

The TAAI Magazine

NamasTAAI

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JANUARY 2022



YEAR OF HOPE



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At the outset, I wish to convey to my fellow travel trade fraternity a very Happy New Year! I wish everyone, and their families health, happiness and success. I truly believe that we will succeed in restoring trust, building confidence, and a more sustainable and successful future for our industry, ourselves, and the next generation in the year 2022.

This edition of NamasTAAI is worked upon keeping in mind the hopes and aspirations of travel trade in the year 2022 and how this industry as a team can work collectively to keep the sparks of fire kindled. As the theme suggests, we are firm that the year 2022 will be full of hopes and therefore looking forward to a fresh start. Despite being stuck amid this deadly pandemic, for the last two years, TAAI has remained active and courageous enough to carry out its work either virtually or physically as the situation demands, be it our webinars, events, meetings, training programmes or collaborations.

In addition, TAAI has been working closely with various governments and departments to open up flights immediately across the world from India especially Indian Carriers must get prominence. India is ready to become the largest Tourism & Aviation Hub of Asia. We need to learn from our past mistakes & both the government and the industry need to work in tandem or else we will once again miss the opportunity. We at TAAI are working tirelessly to bridge this gap and take the country and our businesses to new heights.

We respect all protocols set by the government for the new variant, but we definitely need to work in a more coordinated manner within our country & effectively collaborate globally. TAAI has been strongly advocating with the government to work in a collaborative manner & with unified policies. We have achieved to bring some changes with centre & states. We have been clear in our initiatives that cautious directives are appreciated, keeping in mind the safety of the citizens and travellers, however, at the same time, they should not put spokes in the economic development & tourism which is the core strength.

TAAI has been strongly advocating with the government to work in a collaborative manner & with unified policies. We have been achieving to bring changes with centre & states

With five lakh free e-visa being granted to tourists by the government, the growth of the trade shall only be seen once airspace is fully open. India is a leader in sustaining and bringing the pandemic under control. Today, the Indian travel trade, be it travel agents, tour operators, MICE facilitators, Car Rentals, Hotels, Resorts or ground handlers, each one of them is geared to handle tourists from the world into India.

As we step into the year 2022, we all have mixed feelings of hope and fear as to what will happen next.

We are so looking forward to the aviation and travel & tourism industry to revive strongly once again.

Simultaneously, we also need to see that if omicron wave strengthens then we should be flexible enough to adapt to the changes instead of sitting and waiting for it to subside and be brave enough not to let this pandemic overpower our psychology instead we should work upon strengthening our minds and come up with best of solutions for survival.

NamasTAAI's current edition is crafted with hope, hope for a new sunrise that will take away all the gloomy days and ignite the fire of new dreams and good businesses and take us all to new heights. With new achievements, we would like to cater to the needs of our members as well who put their heart and soul into making this association visible on all platforms, be it India or abroad.

On this positive note, I would like to wish our readers, friends & colleagues a very happy and prosperous new year and would like to convey this message, that no matter how tough the situation gets, brighter days are ahead.

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."—Joseph Kennedy God Bless us with strength to become more resilient & innovative!!

Happy New Year – 2022 – HOPE & PEACE Be with You!

Jyoti Mayal
President
president@taai.in



Dear Colleague Members,

Wishing You a Very Happy and Prosperous 2022, a "Year of Hope".

The beginning of the year is usually a time for reflection and goal-setting – but after a challenging, stagnant 2021, many of us are struggling with motivation.

Let's be positive and let TAAI be your motivator!

The Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Sector under which all of us sync has survived the worst. Given the importance of travellers to India's social and economic fabric, the sector's slower recovery relative to other sectors throughout the pandemic, and the impact of current and potential future coronavirus variants, creative approaches should be considered for the sector to emerge stronger.

We propose three areas to consider:

1. Focusing efforts on encouraging domestic travellers to visit—and revisit—each destination; reinvigorating the workforce to enhance visitors' experiences; and reimagining India as a hub for business travel by keeping up to date with changing working norms.
2. Approaches to entice domestic travellers include doubling down on offering must-attend, extraordinary events. Encouraging visitors to extend their stays to explore undiscovered parts of Incredible India, and harnessing digitization to elevate visitor experiences with smart-city (or technologically modern) concepts. Some destinations have given their iconic landmarks an artistic twist, so that even return visitors can encounter a familiar monument, with fresh eyes. This should be planned and updated in our itineraries. Your Association, TAAI has proposed to India Tourism as well as State Tourism's to partner with us and educate our members on such developments. We shall also be undertaking registration drives along with MoT as State Tourism for our members to take advantage of the MDA's offered by the Government to accredited agents.
3. Reinvigorate the travel workforce: Friends, we all have curtailed our expenses by taking pay cuts! With every surge in business, we get excited and are desirous to spend. We Must! However, we must ensure that we do not fix our employment costs. Rather than increasing salaries, we must look into incentivising sales and profits. This shall keep our fixed costs under check.

Exacerbated by widespread labour shortages across industries, a diminished workforce could see the travel and hospitality industry short-staffed and lacking the capacity to deliver indelible memories to visitors. Tourism growth would also likely be inhibited.

Our industry is forever evolving as we have to stay abreast with information not only on a continuous basis but nowadays on a daily basis.

We have already commenced training for our members for NDC along with the GDS and more detailed schedules are being planned. Further, along with professional training institutions, we shall be undertaking professional, practical training programs and keeping our members and their teams upskilled and educated on developments to enhance business.

Let us all wish and pray for the virus impact to recede and a New Hope for 2022 to vitalise our industry. Let us be cautious and follow all protocols set by the Government. Our care shall protect our Nation and help all of us prosper and grow in the year ahead.

Lastly, this edition of NamasTAAI, which once again brings to you the happenings across our 20 Regions and Chapters, along with the activities and updates of the National Committee, be it with the Government, stakeholder partners, FAITH, UFTAA and others, shall be useful, informative and worth reading and sharing with colleagues.

Once again wishing you a Happy and Prosperous 2022!

Warm Regards

Jay Bhatia

Vice President

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Dear Colleague Members,

At the onset, I would extend my best wishes for the year 2022 to all the members and readers. I am thankful to you for extending support to TAAI in the last year.

The past year has been full of learnings and experiences. A year which will go down in history as one of the toughest years for the entire tourism industry, be it travel, hospitality or allied sectors. The year has taught us a lot about keeping ourselves healthy, up to date, developing tech-enabled platforms, and above all work in tandem to achieve a common goal of promoting sustainable tourism.

From the perspective of running businesses, I wish to convey that the government did a fair bit of work by increasing air bubble flight agreements with more countries which have given much-needed impetus to businesses. Scheduled international flights operations, which are expected to remain suspended in the country till January 31st is worrisome for travel trade however, agreements like these could work as a Stepney in taking business forward which already has seen an avalanche of ups and downs during the covid crisis.

