

*President's Views on TCS increase from 5 % to 20 % in the budget for 2023-24

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman raised the **Tax Collection at Source (TCS)** rate for foreign remittances under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) **from 5 per cent to 20 per cent**. They will now be required to pay a higher tax. This will apply to **overseas tour packages and other remittances except for education and medical purposes**. TCS on remittances made under the LRS was introduced in **2020**. The purpose was to monitor the remittances made and to correlate these with the income tax returns of the persons who made the remittances. Presently, different rates of TCS apply depending on the nature of the transaction. There was also **an annual limit of Rs 7 lakh on remittances** which has **now been removed**. TCS is not a tax by itself, and credit for the amount of TCS paid on any transaction is available to the person who has paid the amount of TCS to adjust against their tax liability for the year.



President AJAY PRAKASH

President Mr. Ajay Prakash's views on this increase of TCS:

"The Finance Minister's reference to tourism in her opening remarks **raised hopes that perhaps, finally**, the industry would get due recognition and direct, tangible support. But the grim reality is just the opposite". "The entire outbound travel industry has been dealt a lethal body blow with the announcement of a huge increase in **TCS to a whopping 20%**. This effectively sounds the death knell for many of our members who will be forced to shut shop". "So, while the Union budget has positives in the form of infrastructure development, **opening new airports**, increased last mile connectivity, the **new Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs** and the establishment of **Unity Malls** - all of which might be **good in the medium to long term**, the **effects of this irrational increase on TCS is disastrous** in its **immediate effect** and could wipe out half the travel agents and tour operators in the country since more and **more travelers will book with overseas operators** who are **under no compulsion** to levy GST or collect TCS, he concluded.

*IATA communications to agents seeking explanation regarding Credit card transactions:

(By- P. Sampath Kumar TAFI Consultant legal & Industry Affairs)



This has reference to recent IATA warning communications to agents seeking explanation related to credit card transaction. It noted many travel agents opted for the **"Go lite"** form of accreditation offered by **IATA** or **switched** from **"standard"** form of accreditation to save costs. Thinking they could continue doing business as usual, simply switching to more of credit card transaction without taking note of the relevant IATA resolutions or other **mandatory requirements**.

Kindly open IATAs travel agent's handbook to

Two IATA resolution which agents need to read and understand before engaging with credit card transaction **resolutions 890 and 896** in their agencies. Beware the following subject matter applies to **both "Standard" and "Golite"** IATA accredited agents. Having read and understood the said resolutions, travel agents, also need to ensure the agency is **PCI DSS** compliant and has undertaken the annual compliance requirement. The safety aspect of related to the credit card transactions is one of the crucial requirements, mandated by **IATA** to ensure its members, do not fall prey to fraudulent transactions when it comes to securing air tickets. Failure to fulfill the above requirement could lead to **'Notice' from IATA** with the possibility of **penalties** and even lead to **cancellation of accreditation**. In the event or your agency has received the notice it is best to write to **IATA** to request to condone the oversight and immediately FUP to ensure henceforth the **PCI DSS** formalities are taken care of annually without fail.

<https://www.iata.org/en/services/finance/pci-dss/>

TAFI representative will try their best to communicate with **IATA** to condone the oversight of agents the country due to extraordinary times related to COVID pandemic occurrence.

* TN Chapter Held Their Regular Meeting on 2nd Feb 2023, at Accord Metropolitan Hotel



TN TAFI chapter Meeting was held on **2nd February at Accord Metropolitan Hotel**, Chennai. The meeting well attended by more than 40 members. On TCS hike from 5% to 20 % members deliberated and requested the chair to take up with National Committee and the floor unanimously request the National Team to approach and represent to the appropriate authorities for roll back, the hike in TCS. **Asego Travel insurance company** sponsored the meeting and after the closed door meeting, they did their product presentations. They had highlighted some interesting and beneficial offers for cruise travelers, and medical benefits for pre-existing medical history of the passengers, which was well appreciated by the members present. The meeting concluded with dinner.

*TAFI Participated in The Travel Tourism & Hospitality event organized by ICC In Kolkata



TAFI was Invited by **ICC (INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE)** “THE TRAVEL TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY” in Kolkata for an event on **TOURISM – TRAVEL INDIA 2023** on 19TH & 20TH JAN 2023, for a conference cum Exhibition for Rejuvenating Revitalization and Revving The travel Tourism And Hospitality Industry . After the Pandemic to capture Significant Areas of Concern, to Act on New Policies Recommendations engaging Travel Tourism Sectors involving, Corporate Houses and Industry Players to join hands and voice the concern. TAFI represented by Vice-President **Mr. KAMAL R JADHWANI** and was asked to talk about the concerns and issues of **Travel Agents operating in East and Northern Eastern states** of India. Mr. Kamal addressed the august audience with concern of the Tour Operators and Travel Agents of that Region, why they are not able to promote the beautiful West Bengal and Northeast States like Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya and other. Issues like Infrastructure, Interstate Competition, Code of Conduct, Certifications to tour Operators, Poor Air Connectivity Limited number of hotels, Non availability of proper Human resources etc., The Dignitaries present on the occasion highlighted the Government role on the above area. Tourism Minister **Mr. BABUL SUPRIYO** stated “After the COVID hiatus, people have taken up the opportunity to jump back to the industry. This is because of the passion attached to the industry. There should be more activities to work collectively with both private and public sectors. This initiative will attract more tourists to Bengal.” “I would rather want tourists to come to Bengal for a successful resurgence of tourism in our state. We shall also try to collaborate with schools to make students experience, earn and cherish the beauty of Bengal,” Mr. Supriyo, added. Tourism State Secretary **Dr. Saumitra Mohan** who assure the Development of these regions and stated, “The state tourism needs to interact with the stakeholders for investments to pour in. **Glamping** has emerged and **caravan tourism** is another area of interest for tourists that we can look into. Recently, **UNESCO** has recognised **Durga puja** as an **intangible cultural heritage**. We have to provide seamless access to tourists. It’s time to learn, adopt and replicate tourism models from other states. Better skilling and usage of our resources will help to bolster tourism in the state.

