



# TAAI Newslines

An E-Bulletin



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## From the Desk of the President

**Dear Member Colleagues,**

I am delighted to address all of you in the first issue of Newslines for the year 2010. Let me begin by saying a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR to each and every one of you.

January has always been a month of hope and happiness for all of us right from our childhood & I still feel that come January every year, we are filled with new vigor, new grit and armed with a new determination to do better than ever before, as we stride out into the year.

Of course we cannot forget last January when we were feeling the first onslaughts of the zero commission and were holding rallies all over India, which issue now (as you all know) is awaiting a dictum from the legal arm of the Government of India.

2010 is going to be all about challenges. Some of the challenges facing the world today are to create jobs, alleviate poverty and to develop the human resources capable of sustaining our economy in the face of fast-increasing globalization and global competitiveness. Our trade too needs to impact on these challenges by realizing the full potential of our tourist arts, culture and new technology in social, economic, medical and special interest tourism besides nurturing creativity and innovation, and in promoting the diverse heritage of our nation. Often such visions remain a distant reality if most of our creative ideas and research outputs are collecting dust on the shelves of un-interested bureaucrats or on the shoulders of trusted but lazy individuals. We have to tackle this in the coming year.

My Committee and myself will face this daunting task and take up the challenge of ensuring tourism growth through new schemes and technologies which we shall share with you soon. We are working tirelessly to achieve this by being proactive, and this was reiterated by me at the beginning of our MC meeting Kuala Lumpur on 12th January

It is a well-known fact that the growth and prosperity of a developed country is the result of their performance and investment in research and development and the associated growth of their trade sector. Like many other countries around the world we have also recognised that tourism as economic growth can be achieved through



technology transfer and multi task training programmes.

Let us in the new year do away with systems with no access to facilities for the testing and promotion of innovative ideas. Let us delve on "value added" sectors that can lead to high figures both in the international and domestic market.

THE TURMOIL that hit financial markets in the third quarter of the year has taken a heavy toll on the travel industry, although India has seen growth in domestic air travel and foreign arrivals in December. Isn't it amazing that the South African tourist arrivals increase remains the biggest news story for the industry this year.

However, India must & still is optimistic about the medium to long term growth prospects of the industry and continues to invest significantly in global and regional destination marketing efforts.

Fiscal 2009 saw a number of significant changes in our travel and tourism industry. In terms of business operations, 2009 was quite successful – in spite of the extensive damage by terrorists alongside the economic downturn.

But what was most inspiring for my team and me in 2009, was the faith and trust all you dear members reposed in us and stood by us through thick and thin. Nothing can be more valuable to us than member support. In 2010 we desire to assist our membership all over India with schemes such as the TAAI IATA Bank Guarantee scheme, TAAI IATA Joint BSP training programs, new initiatives from our Tourism Council, new platforms for the entire membership and the Indian Travel Congress and more ventures like the E Platform as a support for domestic ticketing, TAAI IATA Certification Program, a revamped TAAI Web site

amongst others are the plans being finalized.

And my team and I would like to warmly thank everyone whose dedication helped us reach such goals in 2009 and look forward to the same support in the coming months.

So here's to a very purposeful year ahead with lots happening for the good in our industry.

And let me end by saying "To make an end is to make a beginning. Goodbye 2009 - . 2010 here we come!"

-- Rajji Rai  
President

## Editor's Note

Dear Colleagues,

Here is another year upon us and TEAM TAAI NEWSLINE is sure each and every one of you has welcomed 2010 into your home and work place with equal gusto and merriment.

We are also sure that when you look back at 2009, it was for our trade, a year of trials and tribulations - what with the economic meltdown and zero percentage commission and the terrorist attack on Mumbai which saw our travel and tourism figures going down.

But the good part is that we put on a brave show and weathered this tough year and now look forward to a year that will help us move on. Friends, Take 2010 full on! Our MC has just returned from a very fruitful meeting in Kuala Lumpur and we are giving a note on this for members to know the latest decisions reviewed by the President and the MC.

There is a lot happening in our Regions and Chapters and we shared this with you for your reading pleasure. There are other news items too for you to ponder on and like I have always mentioned, do give us your feedback if any by sending in a note to me.

So here is our FIRST newslines of 2010! READ ON!

ps: we are open to suggestions, if any

TEAM TAAI NEWSLINE

## TAAI MC MEET IN KUALA LUMPUR

TAAI M C held its 3rd M C meeting in Kuala Lumpur on 12th January, 2010 on a special invite from Dato Mirza Mohammed, Regional Director, Tourism Malaysia. The meeting focused on various issues and Mr Sunil Kumar, Hon Secretary General gives below some of the important decisions / subjects reviewed at the meet.

