

**\*TAFI JK Chapter held 1st Bi Monthly Meeting in Srinagar on 25th October 2022**



TAFI Jammu Kashmir Chapter held their first Chapter at 7 C's Cafe & Fine Dine in Srinagar. Mr. MANZOOR PAKHTOON, Chairman, BURHAN MISGAR Secretary and TANVIR KHAN Treasurer successfully conducted the meeting. Members deliberated the formation of TAFI JK Chapter, TAFI National AGM, and Membership Drive etc., followed by formation of Membership Subcommittee for enrolling new membership. The office Bearers explained the meetings held with various Govt offices/ Departments. TAFI JK chapter has also been inducted in United Tourism Forum (UTF) which is constituent of 11 Associations & United Tourism Forum had a meeting with Honorable Home Minister of India Shri Amit Shah in which TAFI JK chapter was represented by Mr. Pakhtoon. Members deliberated and requested the OBs to write to the National Committee to hold the next TAFI convention or at least the NJC meeting in Kashmir.





### **\*What are the experts saying about the highly transmissible XBB Covid variant?**



After appearing in Singapore for the first time, the Omicron sub-lineage **XBB of COVID-19** has found its way to the Indian public. The virus strain is known for its highly contagious nature, but an expert panel has observed that Indian patients have **reported mild illness and no increase in severity**, even after contracting it. INSACOG, or Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics, a group of 54 laboratories across the country that monitor the different iterations of the virus made the observations. "Modest increase in the spread of XBB in Singapore has been observed. "Among the Indian patients, the disease is mild like with other Omicron sub-lineages, and no increase in severity is noted," it added. While the severity might be low, the body said that nearly 50 per cent of the samples sequenced in the past couple of weeks tested positive for it. As reported, the XBB variant was first reported in Singapore and is expected to become the next dominant strain of Covid. Health experts are hopeful that the population's level of hybrid immunity will not lead to severe illnesses. The new Omicron strains such as XBB, BA.5 and BQ.1.1 are also known as "Scrabble" variants, a term coined by **Peter Hotez**, co-director of the Center for Vaccine Development at Texas Children's Hospital. The nickname refers to the alphabets B, Q and X that fetch a whole lot of points in the game. Experts say that XBB has been found to evade vaccine-derived protections in research. However, **vaccination can keep severe symptoms at bay**. In fact, as it becomes colder outside, more variants are likely to emerge.

### **\*Ethiopian Airlines announces Medical Partnership with Akbar Travels Group:**



**Ethiopian Airlines and TravoCure Healthcare**, the medical travel division and a subsidiary of Akbar Group of Companies headquartered in India, announced their recent Medical Tourism Partnership in order to facilitate services for passengers traveling from Africa to India for medical reasons. This will see both parties conduct joint promotional activities to highlight India as a medical tourism destination for its modern medical technologies at internationally accredited hospitals and clinics. One of the sectors expanding globally at a great pace is the medical tourism industry. Therefore, with its latest collaboration with Ethiopian Airlines, passengers traveling to India from Africa for medical reasons will receive

discounts for feasible medical treatment through the Akbar Travels Group. Ethiopian Airlines is among the first to initiate a step in providing more convenience and discounted air fares to its medical travelers. Being the first ever Airline to actively participate towards the future success of the medical tourism industry offering a more seamless travel experience for medical travelers, the airline will also be providing better travel packages to medical tourists at affordable costs. Thus, travelers who were once in a dilemma to visit a destination can now confirm their plans, as they can manage their expenditure and costs while managing a convenient tour. **Tigist Eshetu**, Regional Director India and subcontinent, Ethiopian Airlines, said, "Putting our customers first has always been a priority. Thus, every patient traveling from Africa to India for medical facilities can benefit, as with Akbar Travels, we also look forward to many newer path-breaking horizons for the future." Commenting on the partnership, Nitesh Krishnan, CEO, TravoCure Healthcare, said, "World-class hospitals and access to highly skilled English-speaking medical professionals at a fraction of the cost, today is one of the driving factors for many international patients seeking medical treatment in India.

### **\*Air India reduces assured incentive for travel agents**



Air India has reduced the assured incentive on ticket sales for IATA-accredited domestic travel agents to 0.5 per cent for this fiscal. However, an Air India spokesperson said it has not reduced incentive to travel agents. "On the contrary, it has increased the total incentive by 10 basis points. The only change is with regards to the structure of the incentive, which is now

based more on the performance of the agencies. Also, the new policy allows additional 900 IATA agents to earn productivity-based incentives of up to 1.5 per cent, which was not there in the earlier policy," the spokesperson said. Travel Agents has urged Air India to withdraw its decision with immediate effect and give a minimum of 3 per cent incentive/commission to its members and the IATA-accredited agents.

### \*Air Canada Starts London Heathrow-Mumbai Boeing 787 Flight



Air Canada has introduced London Heathrow to Mumbai, which begins and ends in Toronto. It marks its return to the airport pair after last operating it 31 years ago as part of a longer routing. The launch of the one-stop via London comes as Air Canada, keen to grow India flights further, was originally to begin Toronto-Mumbai nonstop to target Canada's largest unserved Indian market. It didn't, presumably because

of the consequences of avoiding Ukraine and Russian airspace, raising the question of whether the one-stop is just temporary. On October 30th, Air Canada took off from Heathrow to Mumbai. Including 2h 40m ground time in the UK, the travel time between Toronto and Mumbai is 18h 25m out and 20h 40m back. It isn't the quickest option, but it is competitive. Of course, it has fifth freedom traffic rights between London and Mumbai. The 8,043-mile (12,944km) route from Toronto uses 298-seat 787-9s, Air Canada's primary widebody. There are 30 fully flat seats in Signature Class, 21 recliner seats in premium economy, and 247 in regular economy.

