujarat Chapter Meeting was held on 25 Mar'23 Vivanta, SG Highway Ahmedabad:3**

Bimonthly Meeting of TAFI Gujarat Chapter was held on 25 March 2022 at Vivanta, SG Highway, Ahmedabad. It was attended by 45 members from different regions of Gujarat. The Chairman Mr. Manish Sharma conducted the meeting with assistance from Secretary Mr. Ronak Shah and Treasurer Mr. Sohel Kadri. National Treasurer Mr. Hitank Shah, Rajkot Convenor Mr. Sanjay Metha, and Chapter Committee members, Mr. Anshul Shah and Mr. Dilip Masrani were present. The meeting deliberated the activities done by the chapter and discussed the increase in TCS to 20 % and the implication affecting the travel trade.



***Air Canada appoints Di Bert as CFO**



Air Canada said that Chief Financial Officer Amos Kazzaz would retire at the end of June and be replaced by former Bombardier Inc executive John Di Bert. Kazzaz, who has been with the Canadian carrier for 13 years, helped steer the company through the early days of the pandemic, when the aviation industry was brought to a near standstill. Di Bert, who has served as CFO for both Bombardier and Pratt & Whitney Canada, will assume the role at Air Canada on July 1. He is currently CFO of Clarios International Inc. The change comes at a time when Air Canada, like other North American carriers, faces cost pressures due to a labor shortage amid a rebound in travel. Toronto-listed shares of Air Canada were up about 2% on Tuesday, 11 Apr'23.

*Egypt to offer visas on arrival to Indians.



In a recent announcement, Egypt introduced a new multiple-entry visa while adding more nationalities to its visa-on-arrival list. Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ahmed Issa confirmed India's place on the list in his speech early last week. The update has come along with a series of measures aimed at boosting tourism in the country. As per reports, the government will soon be announcing a new multiple-entry visa (MEV) to Egypt at \$700 (Rs57,688). This visa will be valid for five years, in contrast to the one-year validity period of previous MEVs. And now, a single-entry visa on arrival valid for 30 days will be available to more than 180 nationalities for \$25 (Rs2,060). India and China have also made it on this list: now, tourists from China and Indians who hold a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) resident visa will also be able to obtain a visa upon arrival to Egypt. Till now, this facility was available only to holders of an entry visa from Schengen countries, the UK, the USA, Japan, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In addition, Chinese tourists will also be able to obtain an emergency entry visa at Egyptian ports if they are travelling individually.

*Vistara to start direct Mumbai-London flight from June 1



Full-service carrier Vistara, a joint venture of Tata group and Singapore Airlines, on Friday said it will launch direct flight services between Mumbai and London Heathrow, starting June 1. The services on the new route will be operated five times a week with a Dreamliner Boeing 787-9 aircraft in three-class configuration -- business, premium economy and economy,

Vistara said in a statement. The airline, which is in the process of merging with Tata Group-owned Air India, said it plans to expand further into the European market with a gradual increase in its widebody fleet going forward. "Mumbai-London will be our fourth route to Europe after connecting Frankfurt, Paris and London with Delhi. This additional gateway also offers our customers more options and flexibility with their travel itineraries," said Vinod Kannan, CEO at Vistara. "We look forward to further expanding our presence in Europe, especially with more wide-body aircraft joining our fleet in the coming months," he added. The airline also said that bookings for the flights are being progressively opened on all channels, including on its website, mobile app as well as travel agents.

