

*President Ajay Prakash and Team met Finance Secretary Dr. T. V. Somanathan



L to R: Mr. Anil Kalsi, Mr. Ajay Prakash, Dr. T. V. Somanathan, Shri Vivek Shejwalkar, MP, Mr. Ankush Nijhawan and Mr. Rajiv Agarwal

TAFI Delegation led by **President Ajay Prakash** and his Team, **Mr. Anil Kalsi, Mr. Ankush Nijhawan, and Mr. Rajiv Aggarwal** along with **Shri Vivek Shejwalkar** - Member of Parliament met with the **Finance Secretary Dr T.V. Somanathan** at the **Ministry of Finance** today.

The meeting was constructive, **mainly on recent hike in TCS** and the Finance Secretary heard us out patiently and agreed to look into our suggestions which were put forth.

Presently the TCS is 5% with threshold of Rs 7 Lacs under LRS (Liberalized Remittance Scheme) Under the budget 2023-24 the TCS for foreign remittance had been increased to 20% without any threshold. The move to aimed at conserving foreign exchange amidst global uncertainty and the steep rise in TCS rates would force people to rethink remittances. But for Travel Agents it is going to impact their day-to-day business. TAFI had taken this forward through appropriate channel for its members and travel fraternity as a whole. Hoping for positive results.

*TAFI WI Chapter held members meeting at National Museum of Indian cinema on 28 Feb:

The National Museum of Indian Cinema is the first museum in the country that displays the history of Indian cinema. It is housed in two buildings, **New Museum Building**, and the heritage **Gulshan Mahal** on Peddar Road in Mumbai. The museum showcases history of Indian Cinema through recordings, memorabilia, cameras, equipment and much more. The National Museum of Indian Cinema is not only dedicated to Hindi Cinema but also exhibits history and information about regional films. Visitors can walk through various cinematic events, such as Lumiere Brothers first films or the first feature film called Raja Harishchandra which was directed by **Dadasaheb Phalke**. There are handmade posters of iconic films, the era of silent and studio films, the influence of the World Wars on Indian cinema and more. An entire area is dedicated to the most fundamental of filmmaking equipment – the camera. From the hand operated camera used by Dadasaheb Phalke, to the cameras used by legendary filmmakers, such as **Satyajit Ray** to the modern 3D and 4D cinemas, this section is a delight for those who understand the technicalities of making a film. Also, the other wing of the museum has a section that is dedicated completely to Mahatma Gandhi. This wing includes films made on the Mahatma, a children's film studio where kids can try their hand at shooting, editing, lighting etc. TAFI Western India had the opportunity host the members meeting at this Unique venue **on 28 Feb 23**. Some pictures taken during the meeting.



*Emirates Agents' Cricket Tournament 2023 was held in YMCA-Chennai on 4th & 5th Mar 23:



Emirates Agent Cricket Tournament 2023 was held in YMCA Pavilion Ground @ Nandanam-Chennai on **04th & 05th March 2023**. There were 12 teams had registered for this tournament. 04Mar league match between the teams & quarter final, Semi Final & Final held on 05March 2023. Top 1 & 2 teams directly qualified for Semi Finals and other teams played their quarter finals to reach semi. The below are teams participated. 01. TBO, 02. Akbar, 03. FCM, 04. Yatra Air Travel Bureau, 05. TC Tours, 06. SOTC, 07. Alhind, **08. Travel Agent Federation of India** 09. Travel Agent Association of India, 10. Riya, 11. Travel Troops (Also known as Pick Your Trail), 12. International Travel House.

Quarter final Teams

01. FCM (Directly Qualified for Semi Finals). 02. TC Tours (Directly Qualified for Semi Finals)

03. Akbar V/s Alhind 04. Travel Agent Federation of India V/s Riya Travels

Semi-Finals Teams- FCM V/s Riya and TC Tours V/s Alhind

4th Position team trophy has been handed over to FCM by Mr. Sabu Mathew – **Riya Travel - GM - TN**, 3rd Position trophy been handed-over by **Mr. Arul Lazaran – TAFI Chairman** to TC Tours.

Finals Team: Alhind travels V/s Riya Travels

Finals – **Winner Trophy** handed over by **Mr. Asif Ali** – Sales Manager Tamilnadu to **Al Hind Travels & Runner trophy** by **Mrs. Devaki** – TAAI – SR Chairman to Riya Travels.

*Stake your claim to Ticketing Authority. - By P. Sampath Kumar, Consultant - TAFI Legal & Industry Affairs.



Advisory to Travel Agents is to first take a look at the fundamental "Agreement" that IATA has secured on behalf of its Member Airlines who have so authorized it, which is duly stamped and signed by you - Resolution Reference number 824, authorizing the agent to sell, handle, process and service traffic, and provide a contract of carriage reference 3.1 and 3.2 in specific.



The next important IATA resolution which Agents need to be aware of is Reso 850, which is on the subject of BSP setup and relevance, para 12 followed by 20. Further in the said resolution Attachment 'E' para (ii) non IATA member airlines are required to secure a Sales Agency Agreement with each IATA accredited Agent.