### \*Pets start flying on Akasa: Day 1 sees 4 dog passengers; pet-fares start from Rs 4,000



India's youngest airline — aviation veteran Vinay Dube-headed Akasa Air — on Tuesday started carrying pets on board its flights like the country's oldest-operating carrier — Air India. Four pet dogs flew its domestic flights (Akasa flies only within India as of now) on as many flights. The airline allows a maximum of one pet in the passenger cabin and one in the cargo hold. Currently, only domesticated cats and dogs are allowed as pets. According to the airline, it will charge Rs 4,000 (including GST) for carrying pets

weighing upto 7kg in the cabin who will be checked in with an accompanying passenger. The charge for pets between 7kg and 32kg in cargo compartment, checked in with an accompanying passenger, will be Rs 15,000 (GST inclusive). And charges for flying heavier pets weighing upto 100kg in cargo will 'vary based on weight and destination'. "Bookings for pets will need to be made at least 48 hours before flight departure. Number of pets allowed to travel on a flight are limited and bookings will be accepted on a first come first basis, including seating consideration," the airline official said. Belson Coutinho, Akasa Air co-founder and chief marketing and experiences officer, said, "We are pleased to commence our Pets on Akasa service today. The response has been overwhelming since we opened for bookings - with a total of 22 pets already booked to travel on our flights up until mid-December. On the very first day of our Pets on Akasa service, we flew four of our furry friends to their respective destinations and are very heartened to hear the positive feedback from the pet parents. Pets on Akasa reflects our commitment to create an inclusive travel experience."

### \*Jazeera Airways Earns Record Profit And Plans Asian Expansion



In the first nine months of 2022, Kuwaiti low-cost carrier **Jazeera Airways** posted a record net profit of \$67.05 million. In the process, it has exceeded pre-COVID passenger numbers by 370% and is now the market leader at Kuwait International Airport. For the same nine-month period in 2019 (9m 2019), Jazeera Airways (Jazeera) made a net profit of \$31.9 million and carried 703,000 passengers. Fast forward to 9m 2022, and the Middle Eastern airline turned that into a net profit of \$67.05 million earned from

carrying 2.6 million passengers. In Q3 2022, Jazeera flew a record number of 1.1 million passengers, a 256% increase from the same period last year. Passenger load factors reached an average of 80.1% in the third quarter and 76.4% for 9m 2022, a 15.75% increase year-on-year. With 20,161 flights between January and September, Jazeera became the most significant carrier operating at Kuwait International Airport (KIW). The chairman of Jazeera Airways, **Marwan Bodi**, said that the appetite for travel increased significantly during the peak summer season, "exceeding the numbers of passengers that flew with us during the record year of 2019.". Jazeera opened six new routes during the third quarter, four to Saudi Arabia and one to China and Uzbekistan each. The new Saudi Arabia routes link Kuwait to Abha, Hail, Qassim, and Taif. The new route to Namangan is Jazeera's second direct route to Uzbekistan, complementing the existing service to Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport (TAS). Currently, Jazeera operates more than 70 services a week to eight cities in Saudi Arabia. **Al Jazeera, CEO, Rohit Ramachandran** said that it will increase that to 11 cities by the end of the year, adding routes to Tabuk, Al Jouf, and Hofuf.



### \*Saudi holds its first multi-city travel trade roadshow in India



Consequent to its first ever participation in OTM in India, Saudi recently held its inaugural in-person India travel trade roadshow, connecting key partners and stakeholders across different Indian cities. More than 500 leading Indian travel trade players in different cities were engaged and educated on the diversity of the country's product offering as the world's must-visit leisure tourism destination. The week-long tour also saw the signing of 14 MoU's with some of India's leading regional trade partners. "As we work towards achieving our ambitious tourism goals, we are committed to building and solidifying relationships with key partners to help us unlock priority source markets and drive volume and growth. The hosting of our first ever Indian roadshow across four cities and OTM participation created an opportunity for our trade partners to come together to discover the diversity of Saudi's tourism ecosystem, to enable and empower them to offer an exciting new destination to Indian travellers," said **Alhasan Aldabbagh**, President - APAC Markets, Saudi Tourism Authority. Targetting more than 70 million visitors in 2022, Saudi is building on its 2021 success, with its tourism industry witnessing 121 per cent recovery to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, the country's commitment to its tourism development was recognized by the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI), where Saudi gained 10 spots in the global ranking. "The beauty of Saudi lies in its diversity, authenticity and the warm hospitality of the Saudi people," said Aldabbagh. Home to six UNESCO World Heritage sites and more than 10,000 archaeological sites, as well as the mountainous Asir region - which includes Rijal Almaa, voted a UNWTO 'best tourism village' in 2021 - and the arts and culture hub of Jeddah, the Saudi tourism ecosystem continues to transform and evolve.

### \*Domestic airlines seek 100 slots at Mopa in Goa, international ops from January



At least five international airlines and all domestic carriers have approached GMR Goa International Airport Limited (**GGIAL**) seeking landing slots at the yet-to-be-commissioned airport at Mopa. Chief Minister, **Pramod Sawant**, said that PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the airport in mid-December, an indication that work on the airport infrastructure is far from complete. GGIAL Chief Executive Officer, **Ranganathan Sheshan**, said that 100 landing and takeoff slots have

been sought by domestic operators from December. He said that international flights will commence from January, beginning with Oman Air, with more international flights to follow in the coming months. "Approximately 100 slots have been requested. As the operation picks up, we expect more flights to come. Initially, we will commence only with domestic operations from December, and thereafter, we will take up international operations in January," said Sheshan. GGIAL continues to work at a frantic pace to get the airport ready, with a lot of work pending for the launch of commercial operations. While the airside infrastructure such as the air traffic control tower, runway, parallel taxiway, and apron is complete, the approach road to the private airport remains in shambles. We expect that all the work will be completed in time. We are waiting for a date from the PM. Tentatively, we expect a date after December 8, and then it will immediately be opened." The greenfield airport at Mopa will be a boon not just for Goa but for Sindhudurg too, as it is expected to improve economic activity and tourism in its vicinity. Sheshan said that one of the largest temperature-controlled cargo facilities, with an initial capacity of 25,000 tones, will be built at Mopa and will be fully operational by February 2023. In the interim, scheduled passenger flights will transport air freight from day-1 of the airport's operation. "Thereafter, we will encourage freighters to come in. The cargo facility will be used for transportation of pharma, agriculture, floriculture, and other industry products."