In terms of promoting India as the most favoured destination or within the country to push for the growth of domestic travel, we are facing a lot of challenges. We at TAAI have highlighted this to the government as conveyed that we are seeking support to promote both inbound and outbound tourism, and competing in the global world, especially pertaining to the GST, TCS, Credit Control, Tax rebates, incentives, and much more. Taxes like such need to be abolished or at least substantially reduced, to start with, so that our Indian travel trade can compete in both inbound and outbound markets and generate a huge foreign exchange for the exchequer in the coming year.

We at TAAI did our best to keep the confidence of both members and travellers intact by organising many activities and disseminating relevant useful information. I am thankful to each one of you for all the support extended to TAAI.

I wish you all good health and happiness in the year 2022!

Bettaiah Lokesh

Hon. Secretary General

hsg@taai.in



'Year of Hope'

Good bye 2021 and Welcome 2022!

In normal circumstances, the year gone by is cherished for all beautiful moments, experiences, achievements and performances. But 2021 will go down in the history of mankind for the slow revival of the travel and tourism industry slowly limping back to normalcy after the disastrous global pandemic COVID washed away 2020 bringing the industry to standstill and no business transacted.

Just as the industry was slowly returning on the path of recovery in last few months of 2021, the Omicron variant created new roadblocks, shaking consumer confidence both for domestic and international travel. With the rising fear and panic around the spread of the virus, countries have again started bringing up new guidelines and restrictions, which are a deterrent for travel restricting travellers from making any plans.

From the beginning of global outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, TAAI Managing Committee anticipated its consequences and swung into action by using all its resources to appeal to Government of India, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Civil Aviation, DGCA, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Health, RBI, NITI Aayog, Members of Parliament, State Governments, IATA, Airlines, Tourism Boards, Consulates, Airport Authority and all involved stakeholders possible, from where assistance could be sought. This we pursued with continuous communications throughout 2021 and will continue to do so in 2022.

It has always been TAAI's vision to promote & conduct training for skilling our members and staff on airline & tourism products, taxation matters, health and safety concerns, knowledge and futuristic tourism. This, we believe, is very essential as it will greatly help for revival of the industry which is changing due to COVID. In this direction, in 2021 we have successfully conducted webinars/ knowledge sessions/educational workshops in association with IATA, Airlines, VFS, Embassies/Consulates, LGV Learning, Ministry of Tourism (Dekho Apna Desh & Seekho Apna Desh), Expo 2020 Dubai, Tourism Boards (National & International), Amadeus, WITT (Women in TAAI & Travel) at the National and Regions/Chapters level.

We have put all our efforts in 2021 to get maximum support/ relief from government and skilling/training of members, as we did in 2020. Based on our work, we feel encouraged to carry forward this commitment.

We are optimistic that, in spite of the current situation looking challenging, there will be light at the end of the tunnel and 2022 will be the year of Revival & Recovery for the industry. The future is bright and rewarding.

Let's embrace and welcome 2022 with Hope and Optimism!!!

Warm Regards

Shreeram Patel

Hon. Treasurer

treasurer@taai.in





Message from Mr Arvind Singh, IAS, Secretary – Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India

Dear TAAI Members !
Seasons Greetings for the New Year

It is indeed a pleasure to connect with all of you at TAAI who are the stakeholder partners along with the Government especially with our Ministry of Tourism.

The last two years have presented an unprecedented challenge globally for travel trade and hospitality. But I am happy to say that TAAI has been an active partner with the Ministry of Tourism in enabling immediate and long term responses that shall hold the industry in good stead for a robust rebound.

Your Association Office Bearers have been in constant touch with the Ministry and worked with us on all our initiatives, be it be for Dekho Apna Desh and domestic tourism, NIDHI, SAATHI and other such systems creating awareness for COVID protocols and significant promotion programs across the country.

While omicron has posed a fresh challenge, however I am confident that given the aggressive vaccination campaign of the Government shall help us in tiding over this phase of the pandemic very soon. In the meantime, I look forward to your continued support in carrying forward the promotion of domestic tourism to begin with and subsequently working

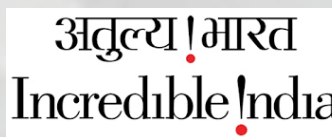
on overseas markets also. I must assure all of you that the Government and all of us in the Ministry shall leave no stone unturned in supporting and promoting Incredible India.

We are confident that the proposed New Tourism Policy shall ensure sustainable growth for all Indians through technology, support and personal care for all visitors travelling within and into India.

I once again take this opportunity to thank all of you at TAAI for standing by and entrusting your support to us and giving us ideas and encouragement to assist you and tourism sector at large. You are a significant driver of the sector and we look forward to continued engagement with TAAI in times to come. Ms Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI has been providing exemplary leadership for last two years and am sure she shall continue to lead with enthusiasm and work in collaboration with us as we take Incredible India forward.

I also would like to Wish you all - a Happy and Prosperous New Year 2022 – a “Year of Hope” through the platform of Namas TAAI.

With warm regards,
Arvind Singh,
IAS



What Next?

By Aashish Gupta, Founder of StrategyPluto and Consulting CEO, FAITH

The pandemic has had the worst impact on many families & business around the world. Within industries, the travel industry and within that the offline travel intermediaries have been most severely affected.

As a result of the pandemic over the past 22 months, the world has also changed on parameters of commerce. Some trends are emerging which may impact the travel business more than the others..

- Digitisation may continue to influence the way transactions happen between buyers & sellers and will also impact the way businesses are run internally between their suppliers, their employees and their bankers.
- Companies across industries will be lesser city centric as their employees will work from their homes, which may impact both the FIT corporate travel patterns and the mics movements for the foreseeable period.
- Newer domestic and short haul tourism destinations will emerge based around the concept of nature and wellness travel.
- Shorter and more frequent trips may be planned around holidays and bookings may have shorter lead times considering uncertainties around any outbreaks.
- Travel advisors may be looked upon as complete solution providers whenever there are multi-point, multi-experience journeys.
- Alternate accommodation may continue to be eagerly sought more so in emerging getaways and for options around staycations & workcations.

Nature, provides the most remarkable instance of transformation of a butterfly which goes through three stages before reaching its most ideal stage. Travel advisors too will have to transform themselves around the way their consumer behaviour is emerging. Some of the key adaptations which may be required to the 'travel business models' could be the following.

- Include higher component of verified 'Alternate accommodation' options across destinations in one's product inventory.
- Continually offer new destinations both within country, short- haul international and medium haul international.
- Digitise as much possible for enabling customer ease, in terms of booking, in-trip management and post- trip follow ups.
- Link up alliances across key markets and complimentary travel segments with other like-minded travel advisors to



Aashish Gupta is the Founder of StrategyPluto and Consulting CEO of FAITH - Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality. He handholds enterprises & entrepreneurs on Strategy Trainings, Visioning Workshops & Business Plan Turnaround.