***Tourism Malaysia and MATTA held their first Sales Mission 2023 in India**



On 30th Jan, 2023, Tourism Malaysia and MATTA held their first sales Mission in Chennai titled “Malaysia Travel Exchange (MTEX)” “a roadshow which was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Saravana Kumar Consulate General of Malaysia in Chennai. It was well attended by local trade partners in Tamil Nadu. More than 150 buyers have attended this Roadshow. 30 Agents/DMC had come from Malaysia interacted with the agents from Tamil Nadu. Mr. Mohammed Amirul Rizal Abdul Rahim Senior Deputy Director of international Promotion (Asia & Africa) Tourism Malaysia (HQ) Mr. Razadi Director Tourism Malaysia Chennai and Ms. Kavita, Manager Tourism Malaysia and many officials from tourism Malaysia and consulate general graced the occasion. Press Conference was also well attended by members of media. These sales missions were held at Bangalore Hyderabad Ahmedabad and Mumbai subsequently.

***Travel agent associations disappointed with Budget 2023; Here's why:**



Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) has expressed the tourism industry's concern that the Budget statement could have covered more direct support measures for the industry. While Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman seemed very positive on promoting the tourism sector, not everyone is pleased. Federation of Associations in Indian

Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH) has expressed the tourism industry's concern that the Budget statement could have covered more direct support measures for the industry. “While we are thankful that the FM has touched upon developing tourism on a mission mode along with destination development, yet the Indian tourism, travel & hospitality industry was keenly looking forward to getting the vital infrastructure status, to be treated at par with merchandise exports, to have received enhanced support for global marketing, and more financial support mechanisms for tourism MSMEs,” says Nakul Anand, Chairman, FAITH. Added Jyoti Mayal, President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI): “It is a populist Budget for individuals. Nothing for travel agents and tour operators.” She says travel agents contribute to over 10 per cent of the GDP. “Nothing on our request on ease of doing business be it on TCS abolishment or ITC for tour operators on interstate GST credit which is one of the main concerns requiring urgent redressal from the FM!” Domestic tour operators are required to collect tax at source (TCS) on sale of overseas tour packages. “The announcements are certainly advantageous for overall tourism growth and tourism infrastructure development, but the growth of travel agents and tour operator organizations remain unchanged this year too,” she said. “Some of our members who do outbound tourism business will have to close their business as Tax Collection at Source (TCS) has been proposed to be increased from 5 per cent to 20 per cent. This needs to be rolled back immediately,” says Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO). “None of our demands like, rationalization of GST on tourism industry, exemption of GST on foreign exchange earnings and refund of tax on shopping under Tax Refund to Tourist (TRT) Scheme on shopping etc. for which there is already a provision in GST Act, have been considered,” said Mehra. He says the government should consider these demands sympathetically as they are important for revival of tourism post Covid-19. As per FAITH, since the Budget, was coming on the back of a recovery from the pandemic, this was an opportunity to strengthen the tourism, travel and hospitality industry of India to reclaim its global inbound tourism share and to add value to domestic tourism which would have boosted employment pan India.

***Some Air India flights to US, Canada affected by crew shortage: Report**



Some Air India flights to the US and Canada were affected due to crew shortages, news agency PTI reported on Thursday. The shortage of crew caused either cancellation or inordinate delay of some flights, the report said citing a source. "There is an acute shortage of manpower, which is impacting airline operations, particularly to the US

and Canada," the source told PTI. According to the official, Air India, in the last 5-6 days, cancelled three flights to San Francisco in the US and one flight to Vancouver in Canada. Also, some of the flights on these routes are facing a delay of 10-12 hours, the source told the news agency. Tata group-owned Air India faced problems last year also due to the shortage of crew members. Ever since Tata acquired the airline, Air India has expanded its operations on new routes. On December 8 last year, the airline leased six Boeing B777-300 ER widebody aircraft to augment its existing fleet. A week later, Air India launched its first-ever non-stop service between Mumbai and San Francisco. This came just two weeks after the airline had launched three times a week flight between Bengaluru and San Francisco.