### Tourism Council Kicks Off.

The Tourism Council under leadership of Vice President, Mr. Jagdeep Rikhy will organize 5 Road Shows in co-operation with Turkish Tourism as a part of our initial program. A Cruise Carnival and Domestic Hotel packages roadshow also on the cards

### Tour Operator Study Programs

For the benefit of Agency Staff Tour Operator Study Programs are being planned under the Tourism Council for the year Also The FAMTAAISTIC Program will continue throughout 2010. Please visit the TAAI Website for FAMTAAISTIC offers.

### TAAI to initiate process

Extension of TAAI - IATA Joint Guarantee Scheme for the new members gets the MC's Nod. Our Hon Secretary General, Mr. Sunil Kumar will initiate the process with IATA. Once IATA approves our proposals, TAAI will open up the scheme for Members who desire to join the same.

### New Training Opportunities

BSP Training Programs for the benefit of staff to continue this year as well. TAAI will join hands with IATA to promote "IATA Qualification Programs". Managing Committee Member, Mr. N.M. Sharafudeen MC Member to initiate new training opportunities for our members.

### Creation of E Distribution Platform

M C approves the project of creating an E-Platform "SYSTEM ONE" for our Members. M C Member, Mr. N. G. Shankar along with a team including MC Member, Mr. Sanjay Datta and Hon Treasurer Mr. Iqbal Mulla will take this forward.

### National Sports Programs

An impressive sports agenda is on the anvil and members can look forward to some exciting sports activity. M C Member Mr. Sunil Notani will organise these programs on an all India level.

### TAAI Travel Awards program to continue.

Watch out for more news on this in our next issue !



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## Inter State Regional Conference of Tourism Ministers of Southern States/ Union territories

Mr. N G Shankar – Managing Committee member and Mr. Niranjana S Bhargava – Chairman TAAI Karnataka Chapter, were invited by the Government of India, Tourist Office to attend the open session with State Govt and trade representatives on the occasion of Inter-State Regional Conference of Tourism Ministers of Southern States/ Union Territories at Bangalore on 16th January 2010 at Vidhan Sudha

The session was Chaired by Mr. Sujith Bannerjee, Tourism Secretary GOI and co chaired by other Southern State Tourism Secretaries and Tourism Directors.

Mr. N G Shankar & Niranjana Bhargava requested the Tourism Secretary to allow TAAI, a premier Travel and Tourism body, to have a counter at the BIAL to service tourists as facilitation counter. The Director of Karnataka Tourism, Mr. Vishwanath Reddy mentioned that Karnataka Tourism was creating such a facility at The BIAL and they are willing to have this counter handled by TAAI. He has invited TAAI Karnataka Chapter to take this forward with Karnataka Tourism. This is a big achievement for TAAI Karnataka as members have been requesting for this facilitation counter for close to 10 years.

The rationalization of luxury taxes and interstate taxes to promote seamless tourism between southern states was also discussed and Mr. Jyotiramalingam, Principal Secretary, Dept of Tourism GOK said that he will take the lead to ensure that Karnataka is pro active in these tax issues to augment tourism growth.

# CHAPTER NEWS

## TAAI-Karnataka Chapter Presentation

Our TAAI-Karnataka Chapter invited Air India for a presentation followed by cocktails and snacks on 16th December, 2009 in Bangalore. Delegation from Air India included Mr. D. Murali , Area Marketing Manager, Mr. R.Sachin Passenger Sales Manager, Ms. Ruma, Sales, Ms. Bhama Cariappa-Sales, Mr. Anand - Sales. Mr. D. Murali gave a very impressive audio visual presentation on their products. Members were informed of various measures taken up by Air India to improve overall services and Mr Murali explained about their new fleets, on time performance, new routes etc. He along with his team assured members of their fullest co-operation and how they looked forward to working closely with TAAI members. The Karnataka Chapter committee comprising of Niranjana Bhargava- Chairman, B. Lokesh, Secretary and Anil Kumar – Treasurer thanked Air India, on behalf of members, for restoring commission, which was unprecedented and assured AI of their fullest co-operation and support. Mr Murali and team opined that the function indeed led to interesting interaction.