- offer customers, seamless and specialised solutions
- Include the facility of multiple digital payment options across cards, net banking mobile & unified payments.
- Identify, map and offer inventory of multiple experiences across accommodation, dining, shopping and entertainment across as many destinations as possible.
- Be ready to offer service guarantees and offer quick redressal of grievances to develop happy customers.
- Keep in touch with customers in a non - intrusive manner and be alert to cross -sell to customers on any travel opportunities whether in their families or within their companies.

As most people have not travelled over the past 22 months, it is expected that travel industry will be the biggest gainer post the pandemic and may have the biggest share of consumer spends both by consumers and by corporates.

This pandemic is affecting most offline travel advisors. But those who have and those who continue to utilise this harsh & forced hibernation to redesign their organisation and to restructure their strategies, may be more ready to seize opportunities on the other side of the pandemic as and when that happens. ▲

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Jyoti Mayal

Vice President

Jay Bhatia

Hon. Secretary General

Bettaiah Lokesh

Hon. Treasurer

Shreeram Patel

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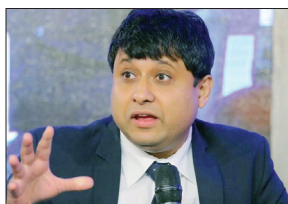
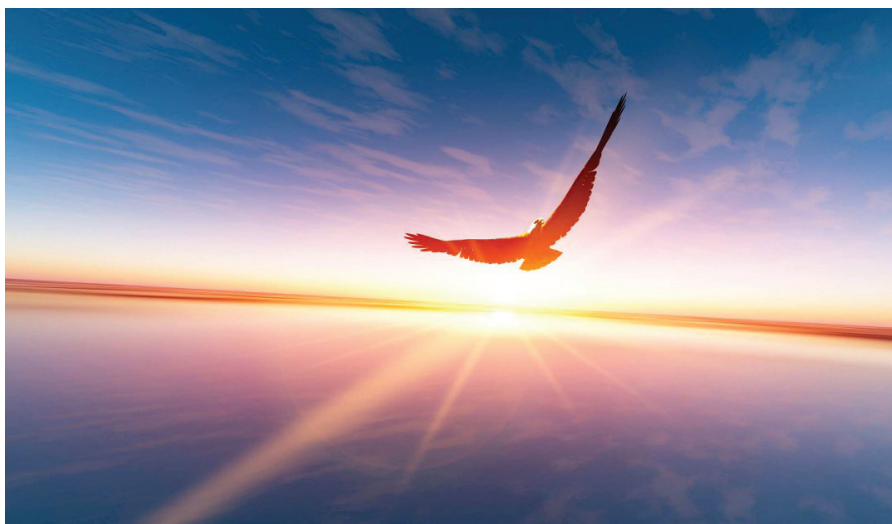
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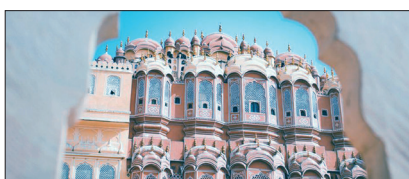
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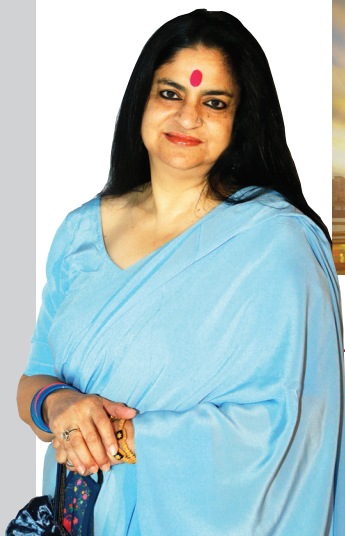
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TAAI partners with Dubai Expo to promote the event on Pan-India level



TAAI and Dubai Expo 2020 have tied up to promote the mega trade show across its member travel and tourism companies through presentations, roadshows and webinars for the next six months.



TAAI organised a physical roadshow in Mumbai on September 28, which was attended by more than 200 members. Organised in association with Charson Advisory, which is the Official Sales & Marketing Representative for Dubai Expo 2020 in India, the association also invited different airlines to give a presentation on their key offerings.



Sharing more details, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said, "TAAI is the leading association and continues to support its members and focuses on the revival strategy to not only promote tourism both inbound and outbound but also educate them on new products and opportunities. With the inauguration of Dubai Expo 2020 on October 1, TAAI has simultaneously started the process of skilling its members and their staff with a physical roadshow on September 28 in Mumbai in the presence of 200 members. We also invited leading airlines such as Etihad, Emirates and IndiGo to showcase their best services and support our members to truly make it experiential. I wish everyone great success."

TAAI Vice President Mr. Jay Bhatia visited Dubai on a mega Familiarisation trip organised by Expo to promote the show among the travel trade. Mr. Bhatia was accompanied by Mr. Carl Vaz from Charson Advisory.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Bhatia hailed his experience visiting the Expo. "Wonderful experience of exploring over 180 cultures from around the world with all countries participating at the Expo which will be on from October 2021 to March 31, 2022. This is a fantastic location for families and tourists who are desirous to see the future of various economies," he said.

"We are ready to welcome all age groups at special

pricing and are happy to partner with TAAI as one of the key associations in India," stated Vaz on the partnership with TAAI for Dubai Expo 2020.

On 28th Oct, TAAI organised a virtual session on Expo Dubai 2020 for its members in the Southern Region (Chapters of Karnataka, Kerala, South Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh & Telangana) and Northern Region (Chapters of Punjab, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand).

This helped members understand about latest updates related to the mega trade show and details on how Expo can be promoted among clients along with their travel requirements Vice President Mr. Jay Bhatia, Honorary Secretary General Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh and Mr. Anoop Kanuga, Managing

Committee Member & Chairman - Tourism Services Council, attended the webinars and briefed members about the benefits of the partnership. Mr. Carl Vaz from Charson Advisory gave a presentation on Expo 2020 and explained other necessary details.

Dubai Expo 2020 is expected to attract over a million Indian visitors in the span of six months, from October 2021 till March 2022. In India, there are 16 Authorised Tickets Resellers (ATR) for Dubai Expo 2020 to distribute tickets and reach out to the travel trade for any queries. ▲



TAAI organises webinars on Expo 2020 Dubai for Northern and Southern region members



Create infrastructure & facilities beyond hotels and resorts for MICE Tourism: TAAI Vice President Jay Bhatia

TAAI Vice President Mr. Jay Bhatia was one of the keynote speakers at the webinar organised on October 6, by the Consulate of Sri Lanka in Mumbai in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau on preparing Sri Lanka MICE ready, by 2022.

