

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

September to December is time once again for festivals galore. So many occasions to celebrate the spirit of life ! A lot of shopping and much travelling too. Honeymoon Travel, Leisure Travel, As and When You like Travel and so forth. Soaring airfares are not going to dampen the spirit of these vacation travelers. Although it is a case for thought.

TAAI Convention in Bengaluru

The wonderful news is that my Committee and myself have confirmed Bengaluru as the venue city for our 61st Annual Convention - The Indian Travel Congress. This prestigious event will be held from 13th to 16th December, 2013 at Vivanta by Taj - Yeshwantpur and is generating a lot of interest. Registration rates and flight details will soon be mailed to you. Be ready to pack your bags to attend a great Congress from TAAI.!

Industry Matters

As far as our industry matters are concerned , your Managing Committee and myself have been putting in sincere efforts in holding several interactive discussions with the airlines and the ministries concerned on the issues of important trade matters such as weekly payment, service tax matters, reduction of commission to IATA travel agents, details of which have already been circulated to all of you from time to time. In fact, more meetings are scheduled shortly and your Association is committed to continue its efforts to bring in the best possible results for the benefit of our membership. That MoCA is re-affirming travel agents' right to commission as per the Aircraft Rule 1935 and reported by the media is heartening indeed.

Roadshows

There have been numerous roadshows the past 2 months and TAAI members have been regularly attending and participating in their seminars and workshops as supported by your Association.

FAITH in Mumbai

FAITH came to Aamchi Mumbai and had 2 successful meets with the industry stakeholders. Read all about it on page 2.



Generally Speaking

it is heartening to learn that a lot of low-cost airlines from the Middle-East and South-East Asian countries are increasing their presence in South India, therefore, this initiative will help in promoting the region collectively in those markets as well. And of course - The fall of the Indian rupee ! This has seen the number of medical tourists to India jump by 40 per cent in the past six months, according to a study by the ASSOCHAM. But thankfully the Rupee is coming back to its glory!

There are many upheavals we are facing today in our business. Your Association is tackling them one by one and intimation to this effect is being sent to all of you regularly. Before I end let me mention that we look forward to a great participation from our dear members for our Convention in Bengaluru. So block those dates rightaway !

M Iqbal Mulla
President

Editor's Note

Dear Members,

Most of you dear members, have been waiting for news on the TAAI Convention. Well, no more waiting ! Bengaluru is the confirmed venue for this most awaited event in our travel and tourism industry. Read all about it on the next page. As mentioned by our President in his column, all IATA agents are excited by MoCA's re-affirmation of travel agents' right to commission.

This Newsline comes to you with lots interesting news so we hope you enjoy reading it.

Manoj Sogani
Editor

It is Bengaluru!!

Members, TAAI's 61st Indian Travel Congress, Annual Convention and Exhibition, is going to be held in the garden city of Bengaluru and now the IT Queen of India, at Vivanta by Taj – Yeshwantpur. So Kindly block the dates 13th to 16th December 2013, in your diary and get ready for a most fruitful and interesting convention.

Expert Speakers will enthrall you with their insights and inputs related to the industry and Panelists will involve you in meaningful debates.

There will be lots to sight-see and shop in and around this beautiful city whilst on the specially arranged tours alongwith the exciting pre and post Convention packages being put together just for you all.

We shall soon mail you the rates for the Registration along with other details.

BENGALURU HERE WE COME !

FAITH COMES TO MUMBAI !



FAITH - Federation of Associations In Tourism & Hospitality held its first ever Executive Meet in Mumbai on 30th August at the ITC Grand Central followed by meet titled Maharashtra Tourism & Hospitality Strategy Brainstorming wherein it focused on growing and debottlenecking the tourism & hospitality industry in Maharashtra. The insightful meet was chaired by Mr. Iqbal Mulla, our President and Hon Treasurer, FAITH and co chaired by Mr. Sarabjit Singh Vice Chairman, FAITH. Over 40 participants across the tourism and hospitality businesses representing the 10

member associations of FAITH attended. Later in the evening, the suggestions identified in the earlier meeting were presented to a cross functional panel of senior bureaucrats from the Maharashtra Government in a back to back meeting held with them at the Trident, chaired by Mr. Nakul Anand, Chairman, FAITH. Several points were mooted at this important meet that saw issues of our trade being brought to the table by different important voices of the industry.

There was no time for rest for the FAITH officials as on 31 st August there was another fruitful meet with TAAI / TAFI Members that explored the two key issues of commissions and service tax which are impacting the travel agents fraternity. The meeting was chaired by our President and Mr. Pradip Lulla, Honorary Secretary, TAFI. All in all, it was a successful event for FAITH.

