

### \*President Speaks:



Dear TAFI'ites,

You are reading the **last issue of this fortnightly Newsletter** which you have been regularly receiving for the last six months, created as a labour of love by our very own and well-known member, **Mr. Ananda Veloo from Chennai**. I have received calls from many members appreciating Mr. Ananda Veloo's dedication and punctuality in producing the Newsletter and complimenting him on the quality and relevance of the featured news and information. However, we have decided to upgrade our member outreach and to revive our monthly magazine **TAFI Connect**. It will be launched next month as a **20-pages magazine** to be published **electronically** and will be available on

**your desktop as well as in a mobile-friendly format**. Apart from news, it will carry articles of interest, destination features, updates and your letters. Of course, Mr. Ananda Veloo will continue his association with the **e-magazine as an Associate Editor**. Do write in with your comments once you receive the first issue.

**Business has picked up** substantially over the last few months and we are all hoping that it will continue to grow steadily as airlines augment capacity to cater to the pent-up demand. High airfares and the huge backlog of visa applications, resulting in inordinate delays, remain a major area of concern, but your Association has been in **regular touch with VFS** and the **Consulates** to try and find a way to speed up the process. **Enquiries for inbound traffic** have also started coming in and we anticipate a decent inbound season. **IATA** will implement the new formula for **RHC (Remittance Holding Capacity) from 4<sup>th</sup> July** when RHC is going to be **equal to the Financial Security** an agent has provided. Simultaneously, the irrational practice of airline capping is set to go and every airline is expected to permit an agent to issue tickets up to the RHC, to be monitored by IATA. While this might pose some temporary cash flow issues for some agents, the majority of **small and medium agents will benefit** if they are allowed to ticket under their **own validation**. This will also lead to a **healthier industry**. And if any airline does not honor this agreement, you should perhaps consider promoting a more friendly carrier. We are also in constant talks to **persuade** more airlines to accept **the agent's credit card** and will keep you posted. We would urge you to **register your card on the IATA Customer Portal** as that will give us a greater leverage when speaking with airlines. And lastly, a word of caution – though the **infections have come down radically in India**, the Covid virus hasn't gone away. It's actually making a comeback in some countries. So let us all behave **responsibly and not abandon all the hygiene protocols and safety measures** that we have rigorously followed in the last year or more. **Stay healthy, stay safe. Here's wishing for a good outbound and a strong inbound season.**

### \*Western India Chapter held a Knowledge session on TCS on 26 Apr



On 26th April 2022 Western India chapter has organized a knowledge session on TCS, at Jade Ball rooms, Worli, Mumbai. The session was co-hosted by **Bombino Express**. **Mr. Jitul Mehta**, Chapter Chairman, said that he had invited India's TOP consultants in this matter. There were 3 speakers. 1) **CA Dilip Thakkar** 2) **CA Rajesh Shah** and 3) **CA Vishal Shah**. There are partners in CA firm name **Jayantilal Thakkar & Co** (it's a 90 years old company). The session was attended by entire national committee along with **110 plus members** from Mumbai and Pune chapters. Speakers made the detailed presentation about **TCS** and how TCS is linked to **FEMA, RBI Regulations and ED regulations**. They guided our members about the law, the reporting systems of GOVT for foreign exchange remittance and about DOS and DONTs of TCS. They have also answered all

the questions and doubts raised by our members. Our members are very happy to attend such knowledge session as their lot of doubts and queries has been address. The session was followed by networking cocktail and dinner