Attention is drawn to Agents and Carrier/s equally participating in the BSP platform that overall ticketing limitations are limited to the extent of value of Financial Security secured by IATA annually from the Agent and not by numbers on any participating airline. This is done by IATA in the best interests of members, having appointed Accredited Agents who has complied with the many conditions, including financial, as mandated.

Next it would be prudent to look at IATA resolution 854 para 5.3.4.2 , 5.4 which in a way allows the BSP airline/s take control of ticketing authority .

Nowhere in the said IATA resolution/s does any BSP participating airline, IATA member or Non Member, have the authority to restrict tickets by numbers to an Agent permanently. (cont...)

Where an Agent finds they have not able to issue ticket of a BSP participating member they should write to the concerned Airline and seek such authority with a copy to IATA.

Having said the above, it may be noted IATA resolution number 878 gives the Airline right to withdraw the General Concurrence singularly and such action needs to be intimidated to the Agent and IATA Agency Administrator in writing format as stated.

Agents are encouraged to report to their Trade Association where any airline/s restricts ticketing authority and if it is found that the said airline/s participating in the country's BSP platform are denying majority of Agents with ticketing authority across the country, diluting the IATA agreement, the matter will then be reported to IATA through proper channels and Agency Administrator by the Association, which includes questioning the value of Agency Accreditation program.

In the best legal interests, a "Certificate of Appointment", as in Resolution 820, should be acquired. However, it is advisable IATA Accredited Agents ensure to seek and obtain a written Agreement which states general terms and conditions, ticketing authority and remuneration assurance from all BSP - India participating Airlines who's name does not figure in the General Concurrence list of Airlines for Area -3 published by IATA, as well as those airlines who are operating to/from and within India but not participating in BSP platform.

***4 incidents of assault, threats to Air India crew in 6 weeks; CEO seeks global support**



Expressing his concern at the rising incidents of unruly behavior by passengers on flights, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson has urged concerted industry effort to contain the problem. "It is unfortunate that the [passenger] behavior is not always what one would expect in a public environment. As an industry, we need to step forward and say there's what is acceptable and what's not acceptable," Wilson told Business Today. The chief executive of the country's national flag carrier made this observation while responding to a question on the incident on a New York-

Delhi flight where a business class passenger had allegedly urinated on a co-passenger on November 26 last year. The matter is currently sub judice. Expressing deep regret at the incident, Wilson admitted they had failed to handle the situation adequately around that time. "As a consequence of that incident, we've looked at internal processes. We've looked at the technology that we will be using in reporting such incidents internally as well as to the regulator. We've looked at some policies because clearly, we need to do better," he said. "In the last six weeks alone, we've had four incidents where people have either assaulted or threatened to physically assault our crew, and we're taking a zero-tolerance line on that. And in each case, they have been referred to an internal committee for suspension," informed Wilson. He said that a spurt in such cases globally had led even the trade association International Air Transport Association (IATA) to take a serious view of the situation and call for industrywide action to stem it. Colehan further said that IATA had been urging governments globally to implement public awareness campaigns to make passengers aware of the type of conduct prohibited onboard as well as the introduction of strong legal deterrents.

***DigiYatra to be enabled at all gates of T2 and T3 of Delhi airport :**



Soon air travelers will enjoy a seamless and hassle-free experience at Delhi airport. The move comes after Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) announced that all boarding gates of Terminal 2 and Terminal 3 will become DigiYatra-enabled by the month-end. Thus, domestic air travelers can enter the terminal, security check area, and boarding gates easily. The number of DigiYatra users has

gradually increased since its launch at the airport on December 01, 2022, by Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. Presently, around 2,500 passengers are using the technology at Delhi Airport's Terminal 3 every day. The Ministry of Civil Aviation is implementing DigiYatra in a phased manner. In the first phase, DigiYatra will be launched at Delhi, Bangalore, Varanasi, Kolkata, Pune, Vijayawada, and Hyderabad Airports by March 2023. The DigiYatra allows the passengers to spend a few seconds clearing each touchpoint. The passengers can save up to 25 minutes of their time in the process from entry checks to security checks. All the passengers travelling by air can use and avail of the benefit of DigiYatra. For this, the passenger has to register their face on the DigiYatra app and validate the same with the Aadhaar repository before coming to the airport. Upload travel barcodes and share them with the airport. Thus, one can save precious time from getting into a queue for entry into the terminal for security checks.