Delivering the keynote address during a webinar organised to promote MICE tourism between India and Sri Lanka, Mr. Bhatia said that MICE events could be curated around festivals and events like sports or adventure activities in both nations.

He emphasised on the need to create infrastructure and facilities beyond hotels and resorts. He said, "Monuments, theme parks, forts like Sigiriya or even Fisherman's village could be explored as locations for incentives and events. MICE events

could be curated around festivals and events like sports or adventure activities." He also requested Sri Lankan airlines to come out with special MICE airfares, wherein travellers visiting for the same event from different parts of India could get beneficial group fares.

He mentioned that TAAI and the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) have recently signed a tourism promotion MoU and MICE events too must be promoted along with pre and post tours in Sri Lanka, which shall boost tourism as well as the local economy.

In line with MoU, the TAAI VP thanked the Consulate General in Mumbai and stakeholder partners in Sri Lanka with whom wonderful progress in boosting travel from India can be maintained. ▲



TAAI Welcomes Ministry of Home Affairs' Move to Re-start Tourist-Visa

TAAI welcomed the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) decision to re-start tourist visas for foreign travellers coming to India on chartered flights from October 15th. TAAI, India's largest and nodal travel trade association, has requested its members across its 20 regions and chapters, to ensure they update all incoming visitors on protocols set by the state governments where the passengers will be travelling to.

Commending the move, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said they welcome the move as a date has finally been given by the government to resume inbound travel and they are happy to acknowledge the announcement of the resumption of Tourist Visa for foreigners coming to India on charter flights from 15th October & further for others effective 15th November 2021. "We hope commercial flights will start beyond air bubbles effective 15th November to facilitate seamless travel. TAAI along with FAITH have submitted numerous representations requesting the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Tourism, Health and External Affairs on the subject. Our results have now finally yielded some relief & members can start planning." She also added that the government has decided to opt for 'reciprocal treatment' to the applicants under new visa conditions. As per reports, the visa facilitation will now depend on the applicant's home country's policy for the



Mrs. Jyoti Mayal
President



Mr. Jay Bhatia
Vice President



Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh
Hon. Secretary General



Mr. Shreeram Patel
Hon. Treasurer

Indian tourists.

"We are pleased to note that Indian borders are opening & inbound travel will see light soon. This will be a great relief to the travel trade fraternity of India as the business will surely pick up & after a long gap our members will be able to transact more business. Tourism both inbound & outbound needs to revive", added Mr. Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary-General, TAAI, sharing his views said that restarting flights be it charter or regular ones will certainly give confidence to travellers looking at visiting India for tourism purposes & we will not miss out on the entire season.

'Our priority should be to work towards containing the virus by following correct protocols and safety norms to infuse confidence in tourists coming to India,' said Mr. Shreeram Patel, Hon. National Treasurer, TAAI. ▲

TAAI President represents travel trade fraternity at the 3rd DPIIT – ASCON Consultation Forum

Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI and Member Board – CII National Committee on Tourism and Hospitality represented Travel Trade Fraternity at the 3rd edition of DPIIT – ASCON Consultation Forum with Industry Associations'. The theme of the event was "Stimulating Growth for Aatmanirbhar Bharat -Leveraging Opportunities Post Pandemic" and was jointly organized by ASCON, CII, and supported by DPIIT, Government of India, on October 9. The meeting was presided over by the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri. Piyush Goyal.

TAAI actively participated & submitted its inputs and supported CII's National Tourism Councils perspective, to the Government of India. Tourism is a significant sector & contributes 9% to the GDP of our country & nearly equal in employment.

The key recommendations were collated into a presentation under Investments, Cost of doing business, Ease of doing business, Trade Policy, Technology & R&D, Job creation & Skills and were put forth to Shri. Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry, Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution during the report-back session.

"We believe working in tandem and a collaborative manner, emphasizing the ease of business, incentivisation, effective skilling with the formation of a National Task Force,



creating tourism funds & being included in the concurrent list is the need of the hour. And, the government needs to support & establish all these & bring corrective policies to see the growth of the Travel & Tourism sector to build a strong economically driven Atmanirbhar India," added Jyoti Mayal. ▲

Travel trade fraternity will come out with most innovative travel solutions post-pandemic: TAAI President

Talking about the role of travel agents and tour operators in the post-Covid-era and the importance of travel trade stakeholders becoming most important now than ever, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that the fraternity will come out with the most innovative travel solutions when the pandemic is over.

"Travel Agents fraternity has been a unique one in its own way. We have built a legacy for ourselves by offering exceptional services both at the front and backend. Post pandemic, I can assure you that our fraternity will come out with the most innovative solutions," she stated.

Leveraging the growing use of technology in the business, Ms. Mayal opined that the industry has adapted

well in the last 18 months with a focus on training and education programmes. "We are now offering marketing solutions based on the technology and upgraded ourselves by facilitating training programmes. Adapting to use technology in our business is very crucial and TAAI has been extensively working in educating and training its members with various training programmes, knowledge sessions, workshops, webinars and many other informative initiatives," she mentioned.

She further informed that the association is working to help its member in developing new marketing and promotional plans and make their business model stronger so that they are ready when the bulk of the business comes back post-pandemic. ▲

Prior intimation important before such decision, urge authorities to work in tandem with travel trade: Jyoti Mayal on Pune airport closure



Commenting on the closure of Pune airport for 14 days before the festive season, TAAI President, Ms. Jyoti Mayal said the travel trade will have to face the heat and bear the brunt of limited or no travel and perhaps cancellations.

Sharing her views on the closure of the Pune International Airport for 14 days starting October 16 due to runway resurfacing work, she stated that the decision has come as a shock to the travel fraternity and the move amidst the upcoming festival season will impact the industry and passengers.