***Flight operations at Bengaluru airport to be impacted for 10 days, due to Aero India 2023**



Flight operations at the Kempe Gowda International Airport (KIA) will be partially suspended for 10 days from **February 8**. This comes as the 14th edition of **Aero India 2023** is scheduled to take place between **February 13 to 17** at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru. "There will be partial air space closure during Aero India 2023 impacting commercial flight schedules between 08 -17 February 2023," the official Twitter handle of Kempe Gowda International Airport tweeted. Commercial flight operations will be shut

between 9 am to 12 pm and from 2 pm to 5 pm on February 8. Similar restrictions are in place between February 9 to 11 as well. On February 12, the closure time will be between 9 am to 12 pm. Meanwhile, runways will be shut between 9 am to 12 pm on February 13 for inauguration ceremony and air display. On February 14 and 15, flight operations will be impacted between 12 pm to 2:30 pm. Whereas on February 16 and 17, runways will be affected between 9:30 am to 12 pm and 2 pm



to 5 pm. **Akasa Air** had updated that "Due to airspace closure at Bengaluru, for Aero India Show 2023, some of our flights across the network, between 8th Feb through 17th Feb'23, have been cancelled or rescheduled". Further stated that they understand that this may impact passengers travel plans and sincerely regret

the inconvenience, Akasa Air tweeted. It added that in case a person's flight is impacted, he or she can request a full refund for the existing booking or rebook an alternate available flight at no additional cost. 'Aero India 2023' is said to be Asia's biggest airshow that will be held for five days. The first three days are reserved for business visitors, and the public will be able to see the show for the last two days. Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said, "This is going to be the biggest airshow with the highest participation. There will be many participations from delegates, aerospace, and defense industry leaders, also companies."

*Delta Airlines employees to get 5% pay bump amid strong travel demand



Delta Air Lines Inc said on Tuesday that it would bump up the pay of its employees by 5%, amid an industrywide shortage of workers as airlines look to cash in on robust demand for air travel. Delta's raise includes a 5% base pay increase for ground and flight attendant employees worldwide at all steps of the pay scale and a 5% pool for eligible merit employees worldwide, the airline's chief executive Ed Bastian wrote in a memo to employees. The pay hike, which will be effective from April 1, comes at a time when airlines are coming up with attractive pay offers to retain workforce and add staff after a faster-than-expected rebound in the U.S. travel market. The carrier offered a 34% cumulative pay increase last month to its pilots over three years in a new contract after the Atlanta-based carrier's pilots voted overwhelmingly in October to authorize a strike. The latest hike includes all employees worldwide, except those covered by an industry or government requirement or collective bargaining agreement. Shares of Delta were down nearly 2% in afternoon trade.

NATAS Travel Fair to be held from 24-26 Feb at Singapore Expo



National Association of Travel Agents Singapore's (NATAS) travel fair, which is celebrating its **57th year**, will be back from **24-26 February 2023**. This year's theme, **'The World of NATAS'**, is all about showcasing the wonders of travel and providing a new world of travel opportunities. As the largest premier travel fair in Singapore, the NATAS Travel Fair will showcase over 50 exhibitors, including travel agents, cruise operators, hotels, and national tourist organizations from Taiwan, Thailand, and Japan. According

to **Steven Ler**, president of NATAS, "As travel continues to recover to pre-pandemic levels, many are travelling and exploring the world again. At NATAS Travel 2023, consumers can take advantage of great travel offers for their next holiday or seek the advice of participating exhibitors to meet their holiday needs." Opening the fair is the guest-of-honors Chutintorn Gongsakdi, the Thai ambassador to Singapore. Visitors can visit the Tourism Authority of Thailand booth to find out more about the country. Etiqa Insurance is the official travel insurer for NATAS Fair 2023 and will offer attractive travel insurance deals. Visitors can drop by their booth for more information on travel protection and discounts on insurance plans. "We want to cordially invite consumers to Singapore's largest premier travel fair, NATAS Travel 2023, to explore an array of great destinations from around the world," added Ler. "Carrying forward the traditional fanfare of past editions, we have prepared a host of great travel deals and many more exciting tour packages visitors can sign up for".

*SATTE was held from Feb 9-11, 2023 at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida.



Informa Markets in India (formerly UBM India) India's leading exhibition organizer conducted their 30th edition of SATTE 2023 from 9th -11th Feb'23 at India Expo Mart at Greater Noida. Specialist market and Customer communities, domestically and around the world to trade, innovate and grow through exhibitions, digital seminars, all under one roof and buyers from International & Domestic attended the Exhibition in large numbers. Every year, SATTE hosts over 25 large scale exhibitions, 40 conferences, along with industry awards and trainings, across the country, thereby enabling trade across multiple industry verticals. In India, Informa Markets has offices across Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai.

*OTM was held from 08-10 Feb 2023 at JIO World Convention Center, Mumbai



OTM is the largest and most international gathering of travel trade buyers and professionals in India was held from 8-10 Feb 2023 at JIO World Convention Center, Mumbai. Face-to-face meeting between exhibitors and buyers at OTM to build long-term business relations. OTM is supported by Domestic and International Tourism Departments and India's biggest Travel Agents Associations **TAAI and TAFI**.

* Quality of buyers at the event, * Reputation of the show, * The number of buyers at the event, were the 3 key influencing factors in the decision to exhibit at OTM the OTM organizers had said.

***No pre-departure Covid Test & Air suvidha for pax from China & 5 other nations:**



Effective 13 Feb, Passengers coming to India from or via Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and China will from 11 am, neither require a negative report from a pre-departure Covid test, nor need to upload self-health on “air suvidha” portal. However, the 2% random testing on arrival in India, irrespective of country of origin will continue. The Union health ministry revised the rules for people coming

from or via these places after these six places saw a “sustained and significant decline in trajectory of Covid-19 cases” in the last four weeks. As per World Health Organization’s latest situational update on Covid-19, a decline of 89% in the number of newly confirmed cases in the past 28 days has been noted globally as compared to 28 days prior to that. Meanwhile, India has continued to witness a declining trajectory, with less than 100 new cases/day being reported,” Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan wrote to his aviation ministry counterpart Rajiv Bansal on Thursday. This will come as big relief to the travel industry as the testing norm had affected travel between India and these places. Thailand, for instance, has seen Indians emerge as the biggest source for inbound tourists post Covid as China is yet to open. Similarly, a significant amount of travel happens between all these six places except China which is yet to open and Hong Kong which is yet to return to pre-Covid arrivals norms. The country started conducting Covid testing for 2% international arrivals from **December 24, 2022**. Then a few days later, pre-departure RT-PCR testing and **air suvidha self-declarations** as made mandatory for passengers coming from/via China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Thailand due to a surge in Covid cases in these places.