*Kolkata airport gets DigiYatra, check-in with facial recognition tech



Passengers travelling through the **Kolkata airport** will now be able to check in for their flights and board planes with facial recognition technology as **DigiYatra** was rolled out here on Friday, an official statement said. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport is the fourth one in the country after airports in Delhi, Bengaluru and Varanasi have the facility that provides a seamless entry and embarkation process for air passengers. '**DigiYatra**' was rolled out in those three airports in the

first phase in December last year. "Its main objective is to enhance passenger experience by eliminating the need for verification of ticket and ID at multiple touch points and to achieve better movement of passengers through existing infrastructure using a digital framework," the Kolkata airport said in a statement. The trials of the technology started at the Kolkata airport on **February 21**, and till 30 March, **9,206 passengers** utilized the facility. Passengers travelling through **Air India, IndiGo, GoFirst, Vistara and SpiceJet** will be able to use **DigiYatra at the Kolkata airport**, the statement said. "It will lead to fast passenger movement, paperless travel, more security and improved airport infrastructure," Kolkata airport director C Pattabhi said, inaugurating the facility. For availing of the service, a passenger has to register their details on the DigiYatra app using Aadhaar-based validation, and a self-image capture. In the next step, the boarding pass has to be scanned and the credentials are shared with the airport. At the airport e-gate, a registered passenger has to first scan the bar-coded boarding pass and the facial recognition system installed at the e-gate will validate the passenger's identity and travel document. Once this process is done, the passenger can enter the airport through the e-gate. The data shared by passengers for DigiYatra will be stored in an encrypted format in a decentralized manner.

***Latest GST Notification - Amnesty for Non-filers of Annual Return:**

GST Notification - Amnesty for Non-filers of Annual Return:

The late fees for filing the Annual Return after the due date is reduced by **CBIC vide Notification No 07/2023**, which is reproduced below.

An amnesty scheme has been provided for those persons who have failed to furnish their annual returns for **F.Y. 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 or 2021-22** but furnish the same between **01.04.2023 to 30.06.2023**. The late fees payable in such cases shall be restricted to **Rs 20,000/- only**. Those who have not filed the Annual Returns for the above financial years are requested to file the same, if applicable to them, **before 30th June, 2023** by paying the late fees which is restricted to **Rs. 20,000/- per return**.



NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 31st March, 2023

No. 07/2023 – CENTRAL TAX

G.S.R. 250(E). In exercise of the powers conferred by section 128 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (12 of 2017) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, on the recommendations of the Council, hereby waives the amount of late fee referred to in section 47 of the said Act in respect of the return to be furnished under section 44 of the said Act for the financial year 2022-23 onwards, which is in excess of amount as specified in Column (3) of the Table below, for the classes of registered persons mentioned in the corresponding entry in Column (2) of the Table below, who fails to furnish the return by the due date, namely:—

Serial No:	Class of registered persons	Amount
(1)	(2)	(3)
1	Registered persons having an aggregate turnover of up to five crore rupees in the relevant financial year.	Twenty-five rupees per day subject to a maximum of an amount calculated at 0.02 per cent. of turnover in the State or Union territory.
2	Registered persons having an aggregate turnover of more than five crores rupees and up to twenty crore rupees in the relevant financial year	Fifty rupees per day, subject to a maximum of an amount calculated at 0.02 per cent. of turnover in the State or Union territory.

Provided that for the registered persons **who fail to furnish the return under section 44 of the said Act** by the due date for any of **the financial years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 or 2021-22**, but furnish the said return between the period from the **1st day of April, 2023 to the 30th day of June, 2023**, the total amount of late fee under section 47 of the said Act payable in respect of the said return, shall stand waived which is in excess of ten thousand rupees.

***Air India's big decision, Changes made in international flights**



Air India has changed the food and beverage menu for all international flights. The airline company issued a statement and informed about it. The menu changes are based on guest suggestions, the statement said. As part of the change, passengers will be served tasty and healthy food. Indian flavor influence will also be seen. Apart from this, the bar menu has also been changed. The new drinks menu will feature a range of **premium brands of whisky, vodka and beer**. **Sandeep Verma, Head, Inflight Services**, Air India said that Air India always tries to innovate for its guests. We want our guests to enjoy their food and beverages on Air India flights just like they would enjoy at their favorite restaurant. An airline spokesperson said the refresh of the menu is based on guest feedback and aims to offer passengers an assortment of delicious meals, trendy appetizers, decadent desserts and showcase India's local culinary influences in line with healthy eating trends. Has been designed for. Air India said that a team of in-house experts, catering partners and suppliers have been kept for food tasting. Verma said that while designing the new menus, our underlying focus has been to ensure that they include nutritious options that the passenger will enjoy. Earlier recently, Air India had changed its policies for **women employees**. After the change, women will now be given **26 weeks of maternity leave**. Apart from this, till the child is one year old, the airline will give women pilots the option of fast-haul flights. According to an internal communication, these options will be given on the basis of request and availability.