She urged the authorities and government to look into the matter and mentioned that prior information should be given to the industry beforehand to prepare for aftereffects. "An unprecedented closure of Pune airport has come as a shock to the travel fraternity. Travel has just started picking up and the festive

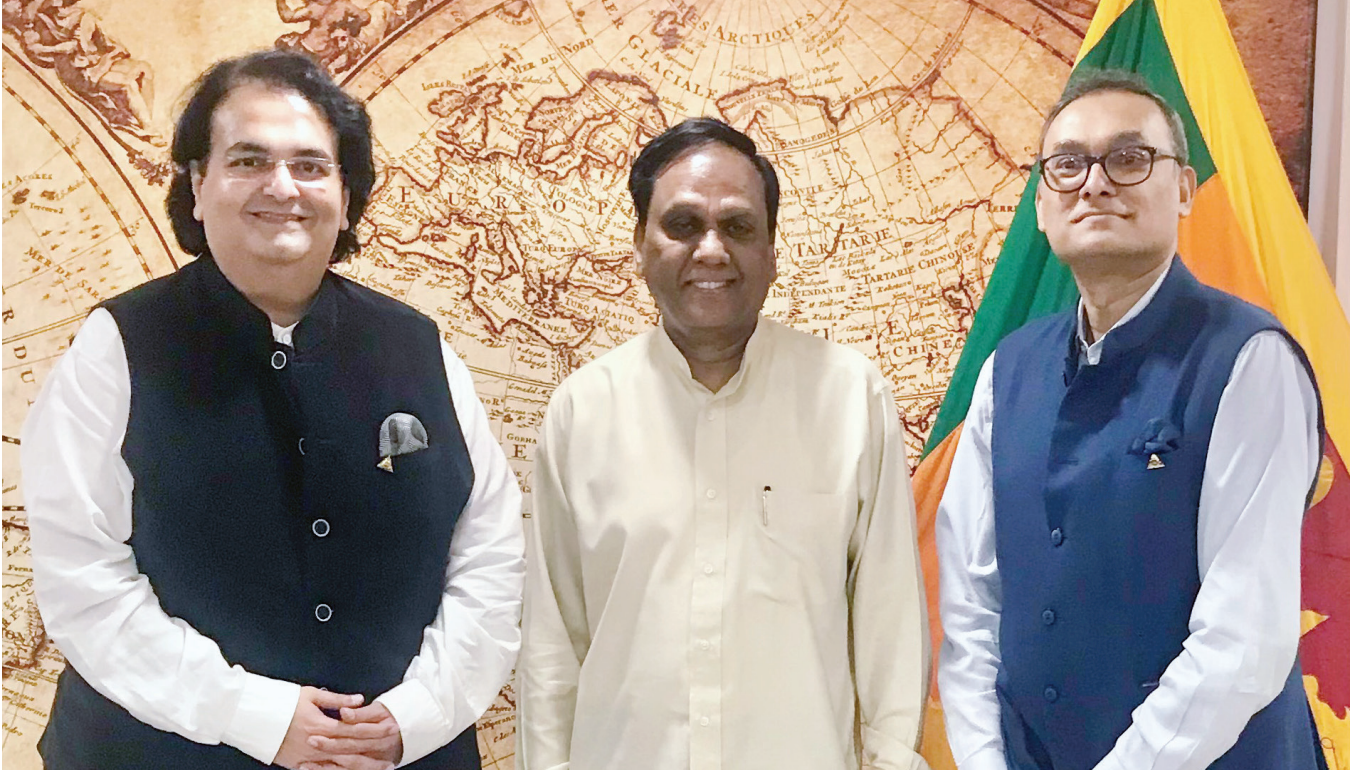
season is coming, and a decision like such has created a negative sentiment in the industry as well as for a traveller," she said.

She further stated, "Intimation would have given a chance to the fraternity to be ready and inform their customers accordingly. However, now we have to face the heat and bear the brunt of limited or no travel and perhaps cancellations. We would urge the authorities and the government to work in tandem with the travel trade and intimate well in advance of any such orders and decisions."

A number of airlines have also requested the government, both civil aviation and defence authorities, to defer the airport closure in the peak festive season. Currently, 55 flights are operational from the Pune airport. From October 16 to October 29, all flights from the airport have been cancelled. ▲



TAAI holds dialogue with Sri Lankan Consul General in Mumbai on tourism promotion



Travel Agents Association of India has started dialogue with Sri Lanka to promote cross border tourism and resume promotion through the travel trade. Mr. Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI along with Mr. Sameer Karnani, TAAI Western Region Chairman held a meeting with Dr. Valsan Vethody, Consul General of Sri Lanka in Mumbai to discuss tourism promotion specific to Ramayana trail and MICE through TAAI members.

TAAI team was invited by Consul General on 26th Oct in Mumbai for promotion of tourism among other topics specific to the Ramayana Trail and enhancement of MICE



to Sri Lanka with the support of TAAI and its members across the country.

Sri Lankan Consulate along with TAAI are planning to undertake promotional events on specific routes and boost tourism between India and Sri Lanka in the post pandemic opening phase between December 2021 and February 2022.

Sri Lanka has already relaxed entry regulations for tourists from October 2021 after the island nation allowed entry of international travellers from foreign countries including India. Fully vaccinated travellers are travelling to Sri Lanka in large number, initial statistics have shown. ▲

Kushinagar International Airport – Remarkable Value addition to promote Buddhist Tourism and Indian Aviation: TAAI



TAAI conveyed its profound and sincere gratitude to Government of India, Uttar Pradesh Government and Airports Authority of India (AAI) on October 20 for connecting Kushinagar, a popular Buddhist site, by air.

Thanking Hon'ble Prime Minister for emphasizing the importance and vision to further develop Buddhist Tourism in India, Ms. Jyoti Mayal – President, TAAI said that South-East and East Asia have scores of Buddhism followers and by providing them with an opportunity to travel hassle-free to Buddhist sites like Kushinagar, will certainly further boost their confidence and rejuvenate the trust in the Indian government for delivering and keeping their promises of promoting tourism.

MoCA has played a crucial role in connecting Buddhist sites and significantly reducing the Travel time for followers, said Mr. Jay Bhatia, Vice President, while extending his congratulations to the Ministry and the Government.

Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary General, welcomed the move made and specifically mentioned the role of the Uttar Pradesh Government in providing land and funds to support such a remarkable achievement.

Adding to the role and contribution of the Airports Authority of India and Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Mr. Shreeram Patel, National Hon. Treasurer, applauded the efforts made by the teams, in conjunction with both the Central and State Government. ▲



TAAI participates in 60th APJC meeting

The 60th APJC meeting was held virtually on 27th October. TAAI was represented by President Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, UFTAA President and Immediate Past President Mr. Sunil Kumar Rumalla, Vice President Mr. Jay Bhatia, Hon. Secretary General Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh and Hon. National Treasurer Mr. Shreeram Patel. ▲

TAAI Joins Hands with Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) to Promote and Enhance Bilateral Tourism



TAAI signs MoU with Nepal Tourism Board to promote bilateral tourism

TAAI signed MoU with the Nepal Tourism Board on 22nd Oct to promote and enhance bilateral tourism. This will focus on promoting mutual interests and tourist arrivals through collaboration and a cooperative approach on a reciprocal basis in the years to come.

Tourism Product Promotion, organization of events/ roadshows/ conclaves/ summits/ webinars, reciprocal invitations to one another's annual events (conferences, travel marts, and national & regional events), exchange of tourism information etc. are a part of the MoU.