### \*Genting Dream readies for Phuket

Resorts World Cruises (RWC) will launch three- and five-nights cruises to Phuket from both Singapore and Kuala Lumpur (via Port Klang) aboard Genting Dream later this month. Guests can choose to board the ship from Singapore for the five-night Kuala Lumpur-Penang-Phuket cruise departing on November 20, 2022 and March 12, 2023; or from Port Klang on November 21, 2022 and March 13, 2023 for a five-night Penang-Phuket-Singapore sailing. There are also the three-night options, from Singapore and from Port Klang with sailing dates available between May 2023 and April 2024. All cruises to Phuket will offer shore experiences. Bookings will open from November 15. Michael Goh, president, RWC, said Genting Dream's two- and three-night cruises have been very popular.

### **\*Hong Kong relaxes Covid rules for inbound tour groups**



Hong Kong's government said that it was relaxing Covid-19 restrictions on inbound tour groups including allowing them to enter theme parks and museums after arriving in the financial hub. Hong Kong has relaxed many of its stringent Coronavirus policies in recent months, including hotel quarantine for international arrivals as of September 26. International arrivals are still, however, subject to multiple Coronavirus tests and barred from entering bars, restaurants and venues like sports clubs for the first three days. The government said specific arrangements for visiting tourists would be launched this month, without specifying a start date. "The relevant arrangements

can support the gradual resumption of the inbound travel market in an orderly manner and provide more favorable business environment for the travel trade," the government said. The announcement came after Hong Kong last week hosted a high-profile financial summit for which more than 200 financial executives who flew into the former British colony were exempted from Hong Kong's rules for international arrivals. Many local residents have pointed to inconsistencies in government policy and said authorities should remove the restrictions for everyone equally. Hong Kong's economy has been battered by the Coronavirus restrictions which have lasted for nearly three years with many small and medium-sized businesses closing down.

### **\*Kerala records 1,33,80,000 domestic tourists till September**



Spurred by the success of its initiatives during the festival season that triggered a huge spike in domestic tourist arrivals, Kerala Tourism has chalked out a slew of programs for the winter to attract a still higher number of visitors from within the country and outside. Kerala Tourism Minister PA Mohamed Riyas said that the just concluded festival season was positive for Kerala's tourism with a large number of domestic tourists visiting the state and reaffirming its touristy appeal in the post-Covid phase. According to the statistics provided by Kerala Tourism, the state recorded a total of 1,33,80,000 domestic tourists in the nine months till this September,

registering a 1.49 per cent increase as compared to the same period of pre-Covid 2019. "We are now looking forward to promoting the winter holiday season even in a bigger way in Kerala. The state's uniqueness lies in a variety of experiences awaiting the tourists like houseboats, caravan stays, jungle lodges, plantation visits, homestays, Ayurveda-based wellness solutions and countrywide walks besides adventure activities, including trekking to verdant hills," the minister highlighted. Tourism Director P B Nooh said that the Kerala Tourism Department has made elaborate plans to give an effective thrust to showcase state's new projects as well as its core assets like beaches, hill stations, houseboats and backwater segments to heighten the totality of visitor experience. "We are making efforts in full throttle to showcase Kerala as an absolutely safe, alluring and hospitable destination for visitors from across the globe.

### **\*In Chennai, airfares to Middle East touch a new high because of FIFA World Cup**



Air fare to destinations in the Middle East (ME) has increased because of the demand for travel by football enthusiasts for the Qatar World Cup scheduled to begin last week of November. The return fare to Doha is 46,000-85,000 while the tickets to Dubai are selling at 25,000-30,000. As hotel tariff is also high in Doha many people are going to stay in UAE and Saudi and travel to Qatar for the matches. These two countries are offering multiple entry visas for football fans arriving to watch the matches. The return fare from Chennai to Doha is in the range of 46,000- 90,000, to Dubai it is 25,000-30,000, Abu Dhabi is 23,000-41,000, Sharjah is 23,000-

27,000, Dammam is 26,000-29,000 for travel at the end of November. The FIFA World Cup begins on November 20. Industry sources said people including groups who have booked for travel to ME during the World Cup are combining the trips - for football match in Qatar and sightseeing in UAE. They will land in the UAE or Saudi, stay there and then fly to Qatar for the matches. UAE and Saudi have also relaxed visa rules.