***Thailand’s first seaplane airline to launch**



Thailand’s first ever dedicated seaplane airline is preparing to launch this summer. Siam Seaplane hopes to secure over 40 landing spots across Thailand. It says it has partnered with 60 resorts including Intercontinental and Four Seasons to transfer guests. Seaplane travel is a luxury segment that is missing in Thailand, Siam Seaplane says. Initially, the seaplane airline would provide scenic air tours and ground-to-ground charter flights. Siam Seaplane has taken delivery of its first aircraft, a Cessna Grand Caravan. It is targeting a fleet of 15 aircraft within five years.

***US Lawmakers vote to end air travel vaccine mandate:**



The U.S. House of Representatives bill passed 227 to 201 in favour of ending the requirement for foreign travelers to be fully jabbed; The bill would still need to go through the Senate. Last year the US dropped the need to test negative prior to travel but maintained the Covid vaccination requirement. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still recommends full vaccinations for air travelers. The U.S. Travel

Association applauded the vote. “The need for this requirement has long since passed, and we appreciate this bipartisan action to end this outdated policy,” it said. “The U.S. is the only country that has maintained this policy.” The White House said it plans to formally end the Covid public health emergency in May. “As we approach the end of the public health emergency, we will review all relevant policies, including this one,” the White House said.

***BA inks airline codeshare pact with South Africa’s Airlink**



British Airways announced an airline codeshare partnership with South Africa based Airlink. It boosts connectivity between the UK, Europe, North America and in Southern Africa. With bases in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, Airlink is a premium regional airline. It has a network

of cities in 14 countries, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia. The agreement allows BA customers to connect to their final destination via Cape Town or Johannesburg on a single ticket. It offers more flexibility for those travelling on to destinations such as Windhoek in Namibia and Durban. British Airways currently flies from London Heathrow to Johannesburg and Cape Town. Members of the Executive Club can earn Avios when flying on Airlink flights. In total, 18 destinations are available as codeshare options w: Codeshare tickets are now available to book on www.ba.com, for travel from 15 February 2023.

***New airport at Shivamogga to be named after B S Yeddyurappa**



The new airport at **Shivamogga**, to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi **on February 27**, will be named after former Chief Minister B S Yeddyurappa, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said. Work on the airport, with international standard facilities, is in the final phase and the facility is expected to be completed within a record 18 months. "Once it's completed, we will send a proposal to the Civil Aviation Ministry recommending the name. Once approved, we will issue an order before the airport is commissioned," Bommai said after inaugurating and laying foundation stones for a slew of development works worth INR 1,000 crore. Last year, the state cabinet decided to name the airport after Yeddyurappa, but the former CM declined and wrote to the Centre requesting that the airport be named after "notable people". Meanwhile, after meeting with striking Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant workers, Bommai said his government will approach industrialists to infuse funds and revive the plant. The CM said the closure process was initiated by the Centre under the disinvestment scheme. "Firstly, our government will try to stop the closure process. We will then hold talks with other companies," he said.

***Hope to exceed our foreign tourism levels by December this year: G Kishan Reddy**



Sharing his positive outlook on growth of tourism in the country, Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said that India has already recovered considerably from the shocks of Covid-19 pandemic and this year the country is expected to exceed foreign tourism levels by December 2023. Speaking at the inauguration of SATTE in Greater Noida on 9th Feb, the Union Culture & Tourism Minister informed that India has already reached 75 per cent of the tourism levels of pre-pandemic and he expressed optimism that country will receive record number of tourists in 2023 on the onset of G20 meeting taking place in the country. "We have reached 75 per cent of the tourism levels we had before Covid-19 pandemic. I have full belief that we will exceed our foreign tourism levels by December of this year and set an all-time record level. I am confident that the chapter that we have begun via the tourism and hospitality sector is going to be discussed amongst the G20 countries in an approximate of 250 meetings in the coming days," the Minister stated. Talking about India's G20 Presidency and Working Group meeting that took place in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, Reddy requested the tourism industry stakeholders to put forward "Athiti Devo Bhava" beliefs to all the G20 delegates. "G20 countries means 85 per cent of the GDP in the world and about 70 per cent of population comes under G20 countries. With meetings in over 56 different cities over the country, more than 125,000 delegates are visiting India. I request their tourism and hospitality sector to make good arrangements for all the delegates. Our culture, heritage, food, hospitality and our "Athiti Devo Bhava" beliefs is what we should put forward for these delegates," he mentioned. The government is promoting domestic tourism by providing a platform for start-ups as well as big multinational companies who will be attending the International Tourism Investors Summit in Delhi," he stated.