***IndiGo looks to enable codeshare connectivity to US, Canada:**



IndiGo on Sunday (5 Mar) said it is looking at enabling codeshare connectivity to the US and Canada through its partnership with Turkish Airlines. On Friday, (3 Mar), a senior official told that the airline has received approval from the civil aviation ministry to wet lease up to two planes for operating flights to the United States and Canada. In response to queries on the same, IndiGo

on Sunday said it constantly evaluates and discusses opportunities with aircraft manufacturers, but at this stage, it is pure speculation. "At present, our objective is to enable codeshare connectivity to the US and Canada via our partnership with Turkish Airlines after the required application and approval process," the statement said. Code sharing allows an airline to book its passengers on its partner carriers and provide seamless travel to destinations where it has no presence. The airline's plans also come against the backdrop of Air India starting to ramp up its international operations and expanding fleet with new aircraft orders. IndiGo started operating wide-body Boeing 777 on Delhi-Istanbul route in February. The plane has been taken on wet lease from Turkish Airlines and it is the first time that the budget carrier started flying a wide-body aircraft. Currently, the airline has more than 300 planes in its fleet and around 500 aircraft are on order. IndiGo, the country's largest airline in terms of domestic market share and operating around 1,800 flights daily, is focusing on the internationalization of operations, preparing to fly to more overseas destinations. In an interview in February, **IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers** said the airline has always kept the option of wide-body aircraft open but did not divulge specific details. "IndiGo has never ruled out any option. We do have a significant order book. We have almost 500 aircraft on order... we have a steady stream of deliveries coming. "Our focus and emphasis will be on that part.

***GMR Hyderabad International Airport wins Prestigious ASI World's Best Airport Award**



GMR Hyderabad International Airport has once again received accolades in the annual Airports Council International (ACI) Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey. Hyderabad Airport has been adjudged as the 'Best Airport of 15 to 25 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA)' in the Asia-Pacific region for 2022. ACI World's globally recognized Airport Service Quality (ASQ) program is the world's leading airport passenger service and benchmarking programme measuring passengers' satisfaction while they are travelling through an airport. Speaking on this achievement, **Mr. Pradeep Panicker, CEO - GHIAL**, said, "It gives us immense pleasure to be recognized year after year by our passengers as the Best Airport in the annual ASQ survey conducted by ACI. The terminal expansion of the Hyderabad Airport has enhanced the passenger experience with more space, new facilities and multiple options. We have made significant investments in our facilities and continue to use technology enabled solutions for efficiency of operations. We believe that courtesy goes a long way in making a journey memorable and our staff demonstrate it and strive to delight our passengers. We are elated to receive this recognition which would not have been possible without the hard work, commitment and dedication of all our employees and stakeholders of the airport ecosystem." **Mr. Luis Felipe de Oliveira, Director General, ACI World**, said, "I am pleased to advise that Rajiv Gandhi International Airport has earned the 2022 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for 'Best Airport of 15 to 25 Million Passengers in Asia-Pacific'. My warmest congratulations to you and your entire airport community." **GMR Hyderabad International Airport** has always been at the forefront when it comes to service and operational excellence. The airport has prominently featured among the Top 3 Global airports for 9 consecutive years (2009 to 2017) including World No. 1 position four times in 2009, 2010, 2016 & 2017 in 5 – 15 MPPA category in ACI- ASQ Awards. It also ranked World No. 4 in 2018 in the 15 – 25 MPPA category and was adjudged as the 'Best Airport by Size and Region' in Asia-Pacific region for both 2019 and 2020 in the 15-25 MPPA category. It has been adjudged as the 'Best Airport by Size and Region' in the 15-25 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA) category in the Asia-Pacific region for 2021.

***Jalan-Kalrock consortium to order 200 aircraft for Jet Airways: Report**



Jet Airways' successful resolution applicant, **Jalan-Kalrock consortium**, is reportedly planning to order 200 airplanes for the airline after **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** declined to halt the ownership transfer as requested by lenders. The order could be announced around June, reported concerned sources. The report added that the consortium is in talks with original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to place the order of at least 200 planes, which will be a mix of small, medium, and large narrow body jets at the Paris airshow in June. The mix of planes the consortium is planning to order is keeping in mind the market opportunity in the country, which is a blend of metro markets and smaller cities. The airline had previously indicated that it would place a large order from Boeing and Airbus but that could not proceed due to opposition from the lenders. The NCLAT refused to stay an order by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on January 13 that approved the transfer of ownership of bankrupt-Jet Airways to the Jalan Kalrock consortium and gave the winning bidder more time to pay the dues to the creditors. The NCLAT stated that lenders must move forward in implementing the resolution plan without delay. This development comes after Air India placed a massive order of 470 planes with Airbus and Boeing, comprising 40 Airbus A350s, 20 Boeing 787s and 10 Boeing 777-9s widebody aircraft, as well as 210 Airbus A320/321 Neos and 190 Boeing 737 MAX single-aisle aircraft. Meanwhile, IndiGo is also in discussions with manufacturers for a 500 aircraft order, the report added. Akasa is also likely to place a "three-digit" order by 2023-end, as per media reports.

*Emirates and Philippine Airlines announce interline partnership.