### \*No more Covid-19 tests for vaccinated travellers entering Singapore from April 26



Travelers fully vaccinated against Covid-19 will no longer need to take any Covid-19 tests to enter Singapore from next Tuesday (April 26). This will thus help air and sea travellers save on testing fees and remove the hassle of having to book pre-departure tests before their trips to Singapore. The requirement had earlier been [removed for those who enter the country via the Causeway and the Second Link](#). The latest move means that the entry requirements for those who are vaccinated against Covid-19 will be almost restored to what it was before the pandemic. The Ministry of Health (MOH) announced the eased testing rules on Friday. Currently, air and sea travellers entering Singapore will need to take either a professionally administered Covid-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, or a recognized antigen rapid test (ART) before their trip. The ART can either be administered by a professional or supervised virtually by a recognized vendor. **Transport Minister S. Iswaran** said on Friday evening that the air, land and sea transport sectors are working to scale up their manpower and operations. He added that, "We will closely monitor the local and global public health situation and remain ready to reinstate tighter public health measures, when necessary, in consultation with the Ministry of Health." Rules will however not be eased for travellers who are not fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and are aged 13 and above. Those who are **not fully vaccinated** but are allowed to enter Singapore will still have to take a **pre-departure test** within two days before departure for Singapore. They will also have to **undergo a seven-day stay-home notice** and take a Covid-19 PCR test before the end of the stay-home notice.



### \*US to process 8 lakh visas in next 12 months, says American diplomat



The United States embassy in India is likely to process about 8 lakh visas over the next 12 months, a senior diplomat said in Chennai on Tuesday. Addressing reporters here, Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs at the US embassy, Donald L Heflin said, "8,00,000 visas are projected to be issued in the next 12 months. we opened a lot of slots for processing the visas, we think of eventually meeting the demand of H and L visas." Asked about the total number of visas issued before the outbreak of Covid-19, he said 1.2 million visas were issued. He also expressed hope that the visa processing would reach pre-Covid-19 levels sometime in 2023 or 2024. "Pre-Covid-19 1.2 million visas were issued. We hope to reach that level sometime in 2023-24," Heflin told. The consular offices were also ramping up staffing across India and the visa processing would be supported by the rise in headcount at these offices. ". Visa processing was done by 50 per cent of the staff (due to Covid-19)." "We are opening a new big building in Hyderabad. We are adding more staff in New Delhi, Mumbai. Already there is 100 per cent staff in Kolkata," he noted. To a question on the consulate setting up a dedicated helpline to address queries raised by visa applicants, the Minister Counselor said all the consulates already have a dedicated phone number as well as an e-mail address which visa applicants can contact for assistance with their appointments. Queried whether Indian visas were 'put-on-hold' due to Covid-19 pandemic, he said, 'not that high (number of visas were put on hold).. but keep an eye as we are going to make more announcements on student visas in the coming weeks. In a major setback to student aspirants, the US Embassy in Delhi has announced that if students are refused a US visa the first time, they will be unlikely to get a second interview slot this year.

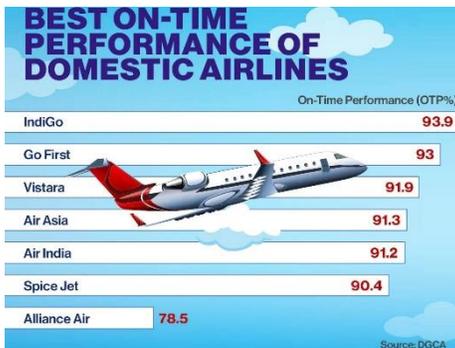
### \*Thailand lifts RT-PCR requirement for vaccinated tourists from May 1



The Centre for Covid-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) on 22 Apr rescinded the requirement for fully vaccinated foreign tourists to undergo the **expensive RT-PCR test upon arrival**. The Centre, which convened a meeting chaired by PM Prayut Chan-o-cha on Friday, approved the proposal put forward by the Public Health Ministry's academic committee and an emergency disease control panel. Currently, foreign tourists and Thais returning from overseas are required to undergo an RT-PCR test even if they have taken all their

Covid-19 shots. The tourism sector and hotel operators have been repeatedly calling on the government to abolish this requirement because this added cost burden is driving tourists to countries that do not require any additional tests. Under the new setup, vaccinated travellers will be advised to test themselves regularly using rapid antigen test kits. If they test positive, they can seek treatment under their insurance policy or should their medical costs themselves, the CCSA announced. Travellers who have not been vaccinated or have received just one shot will be required to undergo an RT-PCR test on arrival and on the fourth or fifth day of their stay in the Kingdom, the CCSA added. They will also be required to quarantine for 10 days. The required insurance coverage will also be halved to US\$10,000, the CCSA said.