***Srinagar airport to spruce up amenities to handle increased footfall:**



Setting up more baggage checking machines and introducing electric vehicles to ferry passengers are among the key measures to be undertaken to handle increased footfall at the international airport here ahead of G20 events and the tourist season, officials said. The measures were announced on Thursday at a meeting to review the security aspects and functioning of the Srinagar international airport, the officials said. It was conducted by Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh and

Director General Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) Zulfiquar Hasan, and attended by top officers of the civil administration and police, the Central Reserve Police Force, the tourism department and the airport. During the meeting, measures to ease congestion such as increasing the number of baggage checking machines at the main gate and introducing electric vehicles to ferry passengers from the main gate to the terminal were discussed threadbare, the officials said. To help tourists, a police facilitation counter will be opened at the airport, besides a police unit will be established to cater to requirements of passengers and their grievances and complaints, they said. The officials said a proposal for an extended baggage-cum-check-in counter in Srinagar city, preferably at the Tourist Reception Centre, will also be considered to reduce congestion at the airport. These measures will help the airport handle more air traffic, especially in view of the upcoming G20 visits, tourist season and the Amarnath yatra, they said. It will be ensured that no passenger is over-charged for any service, including taxi services, the officials said. The security audit of the airport and its surrounding premises will be conducted to neutralize any threat, they said.

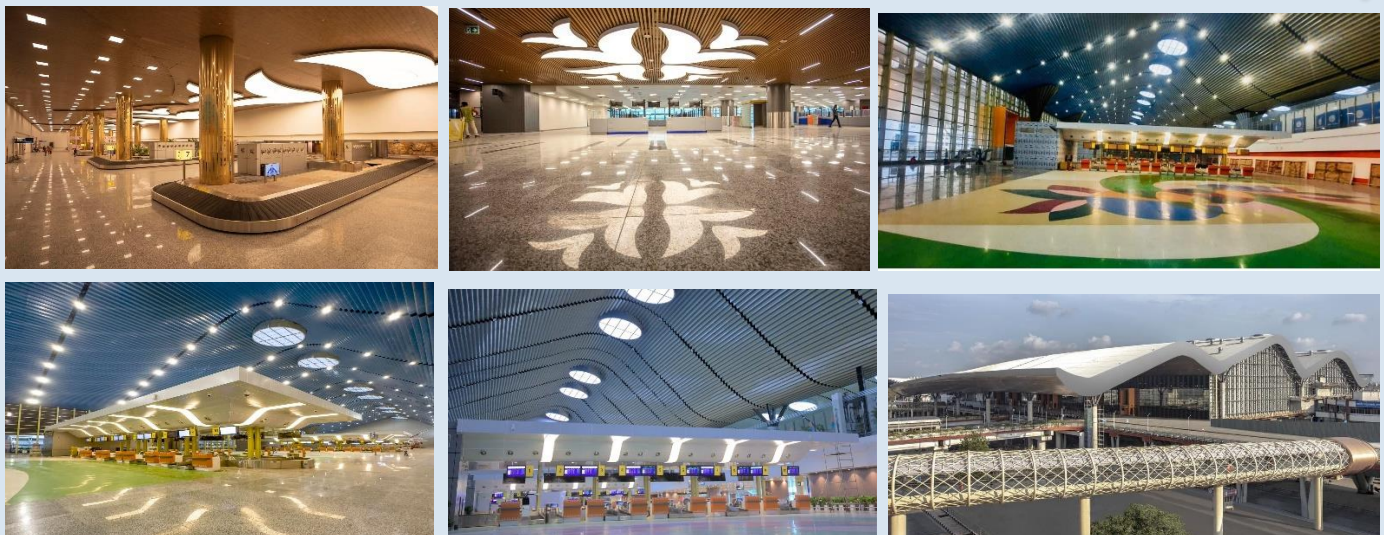
***PM Modi inaugurates Chennai airport's new terminal building:**



