

PRESIDENT SPEAKS:



AJAY PRAKASH
PRESIDENT

Being a travel agent or a tour operator is not easy, and that's becoming increasingly evident with every passing day. There are so many things that affect travel, and none of them are even remotely within our control. Natural calamities, geo-political events, economic upheavals – all of them impact travel and as we've seen during the pandemic, travel is the first to be hit and almost the last to recover.

Some of us who've been in the business long enough can remember the good old days when 9% commissions + overrides, coupled with a near monopoly on travel information like schedules, connections and fares made this an exciting and lucrative business. Those days, however, are gone forever. The world has changed. Knowledge is available at the click of a mouse, price comparisons abound and online deals by hotels and airlines often bypass the agency channel in a bid to go directly to the customer.

Twenty years ago, when Delta Airlines started to cut commissions, many pundits predicted the speedy demise of the travel agent. And yet, here we are! India today has close to 5000 IATA accredited agents and thousands of other entities who sell travel services, including air tickets. We are currently the **6th** largest BSP and are poised to soon become the **4th** by **2030**.

But this new world demands a different skill set. It demands greater professionalism in order to establish ourselves as domain experts, rather than mere "middle men." All the laws and other legal documents, including judgements, are available on the net, but no one says that lawyers are about to become redundant. The most exotic recipes can be found online, but the restaurants are thriving, it's the same with medical information and doctors – specialized knowledge comes at a price and that is what we should capitalize on.

Technology is evolving exponentially – artificial intelligence is the latest disruptor and we need to harness it more effectively. Collaboration and consolidation are the way many developed markets have gone – we, too, need to come to terms with it. As professionals, we need to be one step ahead of the consumer because only then can you charge for the value you add.

We have added a number of **free skilling courses on our website**. I would urge all of you to log in and explore these courses and also encourage your staff to take the courses which are aimed at upgrading **soft skills as well as travel-specific information**.

TAFI will soon start a public awareness campaign. The message and the thrust will be on the theme **"Without A Travel Agent, You're on Your Own."** But we need our members to be ready to fulfil the promise.

Wishing you and your families a very Happy Diwali and a great year ahead.

Ajay Prakash
PRESIDENT

FROM THE DESK OF GENERAL SECRETARY:

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

We could easily call the Post Covid period, a new beginning, to embrace a different approach to the most ordinary actions, which were a part of our lives, and have been taken for granted.

One such area that we should be focusing on is the gender equality sphere in our Chapter and National committees.

TAFI has numerous Women entrepreneurs, who have built businesses on their own and are heading large work forces to deliver, curated products and services within the travel spectrum.

Looking at the statistics, in Maharashtra alone, within the chapters for Mumbai and Pune, we have **62 women entrepreneurs**, and that is about **16% of the membership** in these chapters.

Is there hesitation to an inclusive approach by members and the existing committees?

No, I don't think so, our members and the chapter and national committees are intelligent enough to recognize the contribution women, make to the way we approach issues which must be tackled at the regional and national levels.

It is not that, there is no women representation in our committees, the representation needs to increase. We need to harness their abilities and allow them to bring a different perspective to the role we play in the travel sector in our country.

Though we do not have statistics about Women representation, in other regions of the world. We must acknowledge that some of the most brilliant ideas come from women entrepreneurs in the travel space.

We must also acknowledge the efforts by lawmakers worldwide to bring in legislation, to ensure women representation in legislative and statutory bodies.

The landmark legislation in India, recognizing and paving the way for gender equality was passed by both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in September '21, and is now a law, and will show results in the next 2 to 3 years.

One wonders if, TAFI should as well change the bylaws to empower more women entrepreneurs in TAFI to come forward and be a part and process of managing the association.

On a lighter note, adequate women representation does bring the much-needed glamour to the association.

Abbas Moiz
National General Secretary



ABBAS MOIZ
NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY



MADHYA PRADESH HELD THEIR EOGM AND CHAPTER MEETING ON 19 OCT AT CROWN PALACE HOTEL.