Emirates and Philippine Airlines (PAL) have signed an interline agreement to boost connectivity for passengers of both air carriers to new points on each other's networks via Manila and Dubai, using a single ticket and one baggage policy. Now in effect, the reciprocal interline partnership provides Emirates' passengers access to 19 Philippine domestic destinations operated by Philippine Airlines, including Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod, Cotabato, Davao, Iloilo, Kalibo and more, as well as two Asian regional points via Manila. Philippine Airlines' passengers also benefit from access to Emirates' global network and seamlessly connect to 21 cities operated by Emirates beyond Dubai to European destinations such as London, Rome, Frankfurt, Barcelona, Paris and Kuwait, as well as to Jeddah and other points in the Middle East, Africa and India. Travel itineraries can be booked on emirates.com, philippineairlines.com, the Emirates and PAL mobile apps, or via both online and offline travel agents. **Adnan Kazim, Emirates' chief commercial officer** commented: "The Philippines is one of our strongest consumer markets and we're pleased to sign a new interline agreement with the country's flag carrier. The partnership with Philippine Airlines will help open new links for trade and tourism that will drive more inbound traffic into the market and expand Emirates' footprint in East Asia.

*Emirates focuses on 2023 theme of embracing equity this International Women's Day.

With a clear mission to forge inclusive work cultures where women's careers thrive and their achievements are celebrated, the Emirates Group is focusing on the 2023 International Women's Day theme of #EmbraceEquity through discussions on gender equity, record levels of female promotions and providing company-wide access to 'Unconscious Bias' training. More than 23,000 women are employed by the Emirates Group, representing 41% of the total workforce employed at Emirates worldwide and dnata in the UAE. This sizeable number has been on an upward trajectory in 2023 and active recruitment continues. Currently almost 40% of middle and senior management positions across non-operational grades are held by women at Emirates Group. The Emirates Group recognizes that the International Women's Day theme of #EmbraceEquity is an opportunity to unify direction and galvanize activity, by creating a meaningful framework to amplify action. In signing the UAE Gender Balance Council's pledge, Emirates Group has committed to introducing more compliance measures to prevent bias in the hiring processes, identifying, developing, and working on the succession of female leaders in the organization.

*Mahabalipuram most visited tourism site by foreign tourists in India



Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu is the most visited tourist spot in India by **international tourists**. According to Tourism Department data, Tamil Nadu's Mahabalipuram surpassed '**Ellora Caves**' in Maharashtra, '**Chittor Fort**' in Rajasthan, and '**The Konark Temple**' in Odisha to take the top spot. The Tourism Department was the most affected in the country as a result of Covid lockdowns. When air travel was fully halted, the tourism industry suffered a massive global downfall. While many nations were exceedingly cautious of allowing foreigners into their countries during Covid, Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin made a significant move by holding the '**International Chennai Olympiad 2022**'. This gave a boost to the tourism statistics of the state. The Tamil Nadu government allotted Rs 246.06 crore for the state's Tourism and Culture department in the fiscal year 2021-22. The tourism department alone was given a budget of Rs 187.59 crore. When the worldwide tourism markets were closed, M.K. Stalin's allocation of a large budget was greatly welcomed, especially since the state benefitted so greatly in return. The Union Government allocated Rs 2,400 crores for the Tourism Department this year. This is a 1,343 crore increase above the previous budget. The Union Government's "**Dekho Apna Desh**" plan selected almost **50 tourism attractions** in the country for improvement. More than 88 lakh international tourists visited the country in the first half of the fiscal year 2022-23. Around 2.5 crore international tourists visited the country in 2019-20. In **2021-22**, India attracted **1.25 crore tourists**. Except from the period 2021-22, the country's earnings from tourism have steadily increased year after year.

*Sabah Tourism Board rebrands to 'Feel Sabah, North Borneo.'



Sabah Tourism Board (STB) is under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment. 'Feel Sabah' promotion was developed by STB while the idea of incorporating 'North Borneo' was mooted by Minister Datuk Christina Liew who led a 10-member delegation to ITB Berlin 2023. Launching this rebranding exercise at the world's largest tourism trade fair at the Messe Berlin in Germany on Tuesday, **Minister Datuk Christina Liew** said it was most apt to adopt this promotional theme for sentimental and historical reasons. The name '**North Borneo**' (now **Sabah**) sounds exotic and evokes nostalgic feelings of yearning for this destination. It is also of historical significance as the state was then known as '**North Borneo**' prior to gaining our Independence in 1963. People in many parts of the world (reportedly) haven't heard about Sabah, despite decades of promoting this Land Below The Wind to the outside world, let alone know about their diverse natural attractions and iconic wildlife. However, they are aware that at the mention of Borneo or North Borneo, it rings a bell. Europeans in particular associate Sabah with Borneo. Hence, they are determined to rebrand this tourist destination with '**Feel Sabah, North Borneo**' to create a new identity in the travel marketplace, Liew said after the launch. **Sabah** is home to spectacular natural wonders such as **Mount Kinabalu, Maliau Basin** and **Tip of Borneo**, she added. The delegation comprised Assistant Minister cum STB Chairman Datuk **Joniston Bangkuai**, the Ministry's **Permanent Secretary Datuk Mohd Yusrie Abdullah**, STB Chief Executive Officer **Noredah Othman** as well as ministry and STB officials. With the recent resumption of international direct flights, cruise tourism and optimism about mounting regular or chartered flights from new destinations, Liew said Sabah targets **2.2 million arrivals for 2023** and will work towards attaining 2.5 million arrivals.