IATO ANNUAL CONVENTION IN KOCHI



The 29th Annual Convention of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) was inaugurated on September 8, 2013 by Oommen Chandy, Chief Minister (CM) of Kerala, at Le Meridien, Kochi. The theme on "Innovations & Partnerships" was chosen with careful thought. At the 2nd Business session that was on "Making India an Aviation Hub" the panelists included Session Moderator - Kapil Kaul, CEO CAPA South Asia • Nishantha Wickremasinghe, Chairman, Sri Lankan Airlines • Subhash Goyal, President IATO • & CEO Stic Travels and our President



Iqbal Mulla. The session proved to be very interesting and insightful as the panelists debated and deliberated. Questions asked were "We have the facilities to have aviation hubs but are we missing the will? What do we need to do to make India a major aviation hub on the lines of Dubai, Frankfurt and others? TAAI President gave a very emphatic thought provoking presentation about how connectivity is the most important factor for increasing tourism in the country and how airports as a systematic approach for development are a must.

HON. TOURISM MINISTER OF MAURITIUS MEETS KEY TRAVEL TRADE OFFICIALS



The Hon. Minister Mr. Michael Sik Yuen, Ministry of Tourism & Leisure-Mauritius along with Ms.Premila Roy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Dr. Karl Mootoosamy Director, for Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority along with MTPA India visited Mumbai to engage the Travel Trade, Media & Wedding Planners and targeting niche Indian Audience.

The Minister's vision was to tap the new emerging outbound tourism segments and his aim was to expand and highlight the



diverse product offering of the destination within the Travel Trade Fraternity and other key stakeholders in India. President Mr.Mulla attended the session along with TAAI Managing Committee Member Mr Marzban Antia and Western Region Chairman, Mr Jay Bhatia. TAAI along with TAFI committee also expressed their interest in Mauritius. Said Mr Mulla "agents are very keen to highlight newer facets of Mauritius in the Indian market and enhance the Indian MICE segment movement into Mauritius."



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WESTERN REGION CONDUCTS VISA BRIEFING WITH VFS GLOBAL.

Western Region Chairman Jay Bhatia informs us that VFS Global along with TAAI held a session on visa procedures and briefings on 8th October 2013. The same was for various Shenghen Missions, China and South Africa. Members from Western Region attended in large numbers at the VFS Centre at Babulnath, Mumbai. Ms. Monaz Billimoria, Zonal Manager, Western India for VFS Global briefed the members about the procedures, along with her entire team. Special mention was given on the new list of authorized insurance companies approved by the Schengen States Consular Representation. Q&A session helped resolve issues and updated many members of similar situations.

RAJASTHAN CHAPTER IN SRILANKA



M C Member Mr Manoj Sogani and Rajasthan Chapter Chairman Mr Sanjeev Godha recently planned and organised a meeting in Colombo for the Rajasthan Chapter members from 13 Sep to 16 Sep. 15 members along with Amir Ali, Sales Manager of Srilankan Airlines Delhi (who provided specially rebated tickets for them) and Gaurav Dogra, MGR of Aitken Spence Travel that sponsored all arrangements in Srilanka made

the visit and the members felt it was a great experience indeed. The meeting was held at Hotel Cinnamon Colombo. All topical issues related to the industry were discussed with the emphasis on the need of the hour i.e to give handfull support to TAAI to move forward and fight for the industry's right to remuneration. It was an educational tour for most members. A detailed presentation was given by Mr Sogani on all current matters including service tax, commission, weekly payments. Whilst parting, a memento specially designed by Rajasthan Chapter was given to Mr Nalin Jayasundera, MD, Of Aitken travels for his courteous hospitality. Special thanks to Dheeraj Mittal and Dashrath Rathore for getting sponsors for this trip.