## Kerala State Tourism Awards

The Kerala State Tourism Awards function was held on the 04th January 2010 in Cochin. Hon. Union Minister for State for Agriculture & Fisheries Prof. K.V. Thomas gave away the prestigious awards to all those who contributed to making Kerala as one of the most desired and fastest growing tourist destinations in the World. Hon. Minister for Home, Vigilance & Tourism, Shri Kodiyeri Balakrishnan presided over the function.

TAAI was represented by Chapter Chairman Austin Varghese, who felicitated the Award Winners in the function. Also present were following Chapter members among the Award Winners such as M/s. Great India Tour Co.Pvt.Ltd, for having earned the maximum amount of foreign exchange for Kerala and M/s.Kerala Travels Interserve Ltd, for having introduced the most innovative project in the field of Tourism in the state.

The Kerala State Tourism Awards, instituted in 1991, salutes the spirit of hard work, ingenuity and enterprise that helps Kerala to stay ahead as a dynamic and exciting travel destination. The nominees for the award are evaluated and recommended by the Government Committee. "This annual awards function honours the best in the trade while inspiring higher levels of excellence." says chairman Austin Varghese.

## SAURASHTRA KUTCH CHAPTER HOLDS BSP TRAINING PROGRAMME

BSP Training program was organized for the benefit of all members of Saurashtra Kutch chapter at in Rajkot on 18/12/2009.

Over 35 enthusiastic members participated and the whole program was conducted free of charge which turned out to be a huge success, all thanks to members' tremendous support. After the welcome by the Chapter Chairman and his team the training commenced with a small talk by Devendra Shah (chairman) on TAAI and its activities. He then introduced the charismatic Mr Rodney D'cruz – IATA Manager - Passenger Services India. Mr Rodney's training program covered 1. current bsp training, 2. current bsp link training 3. bdr online, 4. web remittance, 5. current issues, 6. question and answer session.

The participants were of the opinion that Mr Rodney came across as a very affable, friendly person who kept the momentum going with his interactive session of question and answers, The Chapter too distributed chocolates to members who were raising queries related to bsp which actually managed to captivate a lot of interest amongst all the participants. All in all, it gave every participant an excellent platform to meet and greet each other and at the same time find solutions to the queries they were pondering over for long. Mr Rodney on his part thoroughly enjoyed the whole session. In conclusion, the Chairman presented a memento to Mr Rodney as a token of his acknowledgement. A vote of thanks was given by Mr J Lakhani. This IATA training program was a first of its kind and the Chapter was grateful to the Association for arranging such a fruitful and informative program.

## TAAI's T-20 CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Imtiaz Qureshi, Chairman, TAAI Andhra Pradesh Chapter, informs us that his chapter held an exciting fun filled T-20 cricket match on 20th of December between TAAI agents of AP Chapter Vs the Airline/CRS companies, at the Secunderabad Club cricket ground and subsequently followed by lunch. This was a well attended affair with over 125 people both from the



agents as well the airlines coming in. The teams consisting primarily the top management from both the sides who actively participated. The airlines won the toss and put the agents to bat which got them 138 runs after which they were all out. Soon the airlines took to batting & won the match with only one wicket in hand. It was a nail biting finish & the last 2 overs could have taken the match either way. Mr Prabhu Prasad of Smita World Travels was named as man of the match. Now, how about such matches all across India??



## South Gujarat Chapter

Mr Mukesh Patel, Chairman with Ms. Margaret Vice Consul, U. S. Consulate at his Chapter Meeting



## News from Western Region

### "3 Idiots .....The healing touch ?"

TAAI's Western Chapter sponsored the screening of the super hit movie ( 3 Idiots) in Mumbai on 24th Dec. 2009, It was a complete sell out and the entire industry, including member agents and airlines came in large numbers. It was also a pleasant surprise to see Mr. Foo, G.M, Singapore Airlines come for the same which helped in breaking the ice between SQ and the agents as the negotiations for commission had reached a deadlock and since the matter is now sub-judice, there was no justifiable reason to be dragging the issue since law take its own course. Though Mr Foo was travelling

out that very night, he made sure that he came before the screening to say a quick hello to his fellow agents, and hopefully Mr Aamir Khan has unknowingly done the travel agent fraternity a good deed, & hopefully the agent-principal relationship, which has been taking a battering of late, will start mending because this is a marriage where there is no divorce.