PM inaugurates New Integrated Terminal Building of Chennai Airport

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the ₹1,260 crore **New Integrated Terminal Building (Phase-1)** of the Chennai International Airport, a facility that will boost passenger handling. The NITB is uniquely designed to showcase the rich culture and heritage of the state. "The addition of this new integrated terminal building will increase the passenger serving capacity of the airport from 23 million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA) to 30 MPPA. The new terminal is a striking reflection of the local Tamil culture, incorporating traditional

features such as the Kolam, saree, temples, and other elements that highlight the natural surroundings," the government said. The columns are designed to create the visual effect of a palm tree, ceilings are adorned with motif lights, reflecting the Kolam (Rangoli) patterns of South India, and the roof design is derived from Bharatnatyam, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said. "The wavy roofing of NITB replicates the pleated costume that fans out attractively during dancer movements of traditional dance form of the state Bharatnatyam," it added. Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin among others were present. Glimpses of New Airport:



***[Air India becomes country's first & only airline to offer choice of four cabins.](#)**

The Premium Economy Class cabin will be offered on select flights and routes operated by airline's fleet of Boeing 777-200LR. Offering a superior cabin product and added on-ground convenience, the airline has opened sale for the new cabin, for travel starting May 15, 2023. Sharing more information, Air India in a communication said that the new cabin will be initially available to flyers travelling on select routes including Bengaluru-San Francisco, Mumbai-San Francisco, and Mumbai-New York route. Commenting on the development, Campbell Wilson, CEO & MD, Air India said, "The popularity of Premium Economy has grown among travelers around the world, as people are increasingly opting for upgraded, yet affordable flying experiences. We are delighted to introduce a distinctive Premium Economy experience for our customers on select flights for now, with a plan to extend it to many more routes soon, as we rapidly expand and modernize our fleet. This is another step forward in our sincere, ongoing effort to transform Air India into a modern, global carrier of world-class products and service standards." Premium Economy customers will be able to check-in at dedicated counters and have priority tags affixed to their check-in baggage, and also be amongst the first to be invited to board the aircraft. Premium Economy class on Air India's Boeing 777-200LR aircraft features 48 leather-upholstered, memory foam with adjustable leg rest, footrest, and winged headrests. The seats provide extra legroom for customers to stretch out during flight, enabling travelers to rest or work in comfort. The Premium Economy customers will receive a complimentary amenity kit consisting of a pair of flight socks, an eye mask, lip moisturizer, and a pen, in addition to carpet slippers. They also receive noise cancelling headphones for use during flight to complement the experience of Air India's In-flight Entertainment (IFE) system.

***[Navi Mumbai International Airport: Operations to Begin by 2024 End:](#)**



The Navi Mumbai International Airport currently is one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in Maharashtra. This project is being developed by the Adani Group-led Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited (NMIAL). The realization of the exceeding capacity of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has led to the robust work of Navi Mumbai International Airport. After numerous obstacles, Navi Mumbai International Airport is expected to open and be inaugurated in December 2024 as claimed by **Adani Airports CEO Arun Bansal**. This

greenfield project has been in the works since the 1990s and picked up pace in the 2000s. It will be built in an area of around **1,160 hectares** with an estimated cost of 16,700 crores. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the project in February 2018. In February 2017, Gunapati Venkata Krishna Reddy headed a group named GVK Airport Development Ltd to revamp Navi Mumbai International Airport. This group consisted of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra (CIDCO). To implement the project, the DBFOT Model—a design, build, finance, operate, and transfer agreement—was adopted by the nodal agency to carry out the project in a public-private partnership. The airport is expected to be built in four phases by 2032. The initial stage of the project will involve building two runways that can accommodate 80 aircraft per hour. In December 2020, the project was supposed to be operational. The airport will be located on National Highway 4B. It will be linked to Mumbai through the 21 km six-lane Mumbai Trans Harbor Link (MTHL) project. This project is under construction by Larsen and Toubro – IHI Consortium and Tata Projects Ltd. The airport will reportedly handle more than 10 million passengers a year upon the completion of the first phase.