### \*Ground cleared for Visakhapatnam International Airport project to take off



Ground is now fully cleared for the much-delayed Visakhapatnam International Airport project to take off. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Office has written to the Prime Minister's Office requesting that Narendra Modi lay the foundation stone, possibly virtually, for the new airport construction during his visit to port city Visakhapatnam on November 12. But the PMO has not included it in Modi's itinerary, official sources said. Development of the new international airport in

Public-Private Partnership mode at Bhogapuram, 40-km Northeast of Visakhapatnam, was first mooted in the year 2014, post-bifurcation of the state as the existing one in the city is owned by the Indian Navy. For various reasons, the project did not take off in over eight years. The plan also included development of the airport with "one runway, parallel taxiway and other infrastructure capable of servicing world's largest aircrafts". The previous Telugu Desam government initiated the process to acquire over 2,700 acres of land in the Bhogapuram area for the airport development, but it got stuck in litigation all these years over a 50-acre piece right at the centre of the proposed project where the runway was supposed to come up. The AP High Court last week finally dismissed the farmers' petitions against the land acquisition, clearing the way for the project development. According to GMR sources, the INR 3,000 crore project involves designing, building, financing, constructing, developing, operating and maintaining the greenfield international airport for 40 years, which could be extended by an additional 20 years through international competitive bidding. A Special Purpose Vehicle GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Limited (GVIAL) has been floated to take up the development. As per latest development GMR offered to pay INR 303 PPF (per passenger fee) to the state government. As per projections, the number of passengers is expected to touch nine million by the year 2036.

### \*GMR Goa International Airport unveils its brand logo



GMR Goa International Airport Limited unveiled its new brand logo on Tuesday. GGIAL CEO RV Sheshan said, "We are very happy to announce the launch of our New Goa Airport Brand Identity Logo, as a part of creating a distinct marque amongst our valued customers." He said that GGIAL has crafted a logo that has a perfect amalgamation of the key elements of Goa. The new logo, inspired by the sun, sand, palm trees,

sea, sky, earth, and fun which define Goa, is playful, optimistic, and smart. As a prominent representation of the company, people, and brand, the new logo is playful, optimistic and smart. Inspired by the sun, sand, palm trees, sea, sky, earth and fun which define Goa, the logo for New Goa Airport has incorporated each of these attributes, a media release by GGIAL said. The release further said, "it conveys our commitment to serving our customers with the best world-class airport experiences while remaining true to our longstanding reputation." "The new Goa airport is about relaxing and also moving, thus unfolding a new and smooth pace of life. The new Goa airport is about the hills, the water, the greenery and the Goan Spirit. All the colors that define state on the southwestern coast of India and the emotions that surround it find expression in the New Wave Logo," it added. The company has said all the attributes that symbolize the spirit of Goa are present in this corporate insignia. Reportedly, the new airport would be developed in stages initially to service about 4.4 million passengers per annum and will be scaled up as per traffic growth demands. This Airport will be a full-service airport catering to domestic and international passengers besides freight services.

### \*Jaipur airport witnesses 12 per cent increase in October passenger traffic

Passenger traffic at Jaipur International Airport witnessed a growth of 12 per cent with over 3.72 lakh passengers travelling in October compared to 3.38 lakh in September, officials said on Tuesday. "In October, passenger traffic increased by record 12 per cent. With the tourist season setting in, more and more people are travelling. The growth trend is likely to stay in the coming winter months. Increased flight connectivity by different airlines has also helped in the growth," said an official spokesperson of the Jaipur International Airport. In September, a total of 3,33,013 travelled from Jaipur airport of which 2,99,635 were domestic and 33,378 international passengers. "The number of international travellers has also increased as most of the Covid restrictions were removed and improvement in international air connectivity. According to airline companies, number of bookings have started going up as compared to previous months, so the passenger count will increase further," added the spokesperson. Apart from passenger traffic, the movement of unscheduled or chartered flights have also gone up in October. In October, around 143 unscheduled flights landed in Jaipur compared to 76 in August and 80 in September.

### \*Uzbekistan campaign to push pilgrimage tourism in ancient cities



Uzbekistan is looking at promoting pilgrimage tourism to diversify its portfolio. In a recently concluded International Ziyarah Tourism Week, held from November 1 to November 3, 2022, in Uzbekistan, the destination showcased its ancient cities Samarkand, Khiva, Bukhara and Tashkent. Held under the aegis of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan in cooperation with a number of organizations, the Tourism Week included exhibitions, seminars, scientific and practical conferences as well as cultural and educational events aimed at the development of pilgrimage tourism. Visit to the new Silk Road tourist center in Samarkand and the International Exhibition of Crafts on the theme “Khiva - the Capital of Tourism of the Islamic World” were among other events that were held during the week. According to the Government of Uzbekistan, International Pilgrimage Tourism Week will now be an annual event and held in the first week of November. Recently, **President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, defined tourism as one of the strategic sectors of the country’s national economy. The Uzbekistan Embassy in India shared that owing to the open-door policy in Uzbekistan, in a short time, the number of visa-free countries has grown from 9 to 90 countries over the past three years. A system for issuing electronic visas for citizens of more than 50 countries including India has also been introduced, it said. Ancient Silk Road cities of Uzbekistan, like, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and others, it said are becoming popular destinations among Indian tourists. As of present, there are four direct flights per week between Delhi and Tashkent operated by “Uzbekistan Airways” which takes only around 2 hours and 30 minutes flight between the 2 capitals Indian tourists can get an electronic visa (e-visa) of Uzbekistan via a special portal <https://e-visa.gov.uz/main> within 3 days.