### \*Air passenger traffic surges 6.1% in Jan-March; IndiGo reports best 'on time performance'



Domestic air passenger traffic in the January-March period surged to 248 lakhs, compared to 233.83 lakh in the corresponding period last year, an increase of 6.1 per cent, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. In March alone, the domestic carriers carried 106.96 lakh passengers, which was 36.7 per cent higher as compared to February 2022 when the monthly domestic traffic stood at 78.22 lakh, according to DCGA. "Passengers carried by domestic airlines during Jan-March 2022 were 248.00 lakhs as against 233.83 lakhs during the corresponding period of previous year thereby registering annual growth of 6.06 per cent and monthly growth of 36.74 per cent," the DGCA report said. Private carrier IndiGo continued to maintain its lead position, with a market share of 54.8 per cent during the month of March. The numbers marked a rise as compared to February, when the airline's market share stood at 51.3 per cent. Tata aviation pack's (Air Asia, Air India, Vistara) total market share is at 24.5 per cent, while Go First's market share is at 9.7 per cent, SpiceJet at 10.2 per cent and Alliance Air at 1.4 per cent. Air India's market share slipped to 8.8 per cent in March, compared to 11.1 per cent in February, the report said. The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines for the month of March has been 0.30 percent, the DGCA said. During the same period, a total of 458 passenger related complaints had been received by the domestic airlines, the aviation body said, pointing out that the maximum number of complaints, 183, was registered by Air India. There were 853 passengers that were denied boarding at the compensation of Rs 27.60 lakh, while 7,582 passengers were affected by cancellations at the cost of Rs 14.67 lakh worth of compensation and facilities. About 1,41,840 passengers were affected due to flight delays with facilities worth Rs 48.14 lakh.

### [\\*Airports to attract Rs 1 trillion investment in 4 years: Aviation Minister](#)



The government expects an investment of close to a trillion rupees on India's **airports** in the next four years, as it aims to get more people to fly, said the aviation minister Thursday. The aim is to increase the number of airports to 200 from 141 by 2025-26 said **Jyotiraditya Scindia** as the India Economic Conclave. Of the planned Rs 98,000 crore, Rs 22,000 crore will be spent by the state-run Airports Authority of India on building terminals and other infrastructure at existing airports, while Rs 3,300 crore will be spent on greenfield airports in Itanagar and locations in Gujarat. The private sector is expected to spend Rs 67,000 crore on the seven privately run airports apart from greenfield projects in Navi Mumbai, Goa and Greater Noida. Scindia said the Govt., has built 67 new airports in the last 8 years, adding to the 74 that were operational when it took over in 2014. Scindia said air travel demand is rising post Covid. Daily traffic touched 407,000 on Sunday crossing pre-Covid levels for the first time since the pandemic began. Scindia said India handled 144 million passengers in 2019-20 and he expects it to rise to 400 million in 2025-26. The biggest airports in India will add a passenger handling capacity of 250 million in the next few years, Scindia said, that while jet fuel is now five times higher than what it was two years ago, he has been working to ease the tax burden. He said that when he took over as aviation minister, 12 states were charging VAT between 1%-4% while 24 states levied above 25%. Now 25 states charge 4% or below while 11 states charge high VAT on the fuel. Jet fuel accounts for 40% of an airline's operating costs.

### [\\*VietJet set to open four more routes between India and Vietnam](#)



Hanoi-based carrier VietJet on Wednesday announced four new flights linking India and Vietnam. Among them are Mumbai - Hanoi, Mumbai - Ho Chi Minh City, New Delhi - Phu Quoc and Mumbai - Phu Quoc. The airline said that the direct services from Mumbai to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi will commence operation on June 3 and June 4, with a frequency of four weekly return flights and three weekly return flights respectively. "From September 9, onwards, the Mumbai - Phu Quoc route will operate four round trips per week while the New Delhi - Phu Quoc will operate with a frequency of three round trips per week," it added. Prior to the pandemic, VietJet had operated two direct routes linking India's capital city of New Delhi with Vietnam's capital city of Hanoi and the financial hub of Ho Chi Minh City in addition to charter flights from Vietnam to Bodh Gaya, the Indian Buddhist pilgrimage site. The two existing services between New Delhi and Ho Chi Minh City/Hanoi will soon resume, on April 29 and April 30, respectively, with a frequency of three weekly return flights on each route.