*Punjab's trade tourism to bet a major boost via G20 Summit

The chief minister of Punjab, **Bhagwant Mann**, for the **G20 summit**, requested the officials to make sure infallible arrangements working sessions scheduled to take place at Amritsar, the holy city, next week. It would start on **March 15th** and continue till **17th** and again on **March 19-20**. The CM explained that the state government is legally obliged to make detailed arrangements so that the dignitaries can have a comfortable stay. He said that the guests will be provided with conventional Punjabi food, mentioning that they will be provided with a quick look into the rich Punjabi culture at the time of the cultural events as well. Mann showed hope that the Punjab government will create a new yardstick by organizing the two sessions of G 0 summit successfully. He added that this summit will showcase this state as a most preferred destination for business travelers internationally and for the government, it will also act as a stage to display its accomplishments and facilities for setting up new businesses. He also mentioned that this summit is a golden opportunity where the state of Punjab can be highlighted as a land of best opportunities and by attracting maximum investment they can create new employment opportunities for the youth.

*UK regulator tells Heathrow to cut fees in win for airlines:



Britain's Heathrow Airport was told on Wednesday (8 Mar) by the aviation regulator it will have to **cut the fees** it charges airlines over the **2024-2026 period**, bowing to pressure from airlines who have long said charges at the hub are too high. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) announced that Heathrow, Britain's biggest airport, could charge an average maximum price per passenger of 27.49 pounds (\$32.51) in nominal prices over the 2022-2026 period. Following two years of higher interim prices over 2022 and 2023, which includes a charge of 31.57 per passenger for this year, the CAA said that meant Heathrow charges would fall to about 25.43 pounds per passenger in nominal terms over the 2024-2026 period. The lower fees will boost airlines such as British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, two of Heathrow's biggest, making the airport cheaper for them. They have long complained that fees at Heathrow, the busiest airport in western Europe, are the highest in the world. This makes no sense and will do nothing for consumers at a time when the CAA should be incentivizing investment to rebuild service. IATA, said Heathrow had secured a 'generous settlement', adding that the present model for deciding charges needs a fundamental review. IAG and Virgin Atlantic said the CAA had not gone far enough in cutting charges. If the CAA had fully considered industry forecasts of passenger volumes post COVID, it should result in lower prices for consumers, said **IAG CEO Luis Gallego**. Heathrow's passenger numbers could recover to about 90 per cent of pre-pandemic levels this year, the airport has said, but despite that it has warned it does not expect to be able to pay its owners a dividend for 2023.

*KIA is best airport in global passenger satisfaction survey



Kempe Gowda International Airport has been selected as the best airport in Airports Council International's ASQ Global Arrival Survey 2022. It emerged the winner among 15 participating airports worldwide. ASQ is the world's leading airport customer experience index based on passenger satisfaction on the day of travel. The ASQ survey is held in over 340 airports worldwide and is the industry benchmark for airport service quality. Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), operator of KIA, said the Bengaluru airport aims to become the new gateway to India. Hari Marar, MD and CEO of BIAL, said: "This recognition comes as a testament to hard work, dedication and commitment of our team. We want to thank immigration, customs and CISF for their cooperation in enabling a seamless arrival process."

*What NDC is really all about: - By Mark Pestronk -Travel Law Office- Washington DC



I have a cynical opinion of **NDC**. It is not primarily a better service but rather a better weapon in the 38-year war that the airlines have been waging to reduce or eliminate the fees that airlines pay the GDS vendors. Since 1985, the GDS companies have been toll collectors for every booking by a travel agency or a corporate travel department. As the tolls increased every few years, the airlines began complaining that they paid too much, especially in relation to the cost of other kinds of transaction-processing technology. The airlines had a good point, as there is no doubt that the GDSs have been able to take financial advantage of their oligopoly. Over the years, the airlines have asked the departments of Justice and Transportation for relief and have filed antitrust suits, all to no avail. Lacking meaningful legal relief, the airlines have tried to bypass the GDSs by various means over the years, including through Direct Connect technology and the like. They have also tried to reduce the fees they pay to the GDS vendors by threatening to withhold some content, but with limited success. Particularly galling for the airlines is the fact that most fees they pay are passed through to travel agencies in the form of incentives. After all, they spent years nearly eliminating agency commissions only to see them partly restored as what they see as indirect commissions. Airlines have finally figured out how to bypass the GDSs, as agencies can now make NDC bookings directly or through a non-GDS intermediary company. The GDSs are scrambling to handle NDC bookings, as well, presumably collecting lower fees. While it is true that NDC can offer some enhanced services that are not available in the GDS, I believe that **the airlines' primary motivation is not better service but rather saving or reducing GDS booking fees**. For agencies, there are three major problems with NDC. **First**, bypassing the GDS entails a loss of GDS segment incentives, and bypassing can trigger GDS penalties under GDS contracts with market-share or volume quotas. **Second**, for NDC bookings handled through the GDS, it is not yet clear to what extent NDC bookings will earn incentives or count toward quotas. Even under new GDS contracts, the vendors' commitments are somewhat vague. **Third**, records of NDC bookings made outside the GDS cannot yet be integrated into agency mid- and back-office systems without additional costs per transaction. These costs diminish any benefit of being able to offer additional services. Until the airlines address these problems, **NDC will not be a success**.