***IndiGo partners with Austrian National Tourist Office to promote travel to Vienna**



Leading Indian carrier **IndiGo** has announced its first tourism collaboration with **Austrian National Tourist Office**, to promote travel to Vienna through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines. Recently, IndiGo started daily connections to Vienna, increasing capacity and offering accessible option to destinations in Europe. The partnership will contribute to increased accessibility, trade and tourism across both the countries. Commenting on the development, Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo, said, "With IndiGo flights now available via Istanbul (under Turkish Airlines Codeshare) to Vienna and also Salzburg, travelers can soak in the rich cultural heritage, breath-taking architecture, and thriving arts scene of Austria's capital city. This not only strengthens the tourism network, but also boosts economic ties through the country's thriving trade, transportation, and machinery industries. We are committed to make flying a pleasant experience for our customers and will uphold our promise of courteous, hassle-free, ontime and affordable travel." Europe has always been one of the most popular tourist destinations due to its strong depiction in Bollywood. With the ease of obtaining a Schengen visa from cities such as Delhi and Lucknow, Indian citizens are increasingly planning vacations to European countries. Visa applications for Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Portugal, Hungary, Italy, and Germany are in high demand.

Jazeera Airways announces record annual profits of KD 20.1 million for 2022



Kuwaiti airline Jazeera Airways has announced record net profits of KD 20.1 million for the year 2022, an increase of 183.6 per cent over 2021. Operating revenues for 2022 increased to KD 182.116 million, up 126.5 per cent, and operating profit increased by 148.4 per cent to KD 26.8 million. With the resumption of operations at the Kuwait International Airport (KIA), the airline built on its quick return to profitability in the second half of 2021. During 2022, Jazeera also exceeded 2019 performance,

which was the last comparable full year of unrestricted operations, by 30 per cent. While overall passenger traffic at the airport dropped by 26 per cent compared to 2019, Jazeera's traffic grew by 19 per cent during the same period. Passenger numbers increased by 247.5 per cent to an unprecedented 3.6 million, compared to the last year. Load factor increased by 10.2 per cent to 77.01, which offset a decline in yield, the average fare paid per passenger, by 35.1 per cent to KD 47.96. Sharing more details, Marwan Boodai, Chairman, Jazeera Airways, said, "We are extremely proud to report record annual net profits for the year 2022, the highest in the history of Jazeera Airways. In the last year, high fuel prices added approximately KD 9 million to our costs. Our financial performance despite this additional cost burden testifies to the aggressive cost focus across the organization. The fact that we carried 3.6 million passengers in 2022, up from 2.4 million passengers in 2019, shows the strong acceptance of our business model and growing service by our customers. With our growing fleet, new upcoming routes and planned enhancements to our operations, 2023 is going to be another exciting year."

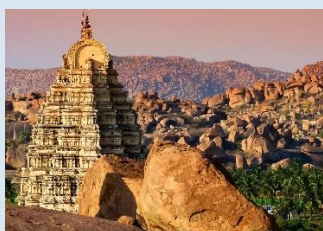
*Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation declares five-day Jain circuit tour In TN.



Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) has announced a five-day Jain circuit tour covering most of the Jain sites in Tamil Nadu. The tour that starts on **March 16** from Chennai will be covering Chiththannaval in Pudukottai, Samanarmalai Theerthangarar abode and Brahmi inscription in Madurai, Ladan Koil in Madurai Yanaimalai, Kidaripatti Jain monuments and Jain Cave in Melur, Rock Cut temple in Thirumangalam, Sri Vettuvan Koil and Jain abode in Kazhugumalai in Tuticorin district, Thirunarunkodai in Ulundurpet,

Arunachaleswara temple in Tiruvannamalai, Vallimalai and Thiruparuthikundram Jain sites in Vellore district and return to Chennai. Tourism officials in Chennai said that queries on this circuit and bookings are very good since Jains in Tamil Nadu as well as from other parts of the country make a point to visit these spiritual sites. The package tour by road will include accommodation and food. For single room with air-conditioned accommodation and AC coach will cost **16,000** for adults and **8,000** for children. For single room with an airconditioned coach and non-air-conditioned accommodation will cost **13,000** for adults and **7,500** for children. Sharing a double room will cost **9,500** for an AC coach and non-air-conditioned accommodation while **11,000** will be charged for an AC coach and air-conditioned accommodation for double room sharing, a statement from TTDC said. Interested people can contact the TTDC office in Chennai at toll free number **1800-4253-1111** for bookings. During the Sangam era, Jainism thrived in Tamil Nadu and the state is dotted with numerous sites associated with Jainism. On this trip, the tourists will be taken to the carved cave temples of Jainism and rekindle spiritual connections at the various abodes dedicated to Jain tirthankaras.

*Lakkundi to be included under proposed Hampi Tourism Circuit: Karnataka CM



Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai announced the inclusion of Lakkundi in the proposed Hampi Tourism Circuit and said that a master plan will be prepared to provide facilities to the visiting domestic and international tourists. Speaking after inaugurating the 'Lakkundi' Utsav in Karnataka on Friday, he said, "The inscriptions tell about the glory of Gadag district as that of the Vijayanagar kingdom. The confluence of the beautiful sculpture is Lakkundi and the government will take steps to make this historical place popular besides giving the impetus to the promotion of tourism. Lakkundi will be included in the Hampi Circuit and will be developed." The CM said Gadag district has been the 'Karma Bhumi' of Kumaravyasa, the birthplace of noted poet Ranna who was responsible for the birth of the Kannada language and taking this language to new heights. He was given shelter at Daana ChintamRani Attimabbe. The government is giving impetus to the work of explaining the good nature of the Kannadigas.

*Turkey earthquake: Are flights and holidays cancelled?