### [\\*CBI FIR against Naresh Goyal likely for allegedly defrauding banks](#)

The Central Bureau of Investigation (**CBI**) is likely to soon file a first information report (FIR) against **Jet Airways** promoter **Naresh Goyal** and his close aides for allegedly defrauding banks and misappropriating loans sanctioned by them. This follows an internal preliminary enquiry, which found that the allegations are prima facie true, said people aware of the development. "Jet Airways is one of the many cases that is pending before the Maharashtra government for seeking general consent so as to register a case in Mumbai. Once the same is awarded, FIR can be registered in the case," said one of the persons quoted above.

### \*Ayush visa for foreigners who want to come to India for traditional treatments soon.



Speaking at the inaugural session of the **Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit 2022** at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, PM Modi said that the Centre has a plethora of initiatives to encourage and promote the Ayush sector. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** announced on 20 Apr that the Centre would soon introduce a special Ayush visa category for foreign nationals who want to come to India to take advantage of traditional medicine, as part of initiatives to promote medical tourism. “With this visa, it will make travel easier for accessing **Ayush therapies** (in India),” said PM Modi while speaking at the inaugural session of the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit 2022. He added that the Centre has a plethora of initiatives to encourage and promote the Ayush sector, including the establishment of a digital portal to connect medicinal plant farmers with Ayush product manufacturers. World Health Organization (WHO) chief **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, Mauritius Prime Minister Pravin Kumar Jugnauth, Union Ayush Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** and Gujarat Chief Minister **Bhupendra Patel** were present at the session. Adding that investment summits are key in taking any sector forward, Modi highlighted that the idea for an Ayush summit came to him during Covid-19 “when there was widespread panic across the world”. “We saw how ayurvedic medicines, Ayush kada and many such other products were aiding people to increase immunity. During the times of Covid-19, turmeric export from India increased manifold. Innovation and investment increase the capability of any sector manifold. It is time now to increase investment as much as possible in the Ayush sector,” said Modi.

### \*Tourism Malaysia on 6-city tour to woo Indian tourists:



**Tourism Malaysia** is on a six-city tour of India to woo back tourists with the resumption of regular flights between Malaysia and India. After India allowed regular international passenger flights on March 27 and Malaysia reopened its borders on April 1, the number of flights between the two countries has reached **76 per week**. More flights are in the offing and this is expected to reduce fares on the Malaysia-India route, Tourism Malaysia officials said. A Malaysian tourism industry group, comprising travel agents, hoteliers and operators of tourist attractions, kicked off a roadshow in **Delhi** on **18 Apr**. Besides the Indian capital, roadshows are being organised in **Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai**, from April 18 to 30. “This is our first major international campaign since the reopening of Malaysia’s borders,” said **Manoharan Periasamy**, a senior director in Tourism Malaysia’s international promotion division. “India is one of our important sources of tourists, so this is the right time to conduct such a roadshow.” The roadshows are aimed at instilling confidence among Indian travellers that Malaysia is fully prepared to welcome back tourists, he said. **Sulaiman Suip**, director of Tourism Malaysia’s New Delhi office, said **AirAsia, Malindo Air** and other airlines are planning to connect more Indian cities with Kuala Lumpur this year. Malaysia recorded 735,309 Indian tourist arrivals in 2019 compared with 600,311 in 2018, according to Malaysian data. India was the seventh biggest source of foreign arrivals for Malaysia before the pandemic. Malaysia has removed quarantine requirements for international travellers who are fully vaccinated against Covid 19. It requires an RT-PCR test two days before departure and travellers must undergo an RTK-Ag test within 24 hours upon arrival in Malaysia.

### \*Czech Republic eases travel restrictions



**Travellers will no longer need to fill in an arrival form or submit proof of vaccination or a previous infection when returning from abroad.** However, it is still recommended travellers to verify the conditions of transport (including proof of infectivity, i.e. test, vaccination, illness) directly with the agreed public transport carrier (plane, bus, train). **Jan Herget, director at Czech Tourism**, said: “The Czech Republic has maintained its place in the world’s top ten – between Ireland and Canada. This topic is important in the marketing communication of the destination across segments, both towards the tourists themselves and especially at the level of B2B marketing, when it is necessary to assure our partners from large travel agencies or conference organisers that the Czech Republic is an objectively safe place for their clients.”