*90 All-Female Crew Flights: Air India Group Marks International Women's Day



To celebrate International Women's Day this year, the Air India Group has assigned over 90 flights to be operated by an all-female crew. These flights have been operating since the start of this month in the run-up to Women's Day on March 8th. Air India, Air India Express, and AirAsia India have scheduled over 90 all-women crew flights to celebrate International Women's Day. These special flights have been operating internationally and domestically since March 1st. The number also signifies the 90th Anniversary of JRD Tata's first commercial flight. In addition to the cockpit and cabin crew, most of these flights will be served by women dispatchers, safety and quality auditors, loaders, engineers, and security. Campbell Wilson, CEO and Managing Director of Air India commented, "**India has the largest number of commercial women pilots in the world and with more Indian women pursuing careers in aviation, we are achieving gender equality in the workforce. We are proud of the women workforce with us at Air India today, and we thank each of them for sending out a powerful message that women can excel in any field.**" Air India is not new to operating all-women crew flights and has been doing so for four decades now to various international and domestic operations. It also operated the world's first all-women crew flight across the globe from Delhi to SFO, besides flying a similar flight charting the polar route. Of the 90+ flights operated by all-women cockpit and cabin crew, Air India is flying 40 flights across domestic and international locations. In contrast, Air India Express operates ten allinternational flights to the Gulf route, and AirAsia India operates over 40 flights within India.

***Akasa Air Carries Over One Million Revenue Passengers In First Six Months**



Akasa Air's Co-Founder and Head of Operations, Neelu Khatri, spoke about the startup carrier's success in the Indian market. The highlight has been carrying over **one million revenue passengers** in just over six months of operations. These numbers are only going to continue to rise as the carrier inducts more aircraft and adds international destinations to its network by the end of 2023. Launching an airline in India is not an easy process, with several regulatory and

financial hurdles to cross before taking off. But Akasa has taken all of this head-on, launching operations on August 7th with two Boeing 737 MAX 8s delivered new. In the seven months since then, almost to the day, the carrier has carried over one million revenue passengers, according to Head of Operations Neelu Khatri. "Converting a business plan into an actual business model has been a lot of hard work but very enriching. Today we have launched operations to more than 14 destinations in India, and we are satisfied. But there is no time to sit back and relax. We have done about a million plus revenue passengers in these six months with about 700 weekly flights," he added further. The next big target for expansion at Akasa Air is the international market. To do so, the DGCA requires a carrier to operate 20 planes and meet other standards. Usually, this is a process that takes airlines a few years (the government previously needed five years of operations, too), but not for the startup airline. Akasa boasts a fleet of 19 737 MAX 8s. If the current timeline is anything to go by, the carrier will almost certainly hit 20 jets by the start of the summer. Until then, the airline is busy growing its network across the country. With a presence in all major hubs and leisure markets, the carrier can now begin challenging existing players with higher frequencies and lower fares.

***Cambodia is pushing sports tourism as part of its -Visit Cambodia Year 2023:**



Cambodia is pushing sports tourism as part of its **-Visit Cambodia Year 2023** -campaign as it gears up to host the **Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games)** for the first time in May. **Prak Vuthy, director of the Ministry of Tourism's overseas marketing** and promotion department, said the games would serve as a catalyst to promote sports tourism nationwide. "This year will see Cambodia host the SEA Games and ASEAN Para Games, which is a big thing for Cambodia," he remarked. Both events are expected to attract between 250,000 and 500,000 international tourists. The SEA Games will take place from **May 5 to 17**, followed by the **ASEAN Para Games 2023** from

June 3 to 9. Prak added that Cambodia annually hosts many sporting events that attract visitors from across the globe, including the Angkor Half Marathon in December and Ultra-Trail Angkor in February, and various international cycling events as well. He added that Cambodia's southern coastline is also perfect for water activities, including sailing and yachting, with more sports-driven itineraries being drawn up.

***US moving Hyderabad Consular Services to Nanakramguda on March 20:**



Starting March 20, the US Consulate Hyderabad will begin consular services from its new and state-of-the-art **\$340 million Consulate building in Nanakramguda** here. The new consulate building represents a tangible investment in growing the US-India Strategic Partnership and the US Consulate General Hyderabad announced changes for Consular service. The services in the new Consulate will begin on **March 20 at 8.30 am**. The current operations at the Paigah Palace will cease at 12 noon on March 15 and the Consulate will be closed

to the public from 12 noon on March 15 until 8.30 am on March 20. Visa applicants who have a visa interview scheduled between March 8 and 15 should go to Paigah Palace for their interviews and those with a visa interview scheduled on or after March 23 should go to the US Consulate's new facility in Nanakramguda. All other visa services – including biometrics appointments, "drop box" appointments (interview waiver), and passport pickup – will continue to take place at the **Visa Application Center (VAC)**, located at the Lower Concourse, **Hitec City Metro Station**, Madhapur.