A 7.8 magnitude earthquake has struck an area of southeast Turkey, with tourists urged by the Foreign Office (FCDO) to "avoid the immediate vicinity" of the incident. The FCDO updated its advice to UK travelers at 3am on Monday 6 February, following the tragic incident in the early hours. Heavy Toll Reported. Are holidays to Turkey in the coming weeks affected, and are airlines still operating flights? The city of Gaziantep and its surrounding provinces were hardest hit by the initial earthquake.

The first quake was felt at 4.17am local time on Monday, with one resident telling CNN that "it felt like it would never be over". The city is in the southeast of the country, close to the Syrian border and a sizeable distance from Turkey's tourism hubs. It lies 823km east of the southern port of Antalya and 1,139km southeast of the port of Istanbul. The 7.8 magnitude quake is the strongest to hit Turkey in more than eight decades; the country saw a 7.6 magnitude earthquake in August 1999, but the last recorded 7.8 incident was in December 1939. One concern for tourists or visitors to the area is aftershocks, which have been felt since the initial quake. Later on Monday, Turkey's AFAP emergency authority reported a second quake in the town of Ekinozu, this time at a magnitude of 7.5. The town is 842km east of Antalya, and 196km north of Gaziantep. **At present**, no airlines serving the UK have announced cancellations to their flights in relation to the natural disaster. However, Turkey's Adana Airport has been closed until further notice, the Demiroren news agency reported. Under normal circumstances, no direct flights operate between the UK and Adana, which is 220km west of Gaziantep, though it is served by domestic flights from tourism hubs Istanbul and Bodrum. Crisis24 reported that Gaziantep Airport, Hatay Airport and the seaport of Ceyhan have also been closed and operations suspended in the wake of the natural disaster. "Currently, only planes carrying aid and rescue teams are allowed to land and take off from the two airports," reported Turkey-based publication the Daily Sabah. "Hatay Airport, whose runway was damaged because of the earthquake, was closed for all flights." **Are Turkey holidays affected? Hugh Fraser**, the founder of **Turkey specialist Corinthian Travel**, told The Independent: "Southeastern Turkey and the area around Gaziantep have many spectacular attractions, and are noted for their regional cuisine, but has traditionally been the preserve of the second or third-time cultural visitors to Turkey. "The earthquake is a human tragedy but is **unlikely to have much impact on Turkey's major centers of tourism: Istanbul, Cappadocia, and the Aegean Coast** – all of which are located hundreds of miles away to the west."

*ITDC reveals INR 60.73- crore profit in Q3



India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Tourism, on Thursday posted a profit of INR 60.73 crore in the third quarter of FY23. ITDC announced the results for quarter and nine months ended December 31, 2022. The turnover during October-December 2022 stood at INR 123.13 crore, which was the highest in FY23 so far, and the cumulative turnover for the nine months ended December 31, 2022 was INR 318.50 crore, according to a company statement. The profit before tax was INR 60.73 crore for the nine months ended December 31, 2022.

*Arrival of tourists in Udaipur surpasses 14- year record in January



As many as 1.94 lakh tourists visited Udaipur in January, surpassing the record of the last 14 years, according to figures released by the tourism department. While the number of domestic tourists visiting the lake city in January was 1.80 lakh, foreign tourists numbered more than 14,000 in the same period. This was the highest footfall of tourists in the city in the last 14 years. These numbers, coming after the Covid

pandemic was over, has brightened hope among stakeholders in the tourism industry, more so because January is considered a lean tourist season in Udaipur as tourist footfall starts receding this month. In December 2022, about 2.25 lakh tourists had come to Udaipur. Foreign tourists who visited Udaipur in January came from the USA, UK, France and Israel. Despite the lean tourism months ahead, the tourism industry is now expecting a reasonable tourist footfall during festivals like Holi. Besides, since the G-20 conference is going to be held in Udaipur for the second time, diplomats from various countries will come to the lake city. In the last week of March, Mewar Festival, to be organised by the tourism department, is also expected to ensure a flow of tourists to the city that had seen trickles in the past two years due to Covid and lockdown. "The upward rise in the tourism graph shows Udaipur remains the most preferred tourist destination in the country. The administration and the department are working towards providing more facilities to tourists," said Shikha Saxena, deputy director of the tourism department.

*National Tourism Policy approval to take time:



There will be more delay in the notification of the **National Tourism Policy**. Although the **Union tourism minister, G Kishan Reddy** had expressed the confidence that the new policy will be notified before the Budget session of the Parliament a couple of months ago, the indications are that the process will be delayed further. If the written reply in the Rajya Sabha related to National Tourism Policy question by the tourism minister is to be believed, the policy is yet to receive the Cabinet approval. "A draft Cabinet note on draft of the National Tourism Policy was circulated for inter-ministerial consultation. After consideration and incorporation of the feedback/ comments received, the draft Cabinet Note has been revised. "The policy shall be implemented after all necessary approvals are obtained and the policy is notified," the minister said. Explaining the key strategic objectives contained in the draft policy, Reddy said that the policy is aimed at **enhancing the contribution of tourism in the Indian economy by increasing the visitation, stay and spend and make India a year-round tourist destination**. It also aims to create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism sector and ensure supply of skilled workforce and enhance the competitiveness of tourism sector by attracting private sector investment. The new Tourism Policy for the country has been in the making for almost two years now. The last time India had a National Tourism Policy was in 2002.