### \*Tony Fernandes resigns as the acting group CEO of AirAsia X



Tony Fernandes has stepped down as the acting group CEO of Capital A’s long-haul budget carrier AirAsia X citing “other commitments,” the airline announced in a note to investors. “I’m now going to focus on delivering significant value to shareholders of Capital A, including the AirAsia Aviation Group, aviation services, logistics, travel, fintech and the e-commerce lifestyle platform,” Fernandes said in a press statement. Having served as the non-independent non-executive director of AirAsia X, Fernandes stepped into the role of acting group CEO in July this year. Mahmood Fawzy has now been appointed as the independent non-executive director of Thai AirAsia. AirAsia X had entered a court-overseen debt restructuring process during the pandemic. The airline completed the debt restructuring in March. Fernandes, in a press statement, mentioned that his job had been to restart AirAsia X and bring it back to profitability and growth after the hibernation. He went on to note that following the restructuring the airline has improved the cost structure, and created a cargo business, which has contributed about 20% to the airline’s revenue during the pandemic and will continue to play a vital role in its recovery. Fernandes had to temporarily step down as AirAsia CEO in 2020 while the carrier was investigated as a potential beneficiary of the Airbus bribery scandal. His airline was ultimately cleared of any wrongdoing, and, as such, Fernandes remains one of Asia’s most highly regarded entrepreneurs. As such, the 58-year-old Malaysian businessman will have no trouble keeping himself busy

### \*10-12% of Indian aircraft fleet grounded due to maintenance or engine-related issue



Aviation consultancy firm CAPA said that more than 75 planes of Indian carriers are currently grounded due to maintenance and engine-related issues. These planes, which account for around 10-12% of the Indian fleet, are grounded due to maintenance or engine-related issues. “These will have a significant impact on financials in the second half,” CAPA said in its India Mid-Year Outlook 2023 released on Tuesday, November 1. As per the report, more than 75 aircraft are currently grounded, creating serious challenges against the backdrop of an already hostile cost environment and contributing to increased losses. The capacity has been impacted by serious supply chain issues impacting current and future deliveries, it said, adding that these issues are likely to proliferate in the fiscal starting April 2023 which,



in turn, will impact future deliveries, the report said. Significantly none of the domestic airlines, including two listed companies — IndiGo and SpiceJet — has so far made any public announcement on the grounding of the planes. According to CAPA, delays in future deliveries could also reflect liquidity issues as the income from the sale and leaseback financing may be less than planned. Delays in aircraft deliveries may also result in increased unit costs for carriers due to the need to extend the leases of older aircraft in the fleet, which have higher maintenance costs and fuel consumption than the new aircraft that would have replaced them. The report also said that non-supply issues are also expected to emerge next year's such as shortages of pilots and engineers. Delays in aircraft deliveries may also result in increased unit costs for carriers due to the need to extend the leases of older aircraft in the fleet, which have higher maintenance costs and fuel consumption than the new aircraft that would have replaced them. The report also said that non-supply issues are also expected to emerge next year's such as shortages of pilots and engineers. CAPA has also highlighted that Domestic traffic is expected to be near 130 million or marginally lower & domestic capacity is expected to be similar to pre-COVID levels. International traffic is still expected to be around 55-60 million & international capacity is projected to be around 10% lower than pre-Covid level



### \*Civil aviation sector likely to log 400 mn passengers in 7-10 yrs: Scindia



The country's civil aviation sector is likely to log around 400 million passengers over the next 7 to 10 years, Civil Aviation Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** said on Wednesday. The Minister said this while virtually addressing the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO) Asia Pacific Conference in Goa. "Think Global, Collaborate Regional, Accomplish Local" is the theme of this year's conference. Scindia said the theme of the conference is contemporaneous with the Central government's vision. He also said that the conference has brought together experts from across Asia Pacific, which reportedly contributes to 35-40 per cent of the global air traffic. Addressing the

conference, Union Minister of State of Civil Aviation Vijay Kumar Singh said that the aviation industry supports almost \$3.5 trillion which is almost 1.4 per cent of world's GDP. He stated that though the industry suffered heavily during Covid-19 pandemic, domestic recovery across the world is now improving. In India, the aviation industry has reached almost 95 per cent of the pre-Covid passenger traffic, said the Minister. CANSO -- the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization -- is the global voice of the air traffic management (ATM) industry and is shaping our future skies. Its members support over 90 per cent of the world's air traffic and include air navigation service providers, airspace users and operators, manufacturers and aviation industry suppliers. The organization looks on global Air Traffic Management performance by connecting the industry to share knowledge, expertise and innovation.

### \*Kerala Tourism bags PATA Gold Award for its Marketing Campaign



Kerala Tourism has bagged the popular Gold Award of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for 2022 in the Printed Marketing Campaign category. This comes as a shot in the arm for the state government that has spared no effort to position Kerala as a major tourist destination in the post-pandemic world. The Kerala Tourism Director Mr P. B. Nooh received the award from Ms. Liz Ortiguera, CEO, PATA, and Ms Maria Helena de Senna Fernandez, Director, Macao Government Tourism Office in a virtual ceremony. "PATA Gold Award comes as a high honour for Kerala Tourism, which has stepped up efforts to market the state as a major global destination.

It is also significant to note that this award comes shortly after Time magazine cited Kerala as one of the 50 extraordinary destinations to explore in 2022," said the Tourism Minister Mr P. A. Mohamed Riyas. "Our sustained marketing campaign has already started yielding results as the state has been witnessing a high footfall of both the domestic and international visitors since the turn of this year," Mr Riyas added. "PATA Grand Award is a huge affirmation of the brilliance of our marketing campaigns at a time when Kerala Tourism is poised to scale greater heights," said Mr. K. S. Srinivas, Principal Secretary, Tourism.