The EOGM and Chapter meeting of TAFI-MP chapter was held on 19th October 2023, at the Crown Palace Hotel. The Meeting was started by Mr. Amol Kataria, as the acting treasurer as Mr. Shailendra Khare, Chairman could not attend the meeting due to ill health. The Acting Treasurer started the EOGM and called upon **Mr. Atul Singh**, Chairman ADTOI, MP Chapter who was the returning officer to take the dais. Mr. Atul Singh gave information regarding the election process, for Chapter Secretary and Treasurer. Since only one nomination each was received for the Secretary and Treasurer post, he declared for the post of Secretary – **Mr. Amol Kataria**, Insta Bhraman, Indore and for Treasurer – **Mr. Maninder Singh Arora**, Jas Yatra Tours and travels Pvt Ltd. were elected unopposed. At the close of EOGM Chapter meetings was started and discussed various subjects and deliberated the queries raised by members. Suggestions were asked from members on how to take the TAFI MP chapter forward, and various constructive suggestions were received like increasing the membership, having family get together, Diwali Milan and organizing FAM trips.



J & K CHAPTER HELD THEIR REGULAR MEETING ON 14 OCT AT HOTEL SNOWLAND RESORT, SRINAGAR



1st Bi-Monthly Meeting of TAFI – JK Chapter 2023 – 2025 which was held on 14th Oct at Hotel Snowland Resort & Spa, Old Gagribal Road Dalgate, Srinagar. Chairman, Shamim Shah welcomed the members and Secretary, Burhan Misg conducted the meeting as per the Agenda. The Chairman was disappointed as when he attended the World Tourism Day the information given by the speakers were misleading and they didn't even mention about Kashmir's own Salim Ali National Park always known as RHGC. The floor deliberated the present scenario of tourism in Kashmir. Members were anguished as they realized that some Hotel Managers are tied up with some local agents and giving away low price to them then to the agents fraternity. Members department of tourism is not giving due consideration to renowned & oldest Travel trade associations, trade bodies, major stakeholders should be taken on board before making any decisions or for better suggestions related to tourism trade. The meeting was concluded with Vote of Thanks by the Secretary.



PUNE CHAPTER'S 2ND BIMONTHLY HELD IN PIMPRI HOTEL KALSAGAR

Pune Chapter's 2nd bimonthly held in Pimpri hotel Kalsagar was amazing. Good numbers of TAFI members were attended the meeting with enthusiasm. Chapter Chairman Mr. Sameer Kulkarni welcomed the members and highlighted on 1st Bi monthly meeting (FAM Tour to Panchagani) which was held at Panchagani and also encourage members to register for Costa Serena Cruise FAM from 7-10 Nov at their earliest as it is on the First come First Serve Basis. Hon Secretary Mr. Pramod Bidkar introduced Mr. Shashikant Choughule (owner – Aathwan Matchi Resort) and Mr. Prashant Mhamunkar from Asego Travel Insurance Company to the floor and they gave their respective product Presentation which was excellent and useful for the members. Chairman Mr. Sameer Kulkarni felicitated with flower bouquet to Mr. Sunil Uttam who was elevated to National as a National Committee member. Mr. Shashikant Choughule - owner of Aathwan Matchi and Mr. Prashant Mhamunkar – Manager of Asego Global Company were felicitated by Chairman and the Secretary respectively. The Office Bearers introduced and felicitated 3 new members who had been added to the chapter and anticipated few more will be joining soon in the Pune Chapter. At close of the meeting Cocktail & Dinner served.





AIR INDIA NOW HAS NEW NDC CONTENT PARTNER IN THE FORM OF TRAVELPORT

Travelport and Air India (AI), India's top international airline, revealed the extension and expansion of their long-term distribution agreement to encompass New Distribution Capability (NDC) content and services. This agreement represents a broader collaboration between Travelport and Air India, firming the commitment to deliver Furthermore a complete NDC solution. Moreover, this will empower Travelport's extensive network of travel agencies worldwide. **Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial and Transformation Officer** at Air India emphasized the significance of their valuable partnership with Travelport in the context of their growth and technology strategy. He stated, "Our valued partnership with Travelport is an important part of our growth and technology strategy as we prepare to deliver a complete solution that makes it easy for agents to access and service Air India's content and offers. This collaboration also underscores the ongoing commitment of Travelport and Air India to provide global travel agencies with a wide array of options along with a streamlined process for discovering and booking the best travel solutions to meet travelers' needs. **Damian Hickey, Global Head of Airline Partners at Travelport, said,** "Our expanded agreement with Air India positions Travelport and our operator partner ITQ to continue leading the way in modern travel retailing, firming our position as the preferred travel technology partner for travel agencies in India.