***[Mumbai Airport Runway to Remain Shut For 6 Hours - Check Details Here](#)**

As part of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's (CSMIA) monsoon contingency plan, both runways - **RWY 09/27 & 14/32** will remain temporarily non-operational on **May 2, 2023**, for pre-monsoon maintenance & repair work for **six hours**. The temporary closure will be from **11 am to 5 pm** and a **NOTAM** (Notice to Airmen) has been issued in this regard. All operations will resume as usual from **May 2, 2023 post 1700 hrs**. The scheduled temporary runway closure is a yearly practice and contingency plan on the same will help maintain operational continuity and ensure passengers safety. As one of the world's busiest single runway airports, Mumbai airport witnesses nearly 900 flight movements each day. The airport has a network of runways, taxiways and apron encompassing nearly 1033 acres. Thus, to ensure operational continuity during the monsoon months, timely check and repair work on the runways and associated facilities is of utmost importance to maintain its health and operational continuity.

*Airlines told to take strict action against unruly fliers



नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF
CIVIL AVIATION

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed airlines to take strict action against unruly fliers and to familiarize its pilots and cabin crew with the rules. DGCA's notice to the carriers comes amid several incidents where passengers were caught smoking and drinking inside

the aircraft, trying to open emergency exits and even getting involved in fights - either with the crew or fellow passengers. In the latest incident, Air India Monday had to turn over a passenger to the police after he caused physical harm to two cabin crew members on board a Delhi-London flight. "In the recent past, DGCA has noticed a few incidents of smoking in aircraft, consumption of alcoholic beverages resulting in unruly behavior, altercations between passengers and sometimes inappropriate touching or sexual harassment by passengers... wherein pilots and cabin crew members have failed to take appropriate actions. Such incidents have the potential of compromising the safety of aircraft operations," the DGCA said in a statement. The regulator in its notice asked the head of operations of all airlines to ensure that pilots and cabin crew are sensitized to monitor such passengers and take action so that aircraft safety is not impacted.

*Tata plans to set up ground-handling business under Air India



Tata Sons is evaluating plans to set up an Air India ground-handling services company that will not only meet the airline's burgeoning in-house needs, but also look at offering shared services to other carriers. Such plans may also include possibly bidding for the erstwhile state-run carrier's ground-handling entity, Air India Air Transport Services (AIASL), which has been put on the block by the

government. Before the government sold Air India, it hived off its business units such as ground handling to an entity called the Air India Assets Holding. The proposed Air India entity may also house the aviation training academy announced in December 2022 as part of an organizational revamp. Air India is keen that the academy equals the biggest and the best globally. Funding for the proposed venture will come in from Tata Sons which has set aside significant funds for the aviation business for the next five years, officials said. "That is the way forward discussed within the top management. Airport services and ground handling are also a critical consumer-facing role adding to the overall consumer experience in addition to the one inside the aircraft," said an official aware of the discussions. The plans are expected to fructify once Air India comfortably progresses on its recent ambitious aircraft-purchasing plans, officials said. Air India currently has an airports services joint venture with Singapore-based SATS Airport Services called AI SATS. The airline has plans to expand the scope of this venture. They include the setting up of a multi-modal cargo hub at the planned Greater Noida airport, **Sanjay Gupta, the CEO** of the JV said in February. Among other things, the facility will include an integrated cargo terminal (ICT) and an integrated warehousing and logistics zone. Separately, the government plans to shortly invite bids for the airline's erstwhile ground-handling subsidiary AI Airport Services and its engineering unit AI Engineering Services.

*India's refusal to revise bilateral rights will result in restrictions by others: IATA DG



Director General of IATA, Willie Walsh.