## \*US Visa Wait Times Continue to Soar, Reached Record High of 2.5 Years



Obtaining a US visa has now turned into a nightmare as visa wait times in India have risen to an all-time high of 939 days at the US Consulate in Mumbai, with no appointments available for the next 2.5 years. This implies that any Indian national applying for a US visa will have to wait until May 2025 to make an appointment for a visitor visa. However, visa waiting times for student visas have been reduced to as little as 50 days, with only the Hyderabad consulate having longer visa wait times of 405 days for F, M, and J category visas. Updated visa waiting times for different U.S. Embassy or Consulate in India and found Hyderabad currently has the shortest waiting time (804 days), while Mumbai currently has the longest (939 days). It is worth noting that the above-mentioned visa waiting times are for non-immigrant visa categories where an in-person interview is required for applicants. For visa cases where the in-person interview requirement is waived, embassies and consulates may have a separate process. Wait times for those cases are generally shorter. For Mumbai, it is just 7 Calendar Days for visitors, students and other non-immigrant visas. The in-person interview waiver will apply to travelers applying for F, H-1, H-3, H-4, non - blanket L, M, O, P, Q, and academic J visas who have previously been issued any type of visa and are applying for a visa in their country of nationality or residence, according to a notice issued by the US Embassy in India. This authorization does not apply to applicants who have been previously refused but have not had their refusal waived or overcome. However, if adjudicating consular officers require additional information from applicants, they may request an in-person interview. Furthermore, applicants for a US visa who renew their visa within 48 months of its expiration remain eligible for an interview waiver.

## \*Emirates named best airline in the world



Emirates has scooped up five global and regional awards from two prestigious travel and aviation ceremonies in the past week. It won **'Best Airline in the World'** and **'Best Airline in the Middle East'** at the ULTRAs 2022 awards, and bagged the **'World Class Award'**, **'5 Star Global Official Airline Rating'**, and **'Passenger Choice Award for Best Global Entertainment'** at APEX 2023. Based on a combination of certified passenger feedback and professional audits, Emirates was honored with a 'World Class Award' for safety, well-being, sustainability, service, and inclusiveness — while its in-flight entertainment system won it the passenger choice title at the APEX awards held on October 26 in California. Days later at the glittering ULTRAs 2022 award ceremony in the Pan Pacific London, Emirates got two top awards — 'Best Airline in the World' and 'Best Airline in the Middle East.' It was honored for its industry-leading services, global network, and best-in-class travel experiences, at the ceremony on October 31. The ULTRA awards are also decided by consumer votes, an international community of two million travelers who have recognized Emirates as the leading airline for luxury travel. "These accolades reflect the hard work and commitment of our teams to make our brand promise — 'fly better' — a reality for customers worldwide," said **Sir Tim Clark, president of Emirates Airline**. Earlier this year, the airline was recognized at the Skytrax World Airline Awards 2022, taking home three coveted awards including, "World's Best Economy Class," "World's Best Economy Class Catering," and for the 17th consecutive time, "World's Best Inflight Entertainment." **Nick Perry, chairman of Ultratravel**, said: "These awards are a tribute to not only the enduring quality of what Emirates offers to luxury travelers, but also that its ever-popular hub in Dubai stayed open and Emirates kept flying throughout the pandemic — making sure they continued to serve those who needed to travel."

## \*Jet Airways Likely To Wait Longer For Launch

Jet Airways' launch could be delayed further as recent developments regarding unpaid dues of former employees seem to have caused a hindrance. The airline's new owners, the Jalan-Kalrock consortium, have been trying hard to resolve issues from the carrier's past, but the road to relaunch looks trickier than previously anticipated. Jet Airways' new team is in the process of resolving several issues from the airline's past, pushing its launch dates several times so far. It was hoped that the carrier would take to the skies earlier this year, but months after receiving the AOC, there has been no date set for restarting operations. To be fair, the new owners have taken on the challenging task of resurrecting an airline with a troubled past. Nothing like this has been done before, and, as such, there is no set template that one could follow in a situation like this. It is also trying to negotiate agreements with aircraft and engine makers to secure a satisfactory deal to kickstart operations.

### \*Europe Prospers from Policies Promoting Different Airline Types Connectivity



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) called on governments and regulators to encourage stronger European cohesion and economic development by embracing policies to promote greater air connectivity. Key to this is recognizing the different strengths and benefits offered by the diverse types of carriers operating in Europe. "Europe, just like the rest of the world, relies on air connectivity, which is vital for society, tourism, and trade. Business users of the European air transport network—large and small—have confirmed this in a recent IATA survey:

82% say that access to global supply chains is "existential" for their business. And 84% "cannot imagine doing business" without access to air transport networks. The deregulation that delivered the Single Aviation Market is one of the significant successes of the European project and it would be a travesty if regulations that failed to take proper account of the realities of the airline business were to undermine this achievement. New evidence shows that Europe benefits from many different kinds of airlines and it needs all these different business models – and the services they provide – to thrive," said **Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General**. European regulators have chosen to tackle several challenging air transport issues in the coming months, including airport slots, passenger rights, and sustainability. These all have a potential impact on the choice and value that European travelers have come to expect, and it is vital that regulators have the full picture on the contribution different airline business models bring to air connectivity. To assist policymakers, in the study of how Airline Business Models meet Demand in Europe IATA Economics analyze the extent of the connectivity provided by Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs) and network carriers in Europe. The report shows that they offer different and complimentary types of connectivity, while also competing on many popular routes. A book and claim system would facilitate faster adoption at much lower cost without in any way diminishing the environmental benefits. We should be focusing on incentivizing SAF production in the greatest quantities at the lowest cost, wherever that may be," said Walsh.