AI DEPLOYS NEW PLANES FOR MUMBAI-US NONSTOPS; DELHI FLYERS WILL HAVE TO WAIT:



Air India - the only airline currently operating nonstops between **Mumbai and the US** —has deployed its newly-inducted **Boeing 777s** on these routes. Which means that while Mumbai's direct connectivity is limited to the US as of now, passengers will be flying in comfort as the new planes don't suffer the issues that plague AI's old fleet which are taking longer than expected to resolve due to global supply chain constraints. Among the Big Three US carriers, United and Delta are currently not flying to Mumbai. And **American's sole India** route is currently only between Delhi and New York JFK. Delhi has the maximum nonstops to the US with AI — the biggest operator of direct flights between the two countries, United and American operating. AI mainly deploys its old B777s on nonstops between Delhi and North America due to operational reasons as they have to overfly the mighty Hindukush ranges while bypassing Afghan airspace that requires extra fuel. The refurbishing of the old B777s will start next year and is expected to be complete by the end of 2025. Which means, Delhi flyers (except some of those flying between Delhi and SFO) will need to wait longer for modern inflight amenities that Mumbai travellers on AI to and from the US will get. Delhi is AI's primary hub in India. AI has deployed its newly inducted B777 aircraft to all three US destinations it serves **non-stop from Mumbai**.



AIR INDIA APPOINTS CAPT KLAUS GOERSCH AS COO IN A MANAGEMENT RESHUFFLE

Air India today announced the appointment of **Capt Klaus Goersch** as Executive Vice President and **Chief Operations Officer**, who will oversee Flight Operations, Engineering, Ground Operations, Integrated Operations Control (IOCC) and Cabin Crew functions. Capt Goersch worked at US-based AirTran Airways before heading to Air Canada as Chief Operating Officer. After that, he headed to British Airways as COO, and from there, he headed to the Saudi Arabian venture, NEOM Airlines. Capt Goersch will be based out of Air India's new headquarters in Gurugram. Incumbent Chief of Operations **Capt RS Sandhu**, who had already extended his service with Air India beyond his superannuation date, will transition to an **advisory role**. Air India also announced other senior announcements to strengthen its management team, **Capt Manish Uppal**, who transitioned from AirAsia India a few months ago, has been appointed **Senior Vice President of Flight Operations**. **Capt Henry Donohoe's Corporate Safety, Security and Quality** role will be expanded to include Emergency Response and be retitled Senior Vice President Safety, Security and Quality. **Pankaj Handa** has joined Air India to lead **Ground Operations**. Pankaj worked with Vistara. **Mr. Choorah Singh** joins as **Divisional Vice President** of the Integrated Operations Control. **Ms. Ju Li Ng** joins as **Divisional Vice President Cabin Crew**. She has a long stint with Indian and Singaporean carriers in developing Cabin Crew departments, having worked with Singapore Airlines, Jet Airways and Scoot before arriving at Air India. Mr. Handa, Mr. Singh and Ms. Ng will report to Capt Goersch, as will Capt Uppal and **Mr. Sisira Kanta Dash**, **Senior Vice President of Engineering**. The Inflight Product & Service Design functions headed by **Mr. Sandeep Verma** will move to **Mr. Rajesh Dogra's Customer Experience** portfolio so that the latter has oversight of all customer interfaces. Capt Goersch, Mr. Dogra and Capt Donohoe will report directly to **Mr. Wilson**, as will existing Management Committee members **Mr. Nipun Aggarwal**, **Dr. Satya Ramaswamy**, **Dr. Suresh Dutt Tripathi** and **Mr. Vinod Hejmadi**, whose roles **remain unchanged**. Air India has reshuffled and reorganized at the top, bringing in more talent from across the globe to lead the turnaround efforts of the airline.

MORE ARRESTS MADE RELATED TO MY AIRLINE COLLAPSE:

Malaysia Federal police have made four more arrests in ongoing money laundering investigations tied to an airline collapse. It relates to the recent collapse of budget carrier MY Airline. MY Airline co-founder Datuk Allan Goh Hwan Hua and his family were arrested recently over suspected money laundering. The airline abruptly shut down leaving hundreds of customers stranded. Four more people have just been arrested. Three are employees of affiliated company i-Serve Technology & Vacation Sdn Bhd, while the other is a lawyer representing i-Serve Technology. The employees also held directors' positions at various firms owned by the MY Airline co-founder. Goh is also a shareholder in i-Serve. He was arrested and bailed earlier this month with investigations still ongoing. He is being investigated under the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing, and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act. MY Airline collapsed on 12 October



GOVT CRACKS DOWN ON AIRLINES, OTAS FOR UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES

The Central government has voiced concerns over the airline industry and online travel aggregators engaging in what it deems unfair trade practices. These practices have been a source of mounting frustration for consumers and have caught the attention of the Union Consumer Affairs Ministry. These practices include: **1) Labelling every seat of flights as “paid” despite claiming to offer “free mandatory web check-in.” 2) Denying boarding to passengers despite having confirmed tickets. 3) Delaying refunds.** One of the major issues brought to light is the misleading labelling of flight seats. Many airlines and travel aggregators have been consistently designating **every seat as ‘paid’** despite promoting the availability of ‘free mandatory web check-in.’ This discrepancy has led to confusion and dissatisfaction among passengers. **The Union Consumer Affairs Ministry** has also drawn attention to two other pressing concerns raised by passengers. Firstly, there have been numerous complaints of passengers being **denied boarding** even with confirmed tickets in hand. **Secondly**, consumers have reported significant delays in receiving refunds for cancelled flights, adding to their woes. **Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh**, in his statement, has shed light on the **deliberate tactics** used by airlines. Singh mentioned that airlines have been structuring their website interfaces in ways that **undermine** consumer autonomy, essentially manipulating their decision-making. This strategy is referred to as **‘dark pattern.’** The government has warned airlines and OTAs to stop engaging in **unfair trade practices**. Failure to comply could lead to action under the **Consumer Protection Act**. In conclusion, the government’s scrutiny of unfair practices by airlines and travel aggregators aims to protect the interests of consumers and ensure a fair and transparent travel experience. With these concerns raised at the highest level, the aviation industry is now under increased pressure to address these issues and provide passengers with **the service they deserve**.

TRAVEL AGENCY IN CUFFE PARADE LOSES ₹4.25 LAKH AFTER EMAIL & WEB PORTAL HACK



A travel agency in Cuffe Parade has complained to the police that the company has lost Rs 4.25 lakh after the firm’s email and web portal were hacked and 21 tickets were booked from their website. According to the information given by the police, **Seema Makhija, 67** told the police that her company is associated with the majority of the airlines and the web portal of every airline company requires an ID and password to book the tickets. Makhija said they had already logged into various portals of the airlines and had also paid money in advance. On **October 11**, when the company tried to book a ticket for a customer, it received a message that there was not enough money in their account. When the company inquired with the airlines they are associated with, it was found that the tickets had been booked using the user ID of their company. When Makhija asked the office staff about these ticket bookings, it came to light that no one had booked the tickets. The next day, an unknown person again booked the ticket using the user ID of the same company. When the company noticed, Makhija complained about it to the Cuffe Parade police. The police have started the investigation by registering an FIR against an unknown person under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and Information Technology Act.

CANADA SUSPENDS VISA & CONSULAR SERVICES IN BENGALURU, CHANDIGARH & MUMBAI

Visa processing for Canada in India will take a hit with Canada temporarily suspending visa and in-person consular services in **Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Mumbai**. **The same will be available only the Canadian High Commission in Delhi**. India had about a month back suspended visa processing in Canada. In its travel advisory for India that was updated on October 19, Canada said: “In the context of recent developments in Canada and in India, there are calls for protests and some negative sentiment towards Canada in traditional media and on social media. Demonstrations, including anti-Canada protests, could occur and Canadians may be subjected to intimidation or harassment. In Delhi and the National Capital Region, you should keep a low profile with strangers, and not share your personal information with them. Avoid crowded areas, including public transportation. You should always travel with someone and inform a friend or a family member of your travel plans, “Consular services in person are temporarily unavailable in and around Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Mumbai. Consular services in person at the High Commission of Canada in New Delhi will remain available,”

SRI LANKA, FIJI, SEYCHELLES & 6 OTHER COUNTRIES WHERE INDIANS DON'T NEED A VISA TO TRAVEL:



Indian travellers no longer need a visa to explore the stunning locales of Sri Lanka. The island nation has announced free visas to India, China, Russia, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand as part of its pilot project till 31 March 2024. With this move, Sri Lanka, which witnessed a major economic crisis in 2022, is attempting to revive its economy which is heavily reliant on inbound tourism. India has historically been the country's primary source of inbound tourism, with 30,000 arrivals recorded in September alone, PTI reports. After India, Chinese tourists followed as the second-largest group with over 8,000 arrivals in the same month. Before this new rule, Indian travellers would have to procure an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) document that was valid for 30 days and would cost Rs 2,080. Now, Indian tourists will save on both time and money that's spent on obtaining visas. But Sri Lanka isn't the only international destination allowing visa-free travel to Indians. Nine other exotic overseas destinations where Indian passport holders don't need a visa are Mauritius, Nepal, Fiji, Seychelles, Bhutan, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago.