*Indian aviation market large enough to 'accommodate all players profitably': Emirates



Indian aviation market is "large enough to accommodate all players profitably" and irrespective of what competitors do, the airline is focused on its strategies, leading Gulf carrier Emirates has said amid Air India ramping up its fleet and operations. Emirates, which operates only wide-body A380s and B777s, flies to nine Indian cities and operates 167 weekly flights to the country. A senior Emirates executive said the expansion of Air India might push airports to improve their services,

which will be a positive development for all other airlines, Indian customers as well as the aviation and travel industries as a whole. "Air India flying to new international routes might also have a positive (effect) on Emirates. When a new route is operated by an airline, then that could result in increased traffic demand and the particular airline might not be able to cater to the demand. "As a result, the potential customers will look at other carriers and that can have a positive impact," **Mohammed Sarhan, Vice President - Emirates**, told during a recent interaction. Tata Group-owned Air India has placed orders for 470 new aircraft, including 70 wide-body planes., as the carrier embarks on overseas expansion plans that will also help provide more direct connectivity for Indians to international destinations. To a query related to Air India and competition in the Indian market, Sarhan said that competition is there and irrespective of what competitors do, "we are focused on our strategies". He asserted that "the market is large enough to accommodate all players profitably". Emirates is bullish on the Indian market and is keen to have more bilateral so that it can operate more flights. Emirates, which currently has 263 planes in its fleet and flies to more than 140 destinations, has embarked on a retrofit programme for 120 of its existing A380 and B777 planes. The programme is expected to be completed in 2025. As part of the programme, the number of economy seats in both types of aircraft will be reduced to introduce premium economy class seats. "A380 and B777 will have around 56 premium economy class seats, and the refurbishment of planes is on, and planes on some routes already have premium economy class seats," Sarhan said.

*Tulip paradise at The Parisian Macao:



This spring, **The Parisian Macao** is transforming into a **romantic Tulip Garden**, allowing guests to enjoy giant Instagram-able tulip installations and floral projection shows from now till May 31. The Parisian Macao's Rotunda will transport guests to a breath-taking Tulip Garden, featuring about 50 five-meter-tall tulip artworks around the Fontaine des Mers, each hand-painted by renowned Chinese artist Xuan Qing, bringing romance and the charm of springtime to The Parisian Macao's French architecture. A matrix of

golden tulips is showcased at Level 3 of Shoppes at Parisian, where a Floating Magic Tulip Garden along the 20-metre **Avenue des Champs-Élysées** will create a fantastic visual impact. The installation will be illuminated with spotlights at dusk, filling the place with shining images of tulips akin to a floral dreamland. In addition, there is also a Floral Projection Show at Place Vendôme at Level 3 of Shoppes at Parisian.

*MoCA asks airlines to do feasibility study to operate direct flights from Chennai to Penang



Ashwin Gunasekaran

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has asked airlines to do a feasibility study to operate direct flights from Chennai to Penang, a province in Malaysia. The decision was conveyed by **minister of civil aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia** in a letter to **Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin**. This was in response to a letter written by Stalin to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on February 11. He had stressed on the importance of having a direct flight to Penang because of the presence of **Tamil diaspora** and the cultural and trade ties between Penang and Tamil Nadu. Penang has been pushing the Indian government for direct flight connectivity from Chennai. During a road show in the city last month, Ashwin Gunasekaran, CEO, Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau (PCEB), said, "The Penang state government will offer a cash incentive to any airline for operating direct connecting flights from any city in India to Penang."

***Around 900 tourists stranded in Sikkim due to heavy snowfall**



Around **900 tourists travelling in 89 vehicles** were stranded due to heavy snowfall while returning to the Sikkim capital from **Nathula and Tsomgo Lake** on Saturday evening, police said. The evacuation process, in collaboration with Army, was underway and 15 vehicles were rescued so far, a police officer said. The heavy snow is being cleared slowly and the rescued vehicles leaving for Gangtok, 42 km away, he said. Some tourists may have to spend the night at a nearby camp of the Army, which has promised all required help for the stranded tourists, the officer added. The administration had recently stopped issuing passes for Nathula and Tsomgo Lake for a few days due to heavy snowfall in East Sikkim.

***Cambodia's tourism made USD 1.41 bn revenue in 2022**



Cambodia's tourism earned a gross revenue of USD 1.41 billion in 2022, a 669 per cent rise compared to the year before, said a Ministry of Tourism report released on Friday. The Southeast Asian country received 2.28 million international tourists in 2022, up 1,058 per cent from a year earlier. "Tourism industry contributed 3.6 per cent to Cambodia's gross domestic product (GDP) last year," the report said. In average, a tourist stayed two nights and three days in Cambodia, it noted. Tourism Minister Thong Khon said the kingdom is expected to attract 4 million international

visitors in 2023. Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting Cambodia's economy. The country has three world heritage sites, namely the Angkor archaeological park in northwest Siem Reap province, Preah Vihear Temple in northwest Preah Vihear province, and Sambor Prei Kuk archaeological site in central Kampong Thom province. Besides, it has a pristine coastline stretching in the length of 450 km in four southwest provinces of Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong.