### New India Visa Application Centre (IVAC) inaugurated in Central London



The new India Visa Application Centre (IVAC), which will be run by VFS Global, a supplier of outsourcing and technology services for governments and diplomatic missions, was inaugurated on Tuesday by Vikram Doraiswami, the Indian High Commissioner to the UK. Along with other initiatives, such as a doorstep service and document verification facility, a new Indian visa centre has been established in the heart of London to increase capacity for processing applications and accommodate the growing demand for travel from the UK. For those who travel in teams or for group

tourism, often utilizing the same airlines and a travel agency to reach their destination, a more simplified procedure has also been implemented. Doraiswami on Twitter stated, "The number of appointments we have been able to do has increased to about 40,000 per month thanks to our partners at VFS Global". Tourists visiting India from the United Kingdom now have the option of obtaining a Visa At Your Doorstep (VAYD) service for roughly GBP 180. "Your papers can be collected at your home and will be brought to you after it is processed. To help with that, the service provider will also offer a special service to get your documents checked online for a small cost. We are also starting a form-filling service, which will be offered by our service provider VFS Global," he added. The new centre is the third India visa centre in London, and VFS Global runs a network of ten IVACs in the UK, including ones in central London, Hounslow, Leicester, and Manchester, as well as Belfast, Birmingham, Bradford, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and Glasgow.

### \*The Importance of Travel Education and Training

Travel agents don't need certification to sell travel but those who do should want it. As a trusted resource for clients, knowing the ins and outs of the destinations that you sell and making trusted, confident recommendations to clients should be a constant pursuit. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, travel was poised for a banner year in 2020 with record-breaking numbers of people planning to travel and bookings that were off the charts. While COVID may have put the brakes on travel for 2020, it seems that, in 2022, travelers are

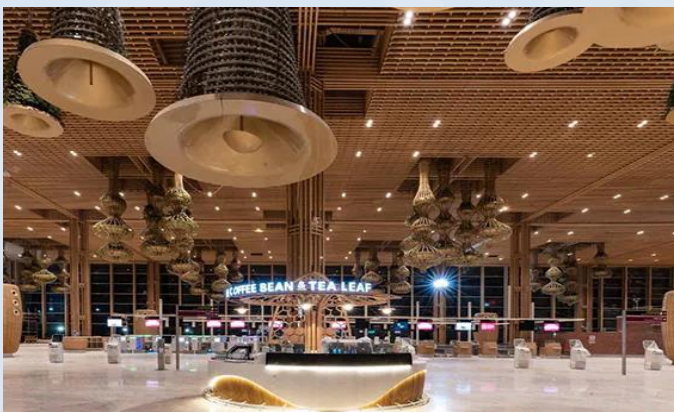




making up for lost time with the industry poised to continue its boom right where it left off and they want advice. With clients relying on the assistance of travel agents more than ever, it's more important than ever to get it right. There are so many ways to learn and continue training on both destinations and technology to stay on track and be able to be the expert for your clients. Travel agents do not have to be on the road 24-7 to learn about the places they are selling. In fact, these days, they don't even have to leave their houses (thank you, Zoom). Virtual learning has truly taken hold and many destinations and

organizations provide ongoing training opportunities to travel advisors through platforms such as the Travel Institute and Travel Agent Academy. Continuing training and ongoing education often cost very little or can even be free. Many destination programs also offer specialists who complete their courses access to special rewards, promotions, fam trips and more. Training doesn't only revolve around destination knowledge. Hotel and resort companies, cruise lines, destination management companies, airlines and booking platforms are also constantly updating products and technology to better serve travelers and travel agents. Staying abreast of these updates also needs to be a priority for those selling travel. Travel agents who are seeking to update their skillset can turn to host agencies, organizations such as ASTA, individual travel companies and business development managers to explore ways to further their knowledge.

### **\*Bengaluru Airport Terminal 2 Looks Simply Wow!**



**Terminal 2 Bengaluru Kempe Gowda Airport:** Built at a cost of around ₹ 5,000 crore, Terminal 2 at Bengaluru Airport will be able to handle around 5-6 crore passengers from the current capacity of 2.5 crore annually. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the new terminal building at Bengaluru Airport. With the inauguration of the Terminal 2 or T2, passenger handling capacity as well as counters for check-in and immigration will double, helping the flyers immensely. Kempe Gowda International Airport Terminal 2 is designed as a tribute to the Garden city of Bengaluru and the passenger experience is meant to be a "walk in the garden". Passengers will travel through 10,000+ square meters of green walls, hanging gardens and outdoor gardens and these gardens have been made in India using indigenous technology. Preparations are in full swing at the premises of Bengaluru airport in Devanahali for the unveiling of 108 feet tall statue of Nadaprabhu Kempe Gowda - the founder of Bengaluru city. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will unveil the giant bronze statue of Kempe Gowda during his visit to the state on November 11.



### \*Secretary Tourism- GOI, proposes for next PATA Summit in India.



The tourism sector in India is growing fast and gearing up to meet the emerging trends post-pandemic. India is now sharing its priorities for the tourism sector, which include a focus on promoting sustainable tourism, digitalization of the tourism sector, development of tourism MSMEs and skills. Forthcoming India's G-20 Presidency from December 2022 to November 2023 will help India's tourism sector to highlight the country's tourism offerings and share the tourism success

stories on a global stage. Keeping that in mind, the Indian delegation including **Arvind Singh, Secretary Tourism**, Government of India, and **Rakesh Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary**, Ministry of Tourism, held a meeting with **Liz Ortiguera**, Pacific Asia Travel Association (**PATA**) CEO. The idea was to discuss in-depth engagement between PATA and India including the possibility to hold the next annual summit in India, PATA travel mart and participation in other G-20 side events. Recently, PATA hosted its **Annual Summit 2022** (PAS 2022) under the theme '**Reconnecting the World Sustainably**' in Ras Al Khaimah, UAE on October 25. Around 237 delegates from 128 organizations and 36 destinations attended the three-day event. The association also has a PATA India Chapter that was established in 1974 with a handful of members. It has now grown to include 245 members and the member database is backed by support from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India which is the main and largest PATA India member organization. The meeting with PATA CEO was scheduled during World Travel Market (WTM) 2022 which took place from November 7 to 9 in London. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India along with Indian states exhibited at the event while showcasing the unique tourism offerings the country represents.