INDIA TO PARTIALLY RESUME VISA SERVICES IN CANADA FROM 26TH OCTOBER:

India announced on October 25, that it will partially reinstate visa services to Canadian citizens, which were suspended last month amid a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. Starting Thursday, the Indian high commission in **Ottawa** and consulates in **Vancouver** and **Toronto** will resume services for **entry, business, medical and conference visas**. "Further decisions, as appropriate, would be intimated based on continuing evaluation of the situation," a media statement from the high commission said. India suspended visa services on **September 21**, citing alleged 'security threats' against diplomatic staff after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged, a few days prior, that Indian agents were linked to the killing of a Canadian Sikh in Vancouver in June. The media statement issued by the high commission said, "After a considered review of the security situation that takes into account some recent Canadian measures in this regard, it has been decided to resume visa services for the following categories with effect from October 26, 2023..." The development will come as a reprieve to Canadian citizens of Indian origin, who were unable to travel to India over the past month if they did not have an OCI card.

DIRECT FLIGHTS TO MALAYSIA FROM AHMEDABAD AIRPORT THIS WINTER:



A direct flight to Malaysia is in the offing from December 1 from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) airport in Ahmedabad, according to top sources. With the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announcing the winter schedule, some 40 new outbound flights will be added from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) airport in Ahmedabad, including both weekly domestic and international departures. The winter schedule will be effective from October 28. This will bring the weekly departures from the SVPI airport to 910 compared to 870 in the winter schedule of 2022. Interestingly, the flights have increased this year compared to previous years, despite GoAir flight operations being indefinitely suspended. This time, direct flights to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia will be launched. "Malaysian airlines have asked for slots for operating a direct flight from Ahmedabad to Kuala Lumpur for four days a week. This will help enhance connectivity to the South Asian country ahead of the Christmas-New Year holidays and the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit," a source told. The SVPI airport recently added a daily direct flight to Bangkok, Thailand from Ahmedabad. With this, the city airport will operate some 15 international flights to various destinations with 18 airlines. "A direct flight to Malaysia is a welcome move. Direct air connectivity to international destinations is the need of the hour, given the number of business and leisure travellers. Moreover, it will be beneficial as several delegates from the country will arrive for the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGS) 2024 an agent said. Currently, the city airport has direct flights to Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Singapore, Bangkok (Thailand), Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (Vietnam), Muscat (Oman), Kuwait, London (UK), Doha (Qatar) and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), among others.



THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL IS PASSPORT-FREE

Travellers at some of the best airports in the world no longer need to show passports, thanks to new technology that is making airport immigration smoother than ever. In September, Singapore announced that its Changi airport will be the first international hub to go completely **passport-free in early 2024** when it implements an automated immigration checkpoint that uses passengers' biometric data. Instead of presenting a passport to an immigration officer at a kiosk, passengers will simply step up to the automated checkpoint for a facial scan that verifies their identity without needing an exit stamp. All travellers will be able to use the technology, including visitors. "Biometrics will be used to create a single token of authentication that will be employed at various automated touchpoints, from bag-drop to immigration and boarding," Josephine Teo, Singapore's second minister for home affairs, said. Biometric passport clearance is a trend that will likely begin to catch on at more airports, as leveraging the technology becomes more popular. **Dubai International Airport** is also replacing traditional passport checks with biometric clearance—meaning that travellers will be able to walk through the terminal and onto their plane or through immigration using only their face as their ID. No more scrambling for travel documents at every point of the travel process. Singapore is adding a new terminal at Changi Airport to accommodate the uptick in passengers, but an "added challenge is our ageing population and shrinking workforce," Teo said, meaning the airport "will have to cope without a significant increase in manpower." From travelers' perspectives, an overwhelming majority are in favor of using biometrics to ease airport processes. According to a November 2022 survey from aviation trade group IATA, "75% of passengers want to use biometric data instead of passports and boarding passes." Teo says that "a person may undergo immigration clearance using an automated clearance system, if available, but that he may also be required to appear before an immigration officer for immigration clearance after using the automated clearance system if so directed." **By 2030**, many airports will have "walk-through, contactless immigration," according to a recent paper by consulting firm **Oliver Wyman**. The report predicts that many airports will model their facial recognition operations off of Singapore Changi's design. But first, airports will need to standardize customs and immigration processes and share passengers' facial recognition and passport data. "Through coordinated efforts by governments and regulatory bodies, there is a prospect of having an internationally recognized digital identity for all passengers by 2050," the report says.