India's refusal to revise bilateral seat allocations for international flights despite demands from several countries reflects an "old protectionist India" that could result in others retaliating and restricting access for Indian airlines which in turn will hamper India's ambition to develop a global airport hub, warns the Director General of global airlines body IATA, Willie Walsh. "With the ambition to expand will come the need to allow more competition into India but you are not going to get the response from other countries if you have a restricted bilateral. Other countries will restrict capacity as well," Mr. Walsh

told in an interview at the IATA's headquarters in Geneva. Mr. Walsh said that the demand from various airlines such as Emirates and Qatar for additional seats or flights within the bilateral agreements were due to "demand for air travel significantly outstripping the services available," and therefore the ultimate loser will be the consumers who are forced to pay higher airfares because of fewer flights. Mr. Walsh rued that the government's policy reflected "old protectionist India" which didn't have a national airline that was capable of competing at a global scale. "Going forward people should be more ambitious and confident and believe that Air India is capable of competing on a level playing field," he said. He said that the potential for growth in India was massive & that though its domestic market was at third place after US and China, it only accounted for 2% of global by revenue passenger, while in China it was 9.8% of global RPKs.

*Akasa Air Now Offers Lounge Services for A Fee



Akasa Air has partnered with India's largest airport lounges access aggregator, DreamFolks Services Limited, to offer lounge services to its passengers. DreamFolks operates in 54 lounges across India, and with this new partnership with Akasa Air, flyers can enjoy access to the lounges in Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Guwahati, Agartala, Lucknow, Varanasi, Hyderabad, Pune, Kolkata, and Bhubaneswar. Akasa customers can purchase lounge access up to 12 hours before departure on the airline's website or app for a fee that will vary depending on the airport. Belson Coutinho, Co-Founder and Chief Marketing & Experience Officer, Akasa Air, commented, "We are continuously augmenting ways to offer high quality, comfortable and convenient travel experience. The introduction of lounge access service is yet another step in this direction, which allows our customers to enjoy the convenience and comfort of a lounge at a reasonable fee. We are delighted to partner with DreamFolks to offer this added layer of comfort and peace of mind to our valued customers." Akasa also tweaks its menu whenever it can to keep things new and fresh, particularly during popular Indian festivals. This year, it has already offered new meal selections for two Hindu festivals – Makar Sankranti and Holi. Akasa Air now flies to 17 cities operating over 900 weekly flights across India, and as it grows its business, it is likely to announce more offers and services in the coming months.

*US tourist visa and student visa to get costlier from May 30

Effective May 30, 2023, the visa fee for the US tourist/business (B1/B2) as well as student and exchange visitor visas will be hiked. According to a US Department of State communique regarding increases to certain non-immigrant visa application (NIV) processing fees, the fee for visitor visas for business or tourism (B1/B2), and other non-petition based NIVs such as student and exchange visitor visas, will increase from \$160 to \$185. The fee for certain petition-based non-immigrant visas for temporary workers (H, L, O, P, Q, and R categories) will increase from \$190 to \$205. The fee for treaty traders, treaty investors, and treaty applicants in a specialty occupation (E category) will increase from \$205 to \$315. Other consular fees are not affected by this rule, including the waiver of the two-year residency required fee for certain exchange visitors. All fee payments for visa interviews made on or after October 1 of the previous year are valid for 365 days from the date of issue of the fee payment invoice. Fees paid by applicants before October 1, 2022, will continue to be valid until September 30 of this year. As a result, applicants must pre-schedule an interview or submit an interview waiver application before September 30, 2023. The fees for most non-petition based NIVs were last updated in 2012, and certain other NIV fees were last updated in 2014.