## Guess who met Shri. Dr. Manmohan Singhji, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Government of India ?

Well it is none other than our Chairman, Mr Haji Khazir Mohammed Dar and Secretary Mr. Shamim Ahmed Shah of J & K Chapter. It all happened like this. The PM was in Srinagar sometime back to inaugurate the country's highest broad gauge line from Anantnag to Qazigund. After this the Chief Minister Omar Abdulla had arranged for the tourism and hospitality sector in SXR to meet with the PM and express their views on their respective sectors. The subject was Revival & Promotion of Tourism to the State of J&K.

Mr Dar and Mr. Shamim, represented TAAI through its chapter and thanked the PM for sparing his valuable time with them. They apprised the PM of how TAAI - J&K Chapter is dedicated to the promotion of Tourism to all the three regions of J&K State (Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir) and how they have been doing aggressive promotion of Tourism since the turmoil in Kashmir started from 1990.

The Chairman and the Secretary sought the help of the PM to improve the state's Tourism industry as it was the largest employment generator, providing direct & indirect employment to more than 70% population of State and also Tourism in J&K has been termed by various economists as the mainstay of the economy of the state.

Some of the pleas they made to the PM amongst many others were for Super fast trains to run on daily basis from all the metros. cities of country to Jammu / Udhampur throughout the year, that Delhi | Srinagar | Leh | Delhi be declared as 2nd Golden Triangle so that ~ tourist inflow to J&K State is increased, that for Srinagar / Leh / Srinagar flight frequency to be enhanced also other international flights (One Hub in Asia & Europe should be permitted). That the Govt declare Visit Kashmir 2010., Visit Ladakh 2011., Visit Jammu 2012., that Airport entry passes to be given by the Civil Aviation | Airport Authority of India to Kashmir based recognized Travel Agents / Tour Operators. like in all parts of India.

Of course there were many issues that they had highlighted but the core point is that the PM was all ears to them and promised to look into all the issues as mentioned in their petition letter. And the good news is that they along with some other representatives from SXR may be called to Delhi in February for a second round of talks. Now that is called **"An Encouraging Sign" !!**



### TAAI TOURISM COUNCIL KICKS OFF

TAAI's Tourism Council under the aegis of Council Chairman Mr Jagdeep Rikhy, (our Vice President) in association with the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Turkey and Turkish Airlines is pleased to bring you Destination Turkey Workshop, the salient features of which are as follows.

- Tour Operators – this is an ideal opportunity to learn / upgrade your knowledge on the popular & fantastic destination Turkey
- A detailed presentation by Turkish Tourism and Turkish Airlines awaits you.
- One on One interaction with leading suppliers from Turkey
- Participants will receive TAAI Training Credit Points which will entitle you to be a preferred partner for NTO's for future promotions & fairs (but to earn these you need to be present for the entire duration of workshop from 1030 am till lunch.)
- This workshop is for TAAI accredited representatives or their senior staff who sell tours.

The workshop is being held in the following cities

--- New Delhi (28th January), Bangalore (1st February), Chennai (2nd Feb), Pune (3rd Feb), and Mumbai (4th Feb). YOU MAY CONTACT THE DELHI OFFICE / TAAI SECRETARIAT IN MUMBAI OR CHAPTER OFFICE BEARERS FOR FURTHER DETAILS IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND.

### VISA FEES WAIVED

Our Chairman of Allied Services Council, Mr Harkripal Singh informs us that up to 4 March 2010 Thailand has waived off Visa Fees. However, if you go through VFS you have to pay their handling charges.

### ALL ABOUT THE US VISA FORM DS-160!

Our Chairperson Northern Region, Jyothi Mayal is happy to inform members that her region with office bearers Secretary - Mr.A.S Gujral,



Hon.Treasurer - Mr. Rajan Sehgal had arranged a presentation of new visa form DS-160 by Mr.Martim L Lahm, Second secretary, Embassy of the United States of America on 15th January, 2010. Over 100 TAAI members participated in this presentation. This new visa form is applicable from 19 January 2010 which is a web based form. The presentation was supported by Mr.Charles F. Seten Visa council & Second Secretary and Mr.Robert B.Richards Consul chief, Non Immigrant visas. Needless to say the Question Answer session took a good 40 minutes as there were many queries and members were happy to get all their answers. Here are some Important tips on how to use DS-160

- Go to <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>, Scan and upload photo (check specification on website)
- Complete DS-160 online (Save often)
- Answer questions as thoroughly as possible—incomplete forms may not be accepted. Print barcode on laser printer.
- Pay HDFC visa application fee.
- Make VFS appointment-you need barcode number and fee receipt.

### Quote of the Month

*Everything happens to everybody sooner or later if there is time enough."*

-- George Bernard Shaw



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