KASHMIR RAILWAY GETS MODERN VISTADOM COACH FOR 180 DEGREE VIEWS



Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday inaugurated the state-of the art Vistadom Coach and stated that the new train will give an opportunity to the local travellers and tourists to enjoy modern day travel experience in the Valley and see natural beauty closely. Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Vistadom Coach at Srinagar railway station, the LG said that Vistadom Coach is a state-of the art train with advanced features of entertainment and sitting. "This coach has rotational facility of seats, power sockets as charging points, transparent glass made roof and windows and automatic doors with sensors etc," he said, adding that "Local travellers and tourists travelling in Vistadom Coach will enjoy the modern day travel experience in Valley and feel the natural beauty right from Budgam, Qazigund, Anantnag and Banihal very closely." The LG said that the Vistadom coach offers 360-degree views of the train journey. They come complete with huge glass windows, and rotating chairs so that travelers can face the windows to soak in the views or turn them around to talk to other passengers. The LG said that the new train will chug from Budgam to Banihal while time is not far when the train will connect Kashmir with Kanyakumari. He said introducing the Vistadom Coach is another step towards J&K's developmental journey. He said post G-20, the number of foreign tourist arrivals have gone up in J&K by 350 percent while as against last year's 1.88 Crore tourist arrivals, this year, 1.70 Crore tourists have visited J&K till September 30. Interestingly, the J & K administration is eyeing 2.25 Crore tourist arrivals by the year end. The LG said that the new train will not only ferry the travellers from Budgam to Banihal but also provide livelihood opportunities to the youth at Budgam, Qazigund, and Banihal points. He said that with the prevailing peace, youth have changed their mind set and are becoming part of the developmental journey of J&K.



AIRLINES PROTEST AGAINST ADANI'S AHMEDABAD AIRPORT PLAN TO HIKE FEES FOR CHARTER AIRCRAFT:

Airlines are outraged by Adani group-owned **Ahmedabad airport's** proposal to sharply raise user charges for **charter flights** during the ongoing **ICC Cricket World Cup**. The airport has increased ground handling charges by **more than 10 times**, sparking a backlash from major airlines who have now sought government intervention. They argue that such a sudden increase is illegal and will make charter operations unviable. The **Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA)**, which fixes airport tariffs for a period of five years, issued a notice on Friday evening, stating that levying charges and tariffs not approved by the authority is illegal. "A few airport operators are levying charges without taking approval, resorting to unethical practices. All airport operators are directed to refrain from levying charges not approved by the authority," AERA said in a notice. People familiar with the matter said AERA has also summoned the top management of the Ahmedabad airport on Monday to discuss the issue. According to the tariff list issued by the Ahmedabad airport in September, the airport has levied a minimum of **Rs 265,000** as general aviation charges for any charter flight carrying more than 15 passengers. Above that, it will charge **Rs 17,667** per passenger. These charges are over and above the landing and parking charges. Airlines have also been told that any flight that has not been filed with the airport operator for a particular season will be charged as a charter. The people cited above said IndiGo, SpiceJet, and Vistara had bid for a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) tender for ferrying cricket teams during the tournament based on previous charges. Such a sudden increase in airport charges, they said, will make those flights unviable, as BCCI has refused to pay the extra charges. The airlines are also operating special charter flights carrying cricket fans from across the world.

AIR INDIA ANNOUNCES ASIA EXPANSION



Air India has announced an expansion of service towards Asia as part of its commitment to growth. The Indian flag carrier says it'll be introducing from 23 October 2023 a nonstop service between Kolkata and Bangkok. The belief is that the connection will be hugely important to direct connectivity between the two major cities. The service will operate as an A322, departing from Kolkata at 2200 before touching down in Bangkok at 0205 the following morning. Air India notes that the return flight will operate as A321. This flight will depart one hour after it arrives at 0305 before touching back down in Kolkata at 0410. Airbus narrowbody aircraft will operate on the service and be configured in a two-class configuration. Air India says the flight will operate six days a week from Monday to Saturday. Therefore, Sunday is the only day the service won't run. Bangkok is enjoying much growth thanks to Air India, which offers 14 weekly flights between Bangkok and cities within India. Notably, nonstop flights from Delhi to Mumbai are available from Bangkok. The carrier says this is all part of its continued mission to transform as a global carrier. It wants to offer more opportunities and availability to its customers with enhanced connection.