*Delhi Airport ninth busiest in the world in 2022



Delhi Airport was the ninth busiest airport in the world in 2022 beating Paris' Charles De Gaulle airport, data from Airports Council International (ACI) showed. The airport which clocked a footfall of 5,94,90,074 in 2022 is one position behind London's Heathrow Airport, which handled over 61 million passengers. The airport climbed from its past rankings of 13th and 17th in 2021 and 2019 respectively. With the exception of Los Angeles (LAX) in sixth place with 65.9 million (+37.3%), the remainder of the Top 10 was made up of airports either regaining their previously held status among the world's busiest gateways – Dubai, London Heathrow and Paris CDG – or continuing their rapid upward trajectory for passenger growth such as Istanbul and Delhi. From the top 10 airports globally, five are in the United States. They all have significant domestic passenger shares (between 75% and 95% domestic traffic).

*Letter of Undertaking (LUT) for GST



Please note the "**Letter of Undertaking**" (LUT) is required to be submitted online in Form No GST RFD 11 every financial year before the beginning of the financial year by the exporter of Goods and Services declaring that he or she will fulfill all the requirements that are prescribed under GST while "exporting without making IGST payment". This is also popular amongst the travel agents who are suppliers of services to **SEZ units** for the incentive received on the CRS segments sold by the members **without making IGST payment. It is a simple formality to be completed online for the FY 2023-24.** The FAQ on LUT is available in the official link given here:(Click+Ctrl for the link) [GST Tutorial and FAQ on LUT](#)

*AirAsia launches new low-cost airline in Cambodia



The new airline will further cement AirAsia's brand in Cambodia and Indochina, providing AirAsia with greater access to its domestic market and connecting it to the international markets across South-east Asia, North Asia and beyond. AirAsia Cambodia aims to further stimulate the Cambodian aviation and tourism industries, launch new destinations, create jobs and bring a true low-cost operation to the country. Tony Fernandes, CEO of Capital A said: "The value of AirAsia's network is an insurmountable asset; it will be another flag of extensive connectivity in Cambodia and into the region, namely China, India and North Asia. "2022 was about restarting our airline to pre-Covid levels. That machine is in place and will be completed by the second quarter of 2023. The second half of 2023 will be when we focus on our continued efforts in growth." Vissoth Nam, director of Sivilai Asia added: "As one of the first countries to open up international travel with no quarantine in November 2021, Cambodia has led the way in (South-east Asia's) air travel recovery journey post-Covid, with the rest of (the) countries in the region following suit. Pre-pandemic, AirAsia operated 90 weekly flights from Malaysia and Thailand and is currently flying about 49 weekly flights to Cambodia. Operating five routes to Cambodia from Kuala Lumpur to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, from Penang to Phnom Penh (starting January 3, 2023) as well as from Bangkok (Don Mueang) to Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, AirAsia has carried over 10 million guests to and from Cambodia since entering the market in 2005.

*American Airlines to offer new fares on Sabre



Sabre Corporation and American Airlines (AA) have teamed up to make the airline's NDC offers available to travellers through **Sabre's** global distribution system (GDS). Starting on **April 3**, Sabre-connected travel buyers, agencies and developer partners will be able to shop, book, and service AA's NDC content, including paid seats, through Sabre's Offer and Order APIs, the agency point-of-sale tool, Sabre Red 360, and the online booking tool, **GetThere**. Thomas Rajan, vice president, global sales at American Airlines, commented: "Through Sabre's network of travel retailers, we'll be able to provide our enhanced, rich NDC content to travellers worldwide. This will open new business opportunities to American Airlines as well as our travel retail partners, and deliver a better, more tailored experience to the customers we all serve." Travel buyers connected to the Sabre GDS will be able to choose enhanced offers from AA such as the Main Select and Flagship Business Plus fares, ancillary products and the lowest fares available in these channels. They will also have access to more descriptive information on AA's flight offers as well as seat selection enabled in the booking path. "While it is still early days for NDC bookings, making this rich NDC content from the world's largest airline available in Sabre channels is an important step towards the maturing and scaling of NDC distribution," said Kathy Morgan, vice president, NDC and airline supply, Sabre Travel Solutions.