### \*Tourism sector to create 126 million new jobs within next decade, says WTTC



**The World Travel & Tourism Council’s latest Economic Impact Report (EIR)** reveals the tourism sector is expected to create nearly **126 million new jobs within the next decade**. The bullish forecast from the World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)), which represents the global Travel & Tourism private sector, also shows the sector will be a driving force of the global economic recovery, creating one in three of all new jobs. The announcement was made today by **Julia Simpson, President & CEO of the World Travel**



**& Tourism Council**, in her opening speech at its prestigious Global Summit in the **Philippines**. The prediction, before more than 1,000 delegates from across the global Travel & Tourism sector, including CEOs, business leaders, government ministers, travel experts and the international media. The EIR report shows Travel & Tourism’s GDP is forecasted to grow at an average rate of 5.8% annually between 2022-2032, outstripping the 2.7% growth rate for global economy, to reach US\$ 14.6 trillion (11.3% of the total global economy). And in additional grounds for optimism, the report also shows global Travel & Tourism GDP could reach pre-pandemic levels by 2023 – just 0.1% below 2019 levels. The sector’s contribution to GDP is expected to grow a massive 43.7% to almost US\$ 8.4 trillion by the end of 2022, amounting to 8.5% of the total global economic GDP – just 13.3% behind 2019 levels. This will be matched by a boost in Travel & Tourism employment, which is expected to approach 2019 levels in 2023, only 2.7% below. **Julia Simpson**, said: “Over the **next decade** Travel & Tourism will create **126 million new jobs worldwide**. In fact, one in three of every new job created will be related to our sector. Looking to this year and the next, WTTC forecast a brighter future with both GDP and employment set to reach pre-pandemic levels by next year. The recovery in 2021 was slower than expected due in part to the impact of the Omicron variant but mainly due to an uncoordinated approach by governments who rejected the advice of the World Health Organization, which maintained that closing borders would not stop the spread of the virus but would only serve to damage economies and livelihoods. Looking back a year, WTTC’s latest EIR report also revealed that 2021 saw the beginning of the recovery for the global Travel & Tourism sector. Its contribution to GDP climbed an impressive 21.7% year on year, to reach more than US\$5.8 trillion. The sector saw a recovery of more than 18 million global Travel & Tourism jobs, representing a positive 6.7% rise in 2021.

### \*Qatar Airways, IndiGo restart partnership; to offer over 340 flights to 13 Indian cities



Qatar Airways and IndiGo have announced that they are reactivating their strategic cooperation following the lifting of suspension on international scheduled flights by the Indian government. Under this agreement, Qatar will operate 190 flights per week to and from 12 destinations in India including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru,



Chennai, Kochi, Kozhikode, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Goa, Kolkata, and Thiruvananthapuram. IndiGo, on the other hand, will operate 154 flights per week between Doha and Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi, Kozhikode, and Kannur. Qatar Airways will place its marketing code on IndiGo operated flights between Doha and Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, starting from April 25, and Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Kozhikode, starting from May 9. Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker said, "The reactivation of our strategic partnership with IndiGo is another milestone in the development of aviation between the State of Qatar and India. Together, both Qatar Airways and IndiGo will offer over 340 flights per week to 13 destinations in India. Never before has our partnership with IndiGo been stronger and the resumption of our strategic cooperation demonstrates the resilience, agility and commitment both partners have shown in overcoming the challenges of the pandemic." Ronojoy Dutta, Whole time Director and Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo added, "With the easing of restrictions, we believe that this will create economic growth through IndiGo's seamless nationwide connectivity." Members of Qatar Airways' loyalty programme 'Privilege Club' will be able to earn Avios on all code-share flights operated by IndiGo. The airline's baggage rules will apply to all code-share flights.