Edited & prepared by M. Ananda Veloo

INDIGO LAUNCHES FLIGHTS TO 20 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS IN LAST SIX MONTHS

In a move to expand its global footprint, low-cost carrier IndiGo has established over 20 international flights across Central and Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in the past six months. The international flights include new routes and the resumption of flights within the airline's network. In total, the airline has a network connecting 32 international destinations. The airline said it has launched routes to destinations such as Jakarta, Nairobi, Almaty, Tashkent, Baku, and Tbilisi. It added that it has reinstated flights from Delhi to Hong Kong and will recommence Delhi-Male operations starting November 1 this year. "These expansions form a pivotal part of IndiGo's long-term growth strategy, demonstrating dedication to broadening its global footprint," the airline said in a statement. The airline said it has connected Hyderabad to Male, Colombo, Ras Al Khaimah, and Singapore. Apart from expanding to international destinations, the airline said it has a total of eight codeshare partnerships, which include arrangements with Turkish Airlines, British Airways, Qantas, Air France, KLM, American Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Virgin Atlantic. A codeshare partnership is a mutually beneficial arrangement between two airlines that allows an airline to book its passengers on its partner carriers. "With the upcoming festive season, these new routes and alliances usher in multiple possibilities, granting seamless access to a diverse array of international destinations.

MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN INDONESIA REACHES NEW HEIGHTS



Mountain tourism in Indonesia has shown advancement in demand post-lockdown, observe Indonesian industry players. Speaking at the **Indonesia Mountain Tourism** Conference in Jakarta recently, **Vicky Gosal**, owner and managing director of Karash Adventure, said: "The quota for hiking in (popular) **Mount Rinjani** and **Mount Merbabu** are fully booked three weeks before the D-day," he said. Vicky said mountain climbing is trending among Indonesians, with many opting for one- to two-day programmes due to a preference for short trips and limited budgets. He noted: "Small mountains with short climbs such as **Mount Kencana**, **Ciung** and **Kerenceng** are suddenly more popular because they are (more accessible) for such travellers." With 400 mountains (of which 29 are large ones), 129 active volcanoes, and one belonging to WorldSeven Summit, Indonesia has great potential to develop mountain tours. In the meantime, the Indonesian Association of Mountain Guides, in preparation for rebound, had created the Indonesia Volcanic Travel Pattern during the pandemic – it includes eight mountains stretching from Yogyakarta and Central Java to Sumbawa in East Nusa Tenggara. Volcano guide specialist, Dasirun, said the programmes could be divided into two patterns. First is linear, which comprises several mountains on an island – like **Merapi**, **Kelud**, **Bromo** and **Semeru** – across Java with additional visits to iconic sites like **Borobudur temple** and **Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace**. The other is territorial and will focus on one mountain, such as **Merapi in Yogyakarta** as the main highlight, with visits to sites with historic or philosophic connections to it, like the **Volcano Museum**, the **Sultanate Palace**, and the **South Seas**.

Edited & prepared by M. Ananda Veloo

VISTARA RETAINS 2ND SPOT WITH 10% SHARE OF INDIA'S DOMESTIC MARKET

India's air traffic continues to increase year-on-year, with September also registering similar growth patterns. While IndiGo remains far ahead of other airlines, Vistara increased its market share slightly to maintain its second spot in the overall rankings. September, however, was not a good month for punctuality, as all major Indian carriers performed poorly compared to the previous month. Let's take a look at what the DGCA's data reveals. India's full-service carrier, Vistara climbed to the No.2 position in August with a 9.8% market share. Data from India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), revealed that Vistara maintained its 2nd spot with a marginal market share increase to 10% in September. This is the first time in quite a while that any Indian carrier has reached a two-digit figure in domestic market share, apart from IndiGo, which maintains its eye-watering lead with a share of 63.4%. Air India, another Tata Group airline, was next on the list with a market share of 9.8%, while AirAsia India came fourth with a share of 6.7%. SpiceJet commanded 4.4% of the Indian market, while Akasa Air was at the bottom of the list of major carriers, with a share of 4.2%. But it has recently been plagued by several flight cancellations amid a crunch of qualified pilots, leading to a slip in rankings. Overall, India's domestic carriers flew more than 112 million passengers from January to September, registering an annual growth of 29.10 % and a monthly growth of 18.26 %.