While speaking on the occasion, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that we are focusing on Tourism Product Promotion which includes bilateral assistance in promoting tourism through the organization of events/ roadshows/ conclaves/ summits/ webinars etc., to demonstrate the tourism potential of both our countries. India and Nepal share borders and therefore both countries should develop more tourism, especially after the pandemic. It is indeed required to be more strategic & adopt new norms and marketing strategies. Tourism in our countries can see significant growth and we can eventually be the number one source market.

Mr. Anoop Kanuga, Managing Committee Member,

TAAI expressed gratitude to Dr. Dhananjay Regmi - CEO, Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) and the entire team for their support and cooperation. He highlighted the age-old relationship between India and Nepal hold and how TAAI has contributed to further cementing and strengthening the same by facilitating travel and trade amongst two great nations.

Specific events may be included under this MoU, and both parties based on discussions and deliberations will formulate strategies to promote and enhance Bilateral Tourism, said Mr. Jay Bhatia, TAAI Vice President.

Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh, TAAI Hon. Secretary-General emphasized the need of facilitating reciprocal invitations to one another's annual events including conferences, travel marts, and other ad hoc national and regional events, and thanked NTB for agreeing to include the suggestion in the MoU.

Information exchange, which plays a crucial role in the development of tourism developing strategies with regards to the development of infrastructure, analytics and other data etc. is indeed a unique point added to the MoU, said Mr. Shreeram Patel, TAAI National Hon. Treasurer. ▲

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TAAI shares recommendations on MoCA's Heli-Tourism policy pitches for better infrastructure



The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) represented the travel trade fraternity at a virtual meeting convened by the Ministry of Tourism to discuss and deliberate upon the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)'s draft 'Heli-Tourism Policy'.

During the course of discussions, recommendations suggested by TAAI were taken up by Mr. Paras Lakhia, Managing Committee Member and Chairman, Airlines Council in the meeting chaired by Ms. Rupinder Brar, Additional Director General (ADG), MoT. The suggestions included inviting private players to foray into the vertical of heli tourism and emphasis was given on the need of developing heli infrastructure at the same pace as developing airports & seaports.

The suggestions by TAAI mentioned that all-important hill stations & religious destinations especially where road journey is tedious, but are well visited and popular, should be facilitated with heli service from its nearest airport or seaport. Destinations and routes such as Hampi, Coorg, Kevadia, Munnar, Goa, Udaipur to Nathdwara, Delhi to Agra, Bangalore to Mysore, Srinagar to Gulmarg etc. can be developed for heli tourism.

Mr. Lakhia opined that heli business may pick up fast if aerial tours at tourist destinations are started on priority so that travellers and visitors may see the entire place in a limited time. 'Heli services could also come as much-awaited relief to the remotest parts of our country with no or fewer medical facilities,' he added.

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI commenting on heli tourism said, "We are happy that the MoT & MoCA are creating more avenues & investing in infrastructure. Heli tourism has tremendous potential and because of that more impetus and boost should be given by the Government looking into ease of business for travel agents. Selling of inventory should be only through recognised agents/tour operators. Also, all correct procedures & standard policies for refunds, cancellation, financial security, insurance on travel protecting the consumer from helicopter companies on defaults, GST credit, payment through credit cards etc. need to be adopted before the start of the project."

She also added that providing subsidies on capital investment and parking charges for helicopters could be a welcome move to invite private investments. ▲

TAAI team joins Tourism Minister of Karnataka for the inauguration of IITM in Bengaluru



The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) joined the Tourism Minister of Karnataka, Shri. Anand Singh for the inauguration of India International Travel Mart (IITM) in Bengaluru on 22nd Oct amidst the presence of Mr. Pankaj Kumar Pandey, Secretary, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

On the occasion, TAAI's HSG Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh thanked the organisers for inviting the association to the inauguration. "TAAI wishes to congratulate the organisers of IITM for extending the invite to attend the ceremony. We are delighted to be a part of such an amazing event," he said.

Whereas Karnataka Chapter Chairman

Mr. Amish Desai extended his gratitude to the Tourism Minister for gracing the ceremony. "We would like to thank the Hon'ble Minister for gracing the occasion with his presence. We are looking forward to an early revival of the sector with such positive steps," he mentioned.

Organisers of the travel trade exhibition, Directors of Sphere Travelmedia & Exhibitions – Mr. Sanjay Haku and Mr. Rohit Hangal were also present on the occasion along with Ms. Sindhu B Rupesh, Director, Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka and Mr. Manoj Kumar, Managing Director, Jungle Lodges. ▲



TAAI supports ‘reciprocity’ in international travel; seeks more clarity on procedures



While supporting the spirit of reciprocity contained in the guidelines published by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, for international arrivals as the country prepares the ground for reopening of international borders from November 15, TAAI sought more “clarity in procedures” to make it easily understandable to travellers and travel industry stakeholders

In a statement, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI appreciated the government’s decision for initiating and implementing reciprocal treatment. “With flights opening up next month in a limited manner, we need to have standardised protocols in place across the country and more clarity on procedures. Also, the government should request partner countries offering air bubble arrangements to follow the same protocols. For instance, if a traveller is coming from the US or UK and transiting through Dubai then protocols of the country from which the flight has originated should be taken into consideration,” said Ms. Mayal.

She appealed to the government to open commercial flights fully, at least with countries that recognise and accept vaccinations approved by the Indian government. “We believe that it will be a welcome move and can help businesses to revive, both aviation and tourism, at a much faster pace.”

The travel and tourism industry has pointed out some ambiguities in the guidelines issued by the government, which were effective from 25th Oct.

Understanding the aspect of reciprocity, the government guidelines allow countries that have agreements with India and recognise Indian vaccine certificates or recognised by WHO and allow Indian visitors quarantine-free entry will have easy procedures while entering India compared to citizens of other countries.

Fully vaccinated citizens of the category ‘A’ countries with which India has either mutual agreement or recognise the Indian vaccine certificate and allow quarantine free entry, can leave the airport on arrival straightaway. In case they are partially vaccinated, they can leave the terminal after submitting the RT-PCR sample on arrival. They have to do home quarantine for 7 days before undergoing a second test on the 8th day.

However, all travellers, irrespective of their vaccine status, have to carry and produce a negative RT-PCR certificate obtained within 72 hours of arrival in India.

All international travellers also have to fill in an online self-declaration on the ‘Air Suvidha’ portal and also upload the RT-PCR negative certificate before boarding the flight. They also have to give a self-declaration on the authenticity of the report. ▲

TAAI shares inputs on promoting rail tourism with government through PPP model; pushes for better coordination with travel trade



In a virtual meeting with the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, TAAI shared its inputs with the government on giving impetus to rail tourism in India. Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh, Honorary Secretary General, TAAI and Anoop Kanuga, Chairman -Tourism Services Council & Managing Committee Member narrated on how rail tourism products can be promoted in the country with the help and support of travel trade. The virtual meeting was conducted October 15.