### \*Air Canada resumes daily seasonal flights between Mumbai & Toronto for winter schedule



Air Canada has resumed its daily seasonal service between Mumbai and Toronto, now operating via London Heathrow until March 23, 2023. The flight is the airline's third service from India, joining existing services from Delhi to Toronto and Montreal. Marking the departure of Air Canada flight AC855, customers, guests, Air Canada employees and crew joined the Consul General of Canada in Mumbai, **Diedrah Kelly**, Quebec Government Office in Mumbai, **Francis Paradis**, Ontario Government Representative in India, **Digvijay Mehra**, Consul and Senior Trade

Commissioner, **Keith Kan**, Air Canada General Manager India, **Arun Pandeya** and Air Canada Airport Operations Manager India and the Middle East, **Madhusudan Nair** for a special gate celebration, ribbon and cake cutting prior to departure in Mumbai. "We are excited to resume our daily seasonal service between Mumbai and Toronto via London Heathrow," said Arun Pandeya, Air Canada General Manager India. "Our customers from India will benefit from greater travel choice, with access to our Toronto hub via London Heathrow, enabling convenient one-stop connections to destinations across Canada, including Montreal, Calgary, and Vancouver. Air Canada's Mumbai flights also connect conveniently at London Heathrow to flights across United States operated by our Star Alliance partner United Airlines, including Denver, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York/Newark, San Francisco, Washington, and Boston." The service between Mumbai and Toronto via London-Heathrow will be operated with Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft, featuring three cabins of service including lie-flat seats in Signature Class, Premium Economy and Economy Class.

### \*China eases Zero-Covid policy, removes curbs on international flights

China has trimmed the quarantine time for inbound travelers and scrapped curbs on international flights, as it began to ease its stringent Zero-Covid policy. The new rules were announced following the first meeting of the newly elected seven-member Standing Committee of the ruling Communist Party of China, (CPC) headed by Xi Jinping here on Thursday. The Standing Committee is the highest policymaking and implementation body of the CPC. On the domestic front, China has adjusted quarantine requirements for close contacts of confirmed cases from seven days of centralized quarantine plus three days of health observation at home to five days of quarantine plus three days of observation. The meeting stressed the necessity of maintaining a firm strategic resolve and carrying out COVID-19 control work in a science-based and targeted manner. The meeting stressed efforts to effectively implement the principle of early detection, reporting, quarantine, and treatment of cases.



### \*Cruise ship with 800 passengers test Covid positive in Australia



Australia's Home Affairs Minister on Saturday sought to reassure the public that COVID19 protocols were adequate after **Majestic Princess** cruise ship with 800 infected passengers were docked in Sydney. **Carnival** Australia's Majestic Princess cruise ship was docked in Sydney, the capital of the most populous state, New South Wales, with "in the vicinity" of 800 passengers on board testing positive to the virus, the company said. The state health authorities rated the outbreak's risk level at "Tier 3", indicating a **high level**

**of transmission.** The incident has sparked comparisons with a notorious 2020 outbreak onboard the Ruby Princess cruise ship. That outbreak, also in New South Wales, led to 914 infections and 28 deaths, an inquiry found. Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil said the authorities have created "regular protocols" in the wake of the Ruby Princess episode and that New South Wales Health would take the lead on determining how to get passengers off the Majestic Princess "on a case-by-case basis". Federal border force officer will play a supplementary role to the state authorities, O'Neil told reporters in Melbourne. Carnival Australia, part of global leisure company Carnival Corporation & plc, said COVID-positive passengers were isolating onboard and being cared for by medical staff, according to New South Wales Health. The agency said it was working with cruise ship staff to monitor the health of passengers and crew members. Company president Marguerite Fitzgerald told ABC television that once Carnival saw an elevated number of COVID cases, it put extra protocols in place. The outbreak comes as COVID-19 cases rise across Australia, reflecting community transmission of the Omicron variant XBB, the federal government said this week.

### \*2 in 3 fliers want Government to bring back airfare capping-complain of very high fares



After two years, on August 31st the government lifted the lower and upper limits placed on airfares to allow airlines more room to set their own fares and let market dynamics work in the interest of fliers. Aviation minister Jyotiraditya M. Scindia in a tweet had announced that the "decision to remove air caps has been taken after careful analysis of daily demand and prices of air turbine fuel. Stabilization has set in & we are certain that the sector is poised for growth in domestic traffic soon." Has this government move ahead of the peak festive and holiday season really worked to the advantage of passengers? In fact, market dynamics does not appear to favor fliers as despite rise

in demand, in certain popular routes like Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Hyderabad, etc., fares have increased over 20% partly due to increase in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices and partly as airlines strive to recoup their losses by capitalizing on higher demand. With hundred plus complaints received since September this year on about higher air fares and in some cases, consumers alleging profiteering by airlines, LocalCircles decided to conduct a national survey to better understand the situation and sensitize the Government. The survey received over 22,000 responses from consumers located in 297 districts of India. 62% respondents were men while 38% respondents were women. 47% respondents were from tier 1, 34% from tier 2 and 19% respondents were from tier 3, 4 and rural districts. In a bid to find out what consumers think about the present scenario, LocalCircles in a survey asked airline fliers, "The government removed the price capping on the air fares effective September 1, with the current fares you are seeing, should the decision be reversed?" Out of 12,193 respondents, 65% stated "Yes" while 21% indicated "No" and 14% reserved their opinion. LocalCircles will escalate the findings to the Ministry of Civil Aviation such that both these inputs from the consumers can be given due consideration and the appropriate policy interventions are implemented.

### # Quote For Thoughts #

"It always seems impossible until it is done."

"Success is not final: failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."

"Failure is only the opportunity to begin again, this time more intelligently."