*Bali overtakes Maldives to be top international destination for Indian travelers: Survey



Recent polling of more than 1,400 members by Luxury Escapes produced some intriguing findings, including preferred travel locales, hotel preferences, activities, and more. The study, which was conducted in January 2023 over the course of a week among its select membership, highlighted evolving trends in Indian travelers' vacation planning and travel sentiment. First, Bali replaced the perennial favorite, the Maldives, as the preferred foreign location for Luxury Escapes members. While Maldives has consistently topped surveys in this category, it has now been pipped to third place as more favorite amongst Indians. All-inclusive vacation packages topped the list of what Luxury Escapes members wanted in their holidays. Members chose packages where all meals and beverages were included, and they didn't have to worry about any other out-of-pocket charges at the resort. Arun Ashok, regional head – India & Middle East, says, "An interesting trend is the resurgence of luxury boutique resorts. 46 percent of Luxury Escapes' affluent traveler base prefers small unbranded boutique luxury resorts to big box 5-star branded properties (which are favored by only 39 percent of members) as a result of the personalized service they can expect in a smaller, intimate setting and the authentic experience that boutique resorts are uniquely equipped to offer."

*There is no proposal to reimburse GST to foreign tourists at airports: G Kishan Reddy:



The Union tourism minister, G Kishan Reddy has informed the Parliament that there is no proposal before the government to refund GST on purchases made by foreign tourists in India at airports before they leave the country. Quoting the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, department of revenue under the ministry of finance, the minister informed the Parliament that there is no proposal pending at present before the government on reimbursement of GST to foreign visitors. There have been reports in the pre-pandemic period that the government is seriously mulling GST refunds on local purchases above a certain threshold to foreign tourists and provisions have been made for the same in the GST law for the same. The response by the tourism minister has put to rest all speculations regarding the same. "As informed by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, department of revenue, ministry of finance, there is no proposal at present under consideration of the Government to reimburse GST to foreign tourists at airports in India," Reddy informed the lower house of the Parliament in a written reply. Earlier reports in this connection indicated a move to introduce a GST refund for foreign visitors at the departing airports for purchases made from select reputed vendors on a pilot basis. The idea was to prevent claims using fake invoices by travelers. A lot of countries offer VAT/GST refunds to foreign visitors for the purchases made locally and developed seamless online systems. These countries also use this incentive as a branding and marketing tool to attract international visitors.

*Kenya wants at least half a million Indian tourists to visit the country in 2023:



"The pre-pandemic numbers of Indian tourists in Kenya were almost 1,50,000. We saw 40,000 Indians going to Kenya even during Covid, now post-Covid that number has moved to 1,20,000. We want to take it further up now, even more than what we used to experience in the 2019 pre-pandemic," shared **Kenya's High Commissioner to India Ambassador, Willy Bett**, on the sidelines of a B2B networking event organized by **Kenya Tourism Board (KTB)** in New Delhi. In 2022, the arrivals into Kenya from the Indian source market recorded a growth of 93.2 per cent from 42,159 in 2021 to 81,458 in 2022, which according to the KTB, is a recovery of 67 per cent compared to the 2019 performance of 1,20,893. And now, Kenya is hoping to build on sports and film tourism to attract Indian tourists in addition to its wildlife and outdoor attractions. "There are serious followers of Bollywood movies in Kenya. Several Indian films have been shot in Kenya, making it a desired location for filming. But we should do more," he said, inviting the Indian filmmakers to consider Kenya as their chosen locale and assuring all help to them in terms of specific arrangements. Speaking on the cultural connect between the two countries, the ambassador said the roots run deep. "We have a huge Indian diaspora in Kenya, who are no longer Indians, but Kenyans. They are well assimilated into local culture and politics of the country," he said. "In fact, we may well have more Indian restaurants in Nairobi than in New Delhi. So, it is a real connection, and Kenya is a natural destination for Indian tourists," he added. KTB recently concluded six-day B2B trade networking roadshows in India. These roadshows were held in the cities of Ahmedabad, Bangalore, and New Delhi. Besides these, the KTB also participated in tourism marts in India to tap the high potential Indian market.

*DGCA fines AirAsia India Rs 20 lakh for lapses in pilot proficiency checks:



Tata Group **AirAsia India** (now AIX Connect) has faced regulatory ire after an audit revealed improper pilot checks. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had carried out a surveillance inspection of the LCC from **November 23-25, 2022**. "During the inspection, DGCA team observed that a few mandatory exercises of

AirAsia India pilots were not done during **pilot proficiency** check/instrument rating check (which is an International Civil Aviation Organization requirement) as per schedule, resulting in violation of DGCA regulations," the regulator said. An AIX Connect spokesperson said, "We acknowledge that a finding related to training exercises of pilots was observed by the DGCA following the main base inspection in November 2022. Immediate corrective action was taken in coordination with DGCA and additional simulator training sessions to address the gap were implemented. We wish to reiterate that there is no deviation from the safety margins required for our operations. Nonetheless, we are reviewing the DGCA order and are considering making an appeal as per available regulatory provisions." Show cause notices were then served to the airline's accountable manager, head of training and all its designated examiners as to why enforcement action should not be taken against them for lack of oversight of their regulatory obligations. After examining written replies, the **DGCA** decided to take enforcement action against the airline. "**Financial Penalty of INR 20 lakh** has been imposed for violation of applicable DGCA civil aviation requirements (CAINR or rules). Withdrawal of Head of Training from his position for three months for failing to discharge his duties as per applicable CAINR. **Financial penalty of INR 3 lakh on each of the eight designated examiners** for failing to discharge their duties as per applicable CAINR," the DGCA statement added.