LAUNCH OF ADTOI MAHARASHTRA CHAPTER

The Maharashtra Chapter of the Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), the fifth chapter of the Association, was officially launched in Mumbai on 29th August, 2013 in the presence of eminent stakeholders from the travel and tourism industry. Abhijeet Patil (Chairman, Raja Rani Travels Pvt. Ltd.) was inducted as Chairman of the Maharashtra Chapter. The keynote address, was delivered by chief guest Parvez Dewan, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. who spoke about the foreign exchange earned from Inbound Tourism and mentioned Domestic Tourism as the pillar of strength of tourism in India and as. The backbone of tourism economy besides being a big player in national integration. Domestic tourist visits

in 2012 was 102 crore compared to 85 crore in 2011. he congratulated ADTOI on formation of the Maharashtra Chapter and assured cooperation and support of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) to uplift Domestic Tourism in the country. Subhash Verma, President, ADTOI said, "Maharashtra is on our radar to hold the next ADTOI Annual Convention." The event was attended by our President Mr Iqbal Mulla long with other association heads, besides officials from India tourism and state tourism boards; travel trade and hospitality players. Said President Mr Mulla "The need of the hour is unity amongst all the associations so that we can boost tourism and contribute to high growth in Domestic Tourism.



VFS GLOBAL MEETS TAAI PUNE MEMBERS



VFS global with TAAI Pune Chapter Members had a brief meeting at their VAC On 29th Aug 2013 to update on their new VFS centre opened in Pune (Maharashtra) for Schengen Visa application for missions of Greece, Italy, Spain and Switzerland which started effective 26 Aug 2013. Approximately 30 Travel Agency staff of TAAI Pune Chapter handling visa application from their respective agencies attended along with Mr. Noshir Irani – Chairman TAAI Pune Chapter. Nital Dave – Unit Manager,



operations Ahmedabad along with her operation Team from Pune briefed the Agents on all required documentation for Schengen countries being served from Pune and the process to be followed. This was followed by Q & A session. Mr. Irani thanked the VFS team for giving their precious time from their busy schedule to update the members on the visa processes. The meet was a very interactive one with members wanting more such sessions

US INTERACTIVE SESSION IN HYDERABAD



TAAI AP Chapter in association with the Consulate General of the United States of America conducted a program on the various issues for granting of non immigrant visas to the USA on 7th August 2013 in Hyderabad. followed by an interactive session and high tea. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Manav Jain Non immigrant visa Chief in the counselor section and his

colleague Mr. Jim Hagenruber along with Mrs Sathya Prabha from the US Commercial Service. TAAI AP members found the program very educative and had all their questions answered aptly by the visiting team. Chairman Mr Imtaiz Qureshi thanked Mr Jain and his officials for making time to meet with the members.

HOW ABOUT SOME STRESS BUSTING?



Well, that is exactly what our Eastern Region did recently for its members ! The Office Bearers organised an exclusive movie show of Chennai Express – the record breaking Shahrukh Khan & Deepika Padukone starrer, at the INOX multiplex at Forum mall. Even Airlines and GDS staff were invited and they were happy to come. In fact this was the 2nd time the movie show



was organised. The whole auditorium was booked in advance and members thoroughly enjoyed the entertaining movie. There was much bonding and back slapping amidst eating pop corn and meeting & greeting each other. Members appreciated this initiative from the TAAI team and some members recommended that this attempt should be regular on bi - annual basis.

INFO FOR MEMBERS

With effect from 13th August 2013, VFS has started Skype services to conduct interviews for applicants submitting their Application at satellite Centre's - Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai, so that the applicant does not have to come to New

Delhi. Please note that Applicant has to visit the respective Application Centre for the Interview which will be conducted by Embassy of Greece.

PLANNING COMMISSION GIVES CONSENT FOR VOA TO 40 MORE COUNTRIES VoA for senior citizens & pensioners; recommends setting up online visa facilitation centres

(In brief) In a decision that could increase foreign exchange earning from tourism for the country in future, the Planning Commission of India has recommended a comprehensive overhaul in the visa facilitation process for travellers intending to visit India.

Taking a favourable view of the suggestions of the tourism industry in the country, the Planning Commission in a joint meeting of the officials of the related ministries of Home Affairs, External Affairs, Tourism, etc. has recommended to the

government for extension of Visa on Arrival (VoA) facilities to citizens of 40 more countries.

The Commission also recommended VoA for senior citizens and pensioners from all countries, as well as setting up online visa processing system to enhance smoother facilitation of visas for overseas travellers. The joint meeting has empowered Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Home Affairs to prepare a road map for infrastructure and manpower required for these services.

By TBM Staff | New Delhi October 08, 2013

GOOD BYE AND GOOD LUCK !



TAAI Staff under the aegis of TAAI OBs & MC gave a fond farewell to Mrs. Susan Thomas Executive Staff of TAAI Secretariat on 10th October. Mrs Susan has served the Secretariat for almost 18 years She is well known for her commitment to work and her dedication to the Association. TAAI wishes her the very best in all her future endeavors !

Quote Of The Month

**I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles;
but today it means getting along with people.**

- Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