The 2nd meeting on the same day was chaired by the

Union Railways Minister at Rail Bhawan, New Delhi Among various suggestions, TAAI laid emphasis on travel agents and tour operators working very closely with the government to promote rail products and how they should be mandatorily commissionable to them. "This is a potentially fantastic rail-tourism product. This should certainly create an initial impetus for private capital to participate in public services to create incredible stories around Indian Tourism," TAAI mentioned. ▲

TAAI President holds a meeting with VFS Global to discuss visa issues and challenges

TAAI President Ms. Jyoti Mayal met with officials of VFS Global On October 20, to discuss various issues and challenges pertaining to visa processing. She discussed a number of topics including reopening of destinations, delays in processing visas, new protocols and guidelines set by countries and ongoing travel rush amidst the festive holiday season among other topics.



The meeting was attended by Mr. Pranav Sinha, Head - South Asia, VFS Global along with Ms. Elizabeth Juni - Unit Head-Schengen Operation North & East, VFS Global.

Ms. Mayal narrated concerns and challenges faced by TAAI members, explored possibilities of opportunities and got updated from VFS on products & services offered to travellers. ▲

Air bubble travel has reached its threshold limit, government should resume scheduled commercial international flights at the earliest: TAAI



Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that air bubble agreements, which has been a crucial tool to keep international travel on, has reached their threshold limit and the government should quickly take a decision of restarting regular commercial flights.

With reports of the government getting requests for revising the 'air travel bubble' policy, the travel trade has also sharply reacted on the matter and demanded the restoration of scheduled commercial international flights to keep in check increasing airfares and safeguard the interests of travellers and tour operators. Sharing her thoughts, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that air bubble agreements, which have been a crucial tool to keep international travel on, has reached its threshold limit and the government should ponder upon restarting regular flights soon.

"A move initiated by several governments during COVID times was welcomed by the travel trade as it was need of the hour to curb the spread of the pandemic,

however, with airfares soaring and limited airlines operating internationally it is time for governments to relook into it and either revoke or add more flights on the busiest routes. India needs to revive footfalls into India and utilise the 5 lakh free visas for inbound travel by March 2022. Unless flights restart this would be difficult to achieve & only resumption of flights will support the Indian tourism and travel sector to revive and re-establish their business," she added.

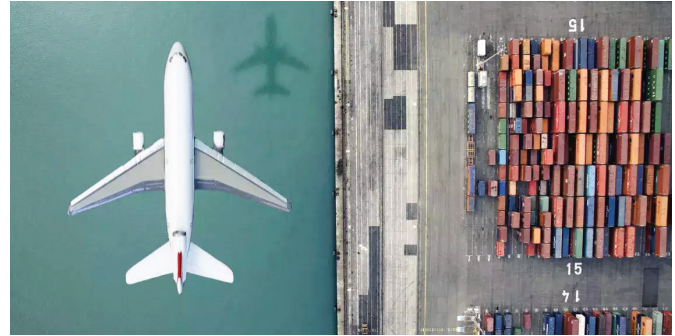
On the matter, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI stated, "An agreement signed and agreed upon to facilitate travel is now the major hurdle and hampering the businesses. The travel trade has seen bad days and the sector was grossly damaged, however, we kept our hopes high. And now, when we are going back to normal, an agreement like such is gradually becoming a roadblock."

Notably, the government had suspended all scheduled international flights on 22nd March 2020 in the wake of the COVID pandemic. ▲

Government should formulate a concrete roadmap for Export Incentive Scheme: TAAI President

Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) during a virtual meeting organised by the Service Export Promotion Council (SEPC) on the new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) said TAAI is looking forward to the government for formulating a concrete roadmap for the proposed and new export service scheme, so that the service export community can have adequate time to adopt their operations to the likely changes to be introduced in the coming years. The virtual meeting was organised on November 6.

Speaking on the expectations of the travel and tourism industry from the policy, she added that there is a need to create awareness about the benefits of service exports, adopt digitalisation and ensure availability of credit. "We at TAAI feel that the services exporting community will be greatly relieved and benefitted by the continuation and introduction of various new duty neutralization as the introduction of stability in the existing policies is very essential,



especially in the current scenario of global export pessimism and the Covid situation," she said.

She expressed happiness that the government has recognised the service sector in the policy, especially the travel & tourism sector, which is a significant engine of export growth. ▲

TAAI reaches out to Tourism Officers abroad for support and facilitation for Inbound & Outbound Tourism



TAAI connected with Tourism Officers in Indian Embassies abroad, who were recently appointed by the Union Ministry of External Affairs on request of the Union Tourism Minister, to solicit support and facilitation for enhancing and promoting both inbound and outbound tourism. The move

is aimed at initiating dialogue for better understanding and coordination to work together for the common goal of promoting tourism. A virtual meeting was requested.

TAAI expressed optimism over the appointment of Tourism Officers and that this move will certainly act as a catalyst towards promoting inbound tourism since the presence of a dedicated tourism official aboard in Indian embassies will have a positive impact on the industry's efforts to attract foreign tourists to the country.

TAAI President Ms. Jyoti Mayal said, "We need to work a lot towards effective marketing to promote India as a safe destination as the country has a huge potential and after COVID we need to motivate the travellers and inculcate confidence."

TAAI is ready to support the government and tourism sector as a whole for an early revival of the industry despite facing all the challenges after the pandemic. She added that the mutual efforts by the government and the industry can contribute significantly in creating employment opportunities.

As on date, TAAI Office Bearers have had a virtual meeting with Tourism Officers of the Embassy of India in Italy and Thailand. ▲

TAAI President Jyoti Mayal honoured for her work and contribution to the travel & tourism industry



Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) was bestowed with the honour and recognition for her work & contribution to the travel and tourism industry. She was conferred with the Peak Life Women Inspire Award, along with 15 other women from areas, such as business, sports, science, finance and aviation, during an event organised in Delhi, on October 28.

The evening was dedicated to inspiring women in every field for making their mark by not only working but also setting new benchmarks for their contemporaries. Among some prominent personalities present at the event were Katharina Wieser - Ambassador of Austria in India, Balbir Singh Dhillon - Head Audi India along with other dignitaries and awardees.

Apart from Mayal, Captain Zoya Sapra Agarwal, Deepika Jindal, Blossom Kochhar, Sujata Sharma, Garima Avtar, Harjinder Kaur Talwar, Malika Datt Sadani, Nonita Lall Qureshi, Priya Venkataraman, Rishma Kaur, Sairee Chahal, Shinjini Kumar, Shivani Malik and Tania Sachdev were honoured for their contribution in the respective field. ▲



TAAI Regions and Chapters hold 2021 annual meetings, report on year-round activities presented

All Regions and Chapters of TAAI successfully completed its Members Annual Meeting for the year 2021. These were held virtually and few physically between November 1-10, 2021.