### \*Working to improve air connectivity between Gujarat and Mumbai, says Jyotiraditya Scindia



Union Civil Aviation Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** on Saturday said his ministry was working to improve air connectivity between **Gujarat** and the country's financial capital **Mumbai**. He was in **Keshod** in the state's Junagadh district to inaugurate the upgraded airport and flag off an Alliance Air flight to Mumbai under the Centre's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)-UDAN scheme. Revived by the **Airports Authority of India** (AAI)



at an investment of Rs 25 crore, the airport at Keshod will see its first flight connecting it to Mumbai, with Scindia adding that Keshod will soon get connected by air to Ahmedabad as well. "In the coming days, we plan to provide maximum connectivity to Gujarat," Scindia said at the programme attended by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and State Civil Aviation Minister Purnesh Modi. He said two greenfield airports will be developed in Gujarat, with an annual capacity of 25 lakh and 30 lakh passengers respectively. Scindia said apart from two greenfield airports, five new flights, flights from Mumbai and Ahmedabad to Keshod, his ministry was present to fulfill the demands of the CM and the state civil aviation minister related to air connectivity. From April 27, a flight connecting Porbandar with New Delhi will start operating, Scindia announced. The Union civil aviation ministry had taken steps that were not taken in 75 years of the country and had "democratized" flights by making it affordable for even common people to board them, Scindia said.

### [\\*If you're flying out of Bengaluru now, your security screening will take just 25 seconds](#)



Flyers traveling via the Bengaluru Airport will have a shorter wait time for security check-ins. Bengaluru's Kempe Gowda International Airport (KIA) which restarted its 24-hour operations from Monday is the first airport in the country to introduce Automatic Tray Retrieval System (ATRS), according to media reports. "Using the ATRS, four trays can be pushed into the scanner at a time," the airport's spokesperson said. According to the report, this system will reduce the role of security officials during the

baggage screening process as the baggage and the separated valuables placed on the trays will reach the other end without the involvement of Central Industry Security Force officials at the spot, thus making them available for other duties. In addition to this, the airport authorities have also decided to add screens to ensure passengers also get to witness the screening process. "Earlier, the scanned baggage was displayed on a monitor in front of the CISF personnel, and passengers couldn't see the process. The additional screens will show passengers what the CISF officer is viewing," the spokesperson added. A News report on the same says the whole checking and frisking process can be done within 25 seconds for every passenger and adds if the security personnel suspects something untoward in any specific baggage, they have the option to divert it into a 'reject line'.

### [\\*Parliamentary Committee Recommends Biometric Screening for India's Airports](#)



India's **Parliamentary Standing Committee** on Transport, Tourism, and Culture is encouraging the country's Ministry of Civil Aviation (**MoCA**) to embrace biometric screening technology. The recommendation comes in the form of a report submitted during a budget session of Parliament



earlier this week, and is intended to help the country's airports deal with increasing passenger volume now that MoCA has lifted its COVID-19 restrictions. The problem, according to the Committee report, is that the screening technologies that India's airports are currently using are too cumbersome to deal with significant congestion. Volume has not yet reached its pre-pandemic levels, but it is rising rapidly (to the tune of 400,000 passengers on April 18 alone), and many airports are already experiencing lengthy backlogs during their peak hours of operation. With that in mind, the Committee is encouraging the Ministry to deploy full-body scanners to mitigate the need for physical frisks and searches. The technology would allow airports to process passengers more quickly, in a manner that better respects their privacy. The Committee's interest in biometric screening technologies comes from a similar place. Biometric tech would allow staff to verify people's identities at check-in and boarding gates, which would further reduce congestion at overcrowded airports. The Committee is especially keen on eye scanning because India already stores iris data for millions of citizens in its Aadhaar database, though the report suggested that MoCA should also be considering other modalities like face and fingerprint recognition. Facial recognition is becoming an increasingly popular screening option in airports all over the world. However, it is worth noting that Indian privacy advocates have opposed the use of the technology in the past.