***AirAsia India, DGCA partner to integrate Pilot Flight Duty Logbook on the eGCA platform**



Air Asia India partnered with the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** to integrate the **Pilot's Flight Duty Logbook** directly from its Crew Management system to the **eGCA platform**. "We are proud to collaborate with DGCA in integrating our Crew Management System with eGCA's LogBook API.

This initiative is a significant step towards improving the efficiency and transparency of the aviation industry and also contributing to sustainability. By eliminating the need for pilots to manually update their Pilot LogBooks, we are simplifying the process and making it more user-friendly. This initiative in conjunction with DGCA is a testament to our commitment to innovation and digitization, and we are excited to continue working towards making services simpler and more user-friendly for pilots," said Manish ppal, Head of Operations, AirAsia India. This initiative will eliminate the need for pilots to hand-fill their flight and simulator duties carried out during their career in physical logbooks. Pilots were traditionally required d to update their Pilot LogBook in physical logbooks, as required by the MOCA's Aircraft Rule, 1937 (67A)

Quotes for Thoughts

- The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.
- If life were predictable it would cease to be life and be without flavor. -Eleanor Roosevelt
- If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more.
- If you look at what you don't have in life, you'll never have enough. -Oprah Winfrey
- Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans.
- If you set your goals ridiculously high and it's a failure, you will fail above everyone else's success – James Cameroon

***Knowledge Series: Income Tax:** By H.M. Talha Rahaman, Chartered Accountant, Consultant IT Matters
(Session -2, Continued from Last Issue):



Part 4: Expenses not allowed as deduction: Under the Income Tax Act, 1961, certain types of expenses are not allowed as deductions from the income of the taxpayer for the purpose of computing taxable income. The following are some of the major types of expenses that are not allowed as deductions under the Income Tax Act, 1961:

- a. Personal expenses: Any expenses incurred for personal purposes, such as expenses related to personal travel, personal entertainment, or personal gifts, are not allowed as deductions.
- b. Capital expenditure: Any expenditure incurred for acquiring, constructing, or improving a capital asset, such as land, building, plant, or machinery, is not allowed as a deduction. However, depreciation on such assets is allowed as a deduction.
- c. Interest on borrowed capital for certain purposes: Interest on borrowed capital is not allowed as a deduction if the borrowed capital is used for certain purposes, such as for earning tax-free income, for making investments that do not generate taxable income, or for acquiring a life insurance policy.
- d. Expenses incurred for non-business or non-professional purposes: Any expenses incurred for non-business or non-professional purposes, such as expenses incurred for personal hobbies or interests, are not allowed as deductions.
- e. Penalty or fine paid to government: Any penalty or fine paid to the government for violation of any law or regulation is not allowed as a deduction.
- f. Contribution to political parties: Any contribution made by a taxpayer to a political party is not allowed as a deduction.

It is important to note that the list of expenses that are not allowed as deductions is not exhaustive and there may be other types of expenses that are disallowed as deductions under the Income Tax Act, 1961. Taxpayers should consult a tax expert or refer to the Income Tax Act, 1961, for detailed information.

PART – 5: Compliances under the Income Tax Act, 1961

The Income Tax Act, 1961, lays down various compliances that taxpayers are required to fulfil. Some of the major compliances under the Income Tax Act, 1961, are as follows:

1. Filing of Income Tax Returns (ITR): Every person whose income exceeds the basic exemption limit, which is currently Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum, is required to file an income tax return on or before the due date specified under the Income Tax Act, 1961. The due date for filing income tax returns for individuals is usually July 31st of the assessment year. For other entities like Partnership, Companies, filing of ITRs is mandatory without any threshold limits.
2. Payment of Advance Tax: If the tax liability of a taxpayer is likely to exceed Rs. 10,000 in a financial year, the taxpayer is required to pay advance tax in instalments during the financial year. The due dates for payment of advance tax are specified under the Income Tax Act, 1961.
3. Tax Deducted at Source (TDS): If a person makes any payment that attracts TDS, such as salary, commission, interest, rent, or professional fees, the person is required to deduct tax at the applicable rate and deposit it with the government within the specified due dates.
4. Tax Collected at Source (TCS): If a person makes any sale of specified goods or services, the person is required to collect tax at the applicable rate and deposit it with the government within the specified due dates.
5. Maintenance of Books of Accounts: Every person who carries on a business or profession is required to maintain books of accounts and other records as prescribed under the Income Tax Act, 1961. The books of accounts and records should be maintained for a minimum period of six years from the end of the relevant assessment year.
6. Tax Audit: If the turnover or gross receipts of a business or profession exceed the specified limits under the Income Tax Act, 1961, the taxpayer is required to get the accounts audited by a chartered accountant and obtain a tax audit report.
7. Compliance with other provisions: Taxpayers are also required to comply with other provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, such as filing of quarterly TDS statements, furnishing of annual financial statements, and responding to notices and inquiries issued by the Income Tax Department.

It is important for taxpayers to comply with the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, to avoid penalties and legal consequences. **(to be continued in the next Issue.....)**