*Travelport, Saudia Airlines renew distribution agreement



Travelport and Saudia Airlines have extended their partnership with the signing of a multi-year extension on their distribution agreement. The agreement will see Travelport continue to provide travel agencies around the world real-time access to Saudia Airlines' wide selection of travel content, products and services. Travelport will also continue to collaborate closely with Saudia Airlines to execute Travelport Rich Content and Branding initiatives, streamlining service procedures, and delivering a modern travel retail experience. Arved von zur Muehlen, chief commercial officer at Saudia Airlines, commented: "Travel distribution is under rapid transformation and we are working to widen our network and product offerings. Travelport is an established partner to support Saudia's growth and product differentiation and personalization strategy." David Gomes, head of commercial, air partners EMEA at Travelport, added: "With our Travelport+ platform, we are committed to work closely with partners like Saudia Airlines to deliver a superior, modern travel retailing experience with a wider range of choice and richer content for our customers."

Quote for Thoughts

- A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events and outcomes.
- We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think.
- Change your thoughts and you change your world.

***Knowledge Series: Income Tax:** By H.M. Talha Rahaman, Chartered Accountant, Consultant IT Matters

(Session - 4, Continued from Last Issue):

PART – 8: Tax Deducted at Source (TDS)

Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) is a tax collection mechanism introduced by the Income Tax Act, 1961 to ensure the collection of taxes at the time of payment of various types of expenses such as salary, interest, rent, commission, etc. Here's what you need to know about TDS under the Income Tax Act, 1961:



1. Who is required to deduct TDS?

Any person or entity who is making payment for any of the specified expenses like Rent, Salary, Commission, Interest, Contracts etc above the respective threshold limit is required to deduct TDS. This includes employers, banks, individuals, and companies.

2. What are the rates of TDS?

The rates of TDS vary depending on the type of expenses and the amount of payment. For example, the TDS rate on salary payments ranges from 0% to 30%, while the TDS rate on rental payments is generally 10%.

3. What is the due date for depositing TDS?

TDS deducted during a month should be deposited with the government on or before the 7th day of the following month. Example, TDS deducted in the month of April should be deposited on or before 7th May.

4. What is the due date for filing TDS returns?

TDS returns need to be filed on a quarterly basis using Form 24Q, 26Q, 27Q or 27EQ, as applicable. The due dates for filing TDS returns are 31st July, 31st October, 31st January and 31st May for the respective quarters.

5. What is the penalty for non-compliance with TDS provisions?

Failure to deduct or deposit TDS or late filing of TDS returns can result in penalties and interest charges under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

It's important to note that the TDS provisions are complex and it's advisable to seek professional advice if you have any doubts or questions about your TDS obligations.

PART – 9: Tax Collected at Source:

Tax Collected at Source (TCS) is a tax collection mechanism introduced by the Income Tax Act, 1961 to ensure the collection of taxes at the time of sale of certain specified goods or provision of certain specified services. Here's what you need to know about TCS under the Income Tax Act, 1961:

1. Who is required to collect TCS?

Any person or entity who is selling certain specified goods or providing certain specified services is required to collect TCS. This includes sellers of scrap, minerals, timber, and buyers of overseas tour packages, among others.

2. What are the rates of TCS?

The rates of TCS vary depending on the type of goods or services being sold. For example, the TCS rate on the sale of scrap is 1%, while the TCS rate on the purchase of overseas tour packages is 5%.

3. What is the due date for depositing TCS?

TCS collected during a month should be deposited with the government on or before the 7th day of the following month. Example, TCS collected in the month of April should be deposited on or before 7th May.

4. What is the due date for filing TCS returns?

TCS returns need to be filed on a quarterly basis using Form 27EQ. The due dates for filing TCS returns are 31st July, 31st October, 31st January and 31st May for the respective quarters.

5. What is the penalty for non-compliance with TCS provisions?

Failure to collect or deposit TCS or late filing of TCS returns can result in penalties and interest charges under the Income Tax Act, 1961.

It's important to note that the TCS provisions are complex and it's advisable to seek professional advice if you have any doubts or questions about your TCS obligations.

(To be continued in the next Issue.....)