### **\*Switzerland lifts all entry restrictions from May 2**



Switzerland, one of the favorite holiday destinations of international tourists, will be fully open for visitors from across the globe starting May 2, 2022. Switzerland's State Secretariat of Migration (SEM) has announced the lifting of all entry restrictions that it had put in place through the duration of the pandemic with effect from May 2. Switzerland is one of the most preferred holiday destinations for Indians. Commenting on the development, Ritu Sharma, Deputy Director, and Marketing Head - India,

Switzerland Tourism, said, "Switzerland tops the wish list of avid travellers across the world who have been waiting to visit the country these past two years without being burdened by paperwork. Now, they can! We look forward to hosting Indian travellers from May 2 onwards and can't wait for them to come and enjoy the wonder that is Switzerland." Switzerland had removed major Covid-19-related travel and entry restrictions around mid-February. With the latest announcement, the general rules that existed in the pre-pandemic times will be restored.

### **\*Cathay Pacific to resume scheduled flight services to India from May 4**



Hong Kong-based international airline Cathay Pacific on Thursday said it will resume scheduled flight services to India in a phased manner from May 4 onwards. Flight services on the Mumbai-Hong Kong route will resume from May 4, while the air connectivity between Hong Kong and Delhi will be restored from May 6, the airline said in a statement. The resumption of scheduled services will provide travellers direct

access to Hong Kong. Additionally, it will also provide onward connections to destinations including New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney, it said. "We are delighted to resume our flights from Mumbai and Delhi to Hong Kong, and look forward to welcoming passengers on-board," said Rakesh Raicar, Regional General Manager - South Asia, Middle East, Africa, Cathay Pacific. "With our onward connections to key destinations, we will also be able to accommodate the resurgent demand for international travel," he added. Cathay Pacific said it has also introduced a 'Fly Ready' programme that allows guests to conveniently upload COVID-19 test results and other required health documents before their flight.

### **\*TATAs make major reshuffle in Air India's top management, Nipun Aggarwal new CCO**

Air India Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Friday effected a major reshuffle in the top management of recently acquired airline, with Nipun Aggarwal appointed as Chief Commercial Officer and Suresh Dutt Tripathi as Chief Human Resources Officer. Aggarwal, who is also Senior Vice President at Tata Sons, replaces Air India veteran Meenakshi Malik, while Tripathi, who was Vice President of Human Resources at Tata Steel from 2012 to 2021, succeeds AI's Amrita Sharan. The order was issued by Chandrasekaran. Malik and Sharan were on Friday appointed as Advisors to the CEO of Air India, according to a company communication. As the Tata Group is yet to appoint the CEO of Air India, Malik and Sharan will currently be advisors to Chandrasekaran. Satya Ramaswamy, from Tata Consultancy Services, was appointed as Chief Digital & Technology Officer at AI. Rajesh Dogra was appointed as the Head of Customer Experience and Ground Handling at Air India. Air India, S Sandhu will continue to hold the charge of Chief of Operations at Air India, it noted. Another Air India veteran Vinod Hejmadi will continue to hold the charge as Chief Financial Officer, it mentioned.

**\*Passengers arriving by air into Australia should complete their Digital Passenger Declaration.**

All passengers arriving by air into Australia should complete the DPD. You can start a DPD seven days before your flight, but you must submit it before you depart for Australia. Passengers who do not complete a DPD before departing may face unnecessary delays on arrival in Australia. When filling out the DPD, you will need to:

- provide your contact details, including a contact phone number in Australia
- make a legally binding declaration in relation to your vaccination status
- make a declaration about your travel history in the last 14 days
- make a declaration that you are aware of the quarantine and testing requirements that apply when coming to Australia and in the state or territory you are landing and the penalties for non-compliance.

**Note:** Before you complete your DPD, check all other travel requirements for Australia. For a list of all documents you need before you travel see the information for [Vaccinated travellers](#) and [Unvaccinated travellers](#).

**\*US Consulate to open B1/B2 Visa First Time Interviews in September '22**

In a Notification from US Consulate said that “In September '22 we will begin interviewing B1/B2 first time applicants again -this is the last category to reopen. Will start booking those appointments in the coming weeks =plan flexibly as they will go fast and will add more appointments on a rolling basis.” Currently Renewal of valid Visa expired in last 48 months, it's generally possible to get drop box appointments within few months. Those wait times will shorten over a period of time.