PASSENGER FERRY SERVICE BETWEEN INDIA AND SRI LANKA BEGINS

An international, high-speed passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam on the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu and Kankesanthurai in the northern province of Sri Lanka, has resumed as of Saturday, October 14, after a gap of nearly 4 decades. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal and Tamil Nadu Minister for Public Works, Highways and Minor Ports, E.V. Velu, flagged off the craft from the Nagapattinam port on Saturday. The high-speed craft (HSC) Cheriya Pani, embarked on its journey around 8.15 a.m. from the Nagapattinam port with 50 passengers and 12 crew members headed by Captain Biju George, on board. In video messages, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe hailed this diplomatic effort and highlighted the importance of launching the ferry service between the two nations. Calling it a new chapter in diplomatic and economic ties between India and Sri Lanka, Mr. Modi said the ferry service will help strengthen cultural, commercial, and civilizational ties between the two nations. Connectivity is the central theme of the joint vision of the India - Sri Lanka economic partnership, Mr. Modi said.

KNOWLEDGE SERIES – GST BY CA. H.M. TALHA RAHAMAN, CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT- TAFI CONSULTANT



PART 6 – GST COMPLIANCES

Goods and Services Tax (GST) compliance in India is essential for businesses to ensure they are following the rules and regulations set by the government. Here are some key GST compliances that businesses in India need to adhere to:

1. GST Registration:

a. Every business with a turnover above the prescribed threshold limit (as determined by the GST Council) is required to register for GST.

b. Businesses operating in multiple states must obtain a separate GST registration for each state.

2. Maintenance of GST Records:

a. Registered taxpayers are required to maintain detailed records of all their inward and outward supplies, including invoices, bills of supply, and accounting records.

b. These records must be preserved for a minimum of 72 months.

3. Filing GST Returns:

a. GST returns must be filed regularly, depending on the type of taxpayer (e.g., monthly, quarterly, or annually).

b. GSTR-1: This return contains details of outward supplies and must be filed by the 10th of the following month.

c. GSTR-3B: A summary return providing details of tax liability and must be filed by the 20th of the following month.

d. GSTR-4: For composition scheme taxpayers, a quarterly return.

e. GSTR-9 & 9C: An annual return summarizing the annual financial transactions.

4. Payment of GST:

GST payments must be made on time to avoid penalties and interest. The due date for payment is typically the 20th of the following month.

5. Reconciliation and Matching:

a. Regularly reconcile the data submitted in GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B with the books of accounts to ensure accuracy.

b. Perform GST reconciliation to match the Input Tax Credit (ITC) claimed with the invoices uploaded by suppliers.

6. Reverse Charge Mechanism:

Ensure compliance with the reverse charge mechanism, where the recipient is liable to pay GST on certain notified supplies instead of the supplier.

7. INPUT TAX CREDIT (ITC):

- a. Verify that ITC claimed is eligible and matches with the details furnished by the supplier.
- b. Timely reverse any excess or ineligible ITC.

8. E-way Bills:

Generate e-way bills for the movement of goods exceeding specified thresholds to ensure compliance with the rules regarding the transportation of goods.

9. E-invoice:

Generate E-invoice if the threshold limit is crossed to ensure compliance with the rules prescribed.

10. Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) and Tax Collected at Source (TCS):

Deduct TDS and collect TCS as per the GST provisions if applicable to your business.

11. Annual Reconciliation and Audit:

Conduct an annual reconciliation of your financial statements with GST returns and get your accounts audited if your turnover exceeds the prescribed limit.

12. Compliance with GST Council Notifications:

Stay updated with the latest notifications and circulars issued by the GST Council to ensure compliance with any changes in rules and rates.

13. GST Compliance Software:

Consider using GST-compliant accounting and invoicing software to streamline compliance tasks and reduce the risk of errors.

Non-compliance with GST regulations can lead to penalties, interest, and legal actions. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to maintain proper records, file returns accurately and on time, and stay informed about any changes in GST laws and rules to ensure smooth GST compliance in India. Consulting with a qualified GST professional or chartered accountant can also be helpful in managing GST compliances effectively.

Quote for Thoughts

“Start each day with a positive thought and a grateful heart.”

“We are addicted to our thoughts. We cannot change anything if we cannot change our thinking.”

“Be the reason someone smiles. Be the reason someone feels loved and believes in the goodness in people.”

“Be mindful. Be grateful. Be positive. Be true. Be kind.”

“Don’t waste your time in anger, regrets, worries, and grudges. Life is too short to be unhappy.”

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can’t blow an uncertain trumpet.”

“A good objective of leadership is to help those who are doing poorly to do well and to help those who are doing well to do even better.”