*Auto drivers as brand ambassadors: Kerala tourism pilot project from April 1



The Kerala tourism department will pilot the project of promoting auto-rickshaw drivers as state tourism's brand ambassadors from April 1 at Wayanad. The Wayanad district tourism promotion council has already given training to 100 auto drivers in the district to be deployed as brand ambassadors of the state tourism department. The drivers of Sulthan Bathery, Ambalavayal and Vythiri have been provided training as the first batch. Officials in the Wayanad District Tourism department told IANS that more drivers are identified from other locations of the district to be branded as ambassadors of state tourism department. Ajesh K.G., secretary of Wayanad District Tourism Promotion Council, while speaking to IANS said, "The tourist destinations in Wayanad are all scattered and some in remote places. The tourists generally come in private vehicles and taxis, but autos would be of great help in providing local connectivity." Kerala tourism minister PA Mohammed Riyas has announced that auto-rickshaw drivers would be deployed as the brand ambassadors of the tourism department.

2 Vande Bharat trains to be flagged off in Maharashtra on February 10:



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off **two Vande Bharat trains** from **Maharashtra on February 10**, adding two more to the country's existing portfolio of eight Vande Bharat trains. PM Modi will also inaugurate two projects of **Santacruz Chembur Link Road (SCLR)** and **Kurar underpass** to ease road traffic congestion in Mumbai and build connectivity in the state. The Railways Ministry said that the launch of Mumbai - Solapur and Mumbai-Sainagar Shirdi Vande Bharat Train will be an important step towards building better, efficient and passenger friendly transport

infrastructure for New India. The world class Mumbai-Solapur Train will improve connectivity between the two cities and will also facilitate travel to important pilgrimage centers like Siddheshwar in Solapur, Akkalkot, Tuljapur, Pandharpur near Solapur and Alandi near Pune. Further, the Mumbai-Sainagar Shirdi Vande Bharat Train will also improve connectivity of pilgrimage centers in Maharashtra like Nashik, Trimbakeshwar, Sainagar Shirdi, Shani Singanapur. Following the flag off ceremony, PM Modi will also dedicate two projects of Santacruz Chembur Link Road (SCLR) and Kurar underpass to the nation. These projects are being launched to ease road traffic congestion in Mumbai and streamline movement of vehicles. The newly constructed elevated corridor from Kurla to Vakola and from MTNL Junction, BKC to LBS Flyover at Kurla will also enhance the much-needed East West connectivity in the city as these arms connect the Western Express highway to Eastern Express highway thereby connecting eastern and western suburbs efficiently.

*United States, UK & Canada top inbound searches of travelers to India for travel in 2023:



As India looks forward to the Summer high season, new flight search data from the leading global travel search site **KAYAK.co.in**, shows that flight searches over the last six months (searches between **20.07.2022 - 20.01.2023**) for travels to India in **2023** have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, growing by about 29 per cent compared to the same period in 2019. Indicating that inbound travelers may be feeling restored confidence in international travel - and shows

that the country's efforts to attract tourists are showing results. "This is positive for India's tourism sector, which has been amplifying its efforts to grow inbound travel from not just traditional source markets, but expanding its promotion further across the globe," says **Tarun Tahiliani**, India **Country Manager, KAYAK**. The United States has long been one of India's most prominent tourism sources, with searches for flights until the end of this year growing about 21 per cent compared to the same pre-pandemic period. The top three spots on the most searched list of destinations are captured by sprawling urban centers New Delhi, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, which are at the cross section of the country's rich heritage and modern infrastructure. As exceptional experiences with culture, traditions, and cuisines continue to be one of the most significant attractions for travelers visiting India, destinations like Ahmedabad, home to intricate textiles, Mughal heritage, and unparalleled delicacies, have also found a spot among the most sought-after designations for international visitors. Southern destinations, a convergence of lush landscapes and serene beaches like Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, and the always favorite Goa, have also garnered traveler interest.

*Pawan Hans launches 6 UDAN helicopter routes in Assam:

The Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN (Ude Desh ka aam nagrik) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation is giving special impetus to providing air connectivity to the remote places of the northeastern states with inadequate rail and road connectivity. In furtherance to boost the air connect city within the state of Assam, Pawan Hans Ltd, a national helicopter carrier owned by the Ministry of Civil Aviation commenced its helicopter services on six routes in the state on February 8, 2023. These new helicopter services launched under the RCS UDAN scheme will provide connectivity on the "Dibrugarh-Jorhat-Tezpur-Guwahati-Tezpur Jorhat-Dibrugarh" network. RCS UDAN Helicopter services, being operated under the scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, aim to boosting the air-connectivity within the state by offering the fastest mode of travel to connect Tezpur, Jorhat, and Dibrugarh from the state capital. The Helicopter services will also play a key role in promoting tourism activities in the state, an official statement said. For RCS UDAN Services, Pawan Hans has deployed one Twin Engine Dauphin Helicopter having a seating capacity of up to 11 passengers. The inauguration of these RCS UDAN Helicopter Operations took place at the Guwahati Airport and the senior officials attending the event included Maninder Singh, Addl Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, Kumar Padmapani Bora, Secretary Tourism, Govt. of Assam, SanmukhJugani, Regional Executive Director, AAI and Sanjay Kumar, General Manager, Pawan Han.