**\*UAE Immigration will be Closed from 30 Apr to May, in observance of Eid-Al Fitr.**



UAE authority in a advice notified that, the immigration department in UAE will be closed in the observance of Eid Al Fitr. UAE Immigration Services will be suspended from Saturday 30 Apr to Wednesday, 08 May, and will resume work on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

**\*UK-bound Indians can transit via Amsterdam without Schengen/Transit visa, says KLM**

KLM said, UK bound passengers transiting on its flights via Amsterdam do not require Schengen Visa. However, it said this only for KLM and not for its partner airline Air France. “Indian nationals destined to the United Kingdom, do not require a transit/Schengen visa while transiting Amsterdam Schiphol, provided they hold a valid visa for the United Kingdom and comply with all applicable conditions in transit and entry conditions at destination. Passengers are personally responsible to ascertain eligibility.” Post Brexit, the EU has decided that non-EU citizens must have a transit Schengen visa to fly to the UK on transit flights of many of its member carriers. Swiss of Switzerland, which is not a part of the EU, is exempt from this requirement. The reason: Post Brexit, the EU has decided to “punish” the UK by insisting non-EU citizens must have a transit Schengen visa to fly to the UK on transit flights of its carriers, say top airline officials. Interestingly, Switzerland — which is not a part of EU — is spared this rule for its airline Swiss.

**\*Cambodia cuts quarantine period for unvaccinated travelers**

Cambodia has reduced the required quarantine period from two weeks to one for arriving travellers who are not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, acting after recording consistently low numbers of new infections in recent days. The Health Ministry also said that travellers arriving by air who have not been fully vaccinated must take a rapid antigen test on the last day of their quarantine.

### **\*British Airways cancels hundreds of its popular summer flights**



British Airways, the flag carrier airline of the United Kingdom, has slashed hundreds of flights on some of its most popular routes for the summer season due to staff shortages. According to the latest reports, UK's largest airline has already axed over 1,000 flights in little more than three weeks. Last Wednesday, 20 Apr, around 112 flights to European and Mediterranean destinations have been cut from the British Airways schedule, after 96 flights were canceled the day before. [British Airways](#) officials announced that the canceled daily flight to and from Miami would be picked up by American Airlines. Flights from London to Tokyo have been suspended for the rest of the summer 2022 season. There will be no flights to those destinations until September and October, respectively. British Airways CEO Sean Doyle has emailed customers saying, "We'll do everything we can to get you where you need to be." Just like the most of major international air carriers, British Airways is suffering from chronic staff shortages after laying off thousands of staff during the height of the coronavirus pandemic. The airline is now trying to urgently hire more workers to replenish its ranks.

### **\*India Suspends Tourist Visas For Chinese Citizens As Payback: Report**



The move appeared to be a response to Beijing stonewalling India's appeals about approximately 22,000 Indian students enrolled in Chinese universities who are unable to go back for physical classes. The neighboring country has till date refused to let them enter. These students had to leave their studies in China and come to India when the COVID-19 pandemic began in the beginning of 2020. In a circular issued on April 20 regarding India, the IATA said, "Tourist visas issued to nationals of China (People's Republic) are no longer valid." It said the following passengers are allowed to enter India: nationals of Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal; passengers with a residence permit issued by India; passengers with visa or an e-visa issued by India; passengers with an overseas citizen of India (OCI) card or booklet; passengers with a persons of Indian origin (PIO) card; and passengers with a diplomatic passport. The IATA also said that tourist visas with a validity of **10 years are no longer valid**.

### **\*UAE drops negative PCR tests for arrivals**



People arriving in the UAE through land points, and regardless of their vaccination status, will no longer have to present a negative pre-arrival PCR test under new rules. However, the rules, to be applied starting March 29, require them to undertake the rapid Exponential Deep Examination (EDE) and wait for the result before they are allowed entry into the country. All the vehicle occupants have to perform the EDE as a precondition to enter the country, the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority (NCEMA) and the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security announced, WAM news agency reported. The two authorities also stressed the need to adhere to the Green Pass protocol upon entering various events, tourist and cultural sites, and other places that require the presentation of Green Pass as a precondition for entry.