In the meeting, the Chairpersons presented their report on year-round activities organised in their respective Region/Chapter. At the same time, annual accounts of the respective Region/Chapter for the year ended 31st March 2021, was adopted.



Active members participated and attendance was overwhelming.

India's reopening for foreign tourists auspicious moment for aviation and travel trade industry: TAAI President

Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India observed that 15th November will be marked as an auspicious day for the travel trade industry with the arrival of foreign tourists in India after a long haul of almost two years.

She congratulated the Indian government and expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and Union Tourism Ministers of Tourism and Civil Aviation for supporting the travel trade to once again build on their business and revive their earnings.

"Our members and customers have both faced the brunt of soaring airfares to travel abroad. With limited airline options, no/ delay in visa processing, uninvited cancellations due to the fear of pandemic and unilateral policies of countries have impacted businesses immensely and both the service providers & travellers have suffered a lot," she added.

Hoping for resumption of commercial air traffic soon to mitigate the challenges, to motivate the travellers and also to utilise the free visa offer of the government, she conveyed her greetings and best wishes to the travel trade, and to the



travellers and re-emphasised the need for safe, secure, and hassle-free travel. ▲

Approval to Covaxin for international travel will further boost confidence among tourists: TAAI

Acceptance of Covaxin by various foreign governments has come at an opportune time when India Government is initiating granting visas and opening commercial flights in a phased manner, said Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) while appreciating the bold and stern steps taken by Prime Minister.

She further said that the Union Health Minister has infused confidence in the people engaged in the medical sector and people of India at large, after taking over the Ministry. A strategic and guided approach adopted by the Health Ministry has curbed the aftereffects of the pandemic to a larger extent.

"It is now the responsibility of the travel trade fraternity to devise safety strategies, educate travellers, and adopt/ implement



the latest technology which requires minimum human contact", she added.

Referring to the damage caused by the pandemic, she conveyed that an opportunity is now lying with the travel trade to adopt international best practices in order to revive soon. "Health and safety have now become a significant part of travel - globally, although it was always there, however, in order to attract tourists to India a dedicated effort in terms of marketing and promotion is a need of the hour", she further mentioned.

Whereas, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI said that it's time for the revival of tourism and the industry has already suffered a lot. "The travel agents now need to quickly act and get back to business in a collaborative way," he commented. ▲

With approvals flowing-in from different countries allowing vaccinated Indian travellers to fly, travel trade hopes for early revival of the industry: TAAI



Extending her best wishes and gratitude to the Governments of Thailand, Turkey, Singapore, Cambodia and many other nationalities, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) stated signs of early recovery are visible now and will definitely prove to be path breaking to the tourism industry and avid travellers, waiting eagerly to travel overseas. "It's a positive sign that widely used vaccines in India, Covishield and Covaxin are increasingly becoming more acceptable. Indian travellers visiting various countries will not have to serve the mandatory quarantine which can be seen as a huge relief and provides hassle free travel experience," she said.

"With more and more countries lifting travel ban and

opening borders to allow entry of international travellers amidst the ongoing global pandemic; this change has somewhat come as a ray of hope to set things back on track again," commented Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI added that in the new normal scenario, the travel and tourism industry stakeholders have their fingers crossed and eyes set on everyday changing guidelines as per the changing pattern of this pandemic varying from country to country.

While, Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI mentioned that the travel trade fraternity welcomes this move with open arms and they are all set to serve the travellers. ▲

Quarantine free entry of foreign travellers from 99 countries is a ray of hope to foster travel trade & economy amid this global pandemic: TAAI



On the basis of reciprocity, international travellers from all such countries that provide quarantine free entry to Indians are allowed to enter India with certain relaxations on arrival. Commenting on the arrangement, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) extended her greetings to the Indian authorities as the nation opened her door to fully vaccinated international tourists from all over the world beginning November 15. First set of international tourists who landed in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kochi, Hyderabad and Bengaluru were welcomed with full vigour.

Some of the countries currently considered at risk by India, which means the travellers from such would need to follow additional measures on arrival including additional testing. These nations are United Kingdom, South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Singapore.

While India has reached an agreement with 96 countries for mutual recognition of vaccination certificates, the status if printed on boarding pass will make procedure easier. Speaking on which, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI welcomed the move and added that vaccination status printed on flight boarding pass will make the travel hassle free and smooth.

With Covid vaccine being the new normal, the Government is also working on providing APIs for vaccination status at the time of web check-in with a mobile number. Appreciating the efforts, Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI said that technology is playing a major role in ensuring ease of travel, hassle-free and touchless check in. Whereas, Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI mentioned that the travel trade is fully geared up and prepared to provide all kinds of support foreign tourists coming to India. ▲

TAAI congratulates Goa tourist traders as state government gives 50% fee relaxation on various services



The Goa tourism department last week issued an order giving 50 per cent waiver on registration and renewal fees for various tourist trade activities. Shack operators as well as other service providers had demanded relief with business being badly hit from last two seasons. The stir was created as the department had implemented a new fee structure, hiking them for various services. Stakeholders wanted the state government to keep the implementation on hold until the situation improved.

Expressing her gratitude to the state government, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) President, Jyoti Mayal stated that this positive move at such hard times of economic disaster and it will help rebuild the trust of mediocre traders in the system and provide a safe passage to their business. "Those eligible to receive 50 per cent relief in registration and renewal fees are 'C' and 'D' category hotels, dealers, travel agents and tour operators, water sports activities, private shacks and huts, photographers, tourist guides, deck beds and umbrellas, adventure sports activities and spice plantations," she said.

On 25th August 2021, TAAI had interacted with the Goa

CM and the tourism ministry requested for relief for the industry. Assuring full support, the CM indicated that this proposal is being considered. The association is happy now that its efforts have yielded results.

Adding his views on the waivering of prices, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI congratulated the government and specified that this shall provide a huge relief to the people associated whose sustainability became difficult due to the prolonged lockdown.

Last season, only beach shack operators were given a discount on licence fees. This year, the benefit has been extended to more services. This is a very positive sign for the travel trade industry in Goa and will certainly give impetus for revival of business," mentioned Betaiah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI.

"Fees already paid for the financial year 2021- 2022 will be adjusted against that payable for the next year which shall give such small businesses a ray of hope and upliftment in the time to come," commented Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI. ▲

TAAI MP & Chhattisgarh Chapter organises Diwali Milan programme in Bhopal



With full vigour, the Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Chapter of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) organised and celebrated Diwali Milan programme at Bhopal on November 13. Speaking on the occasion, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that travel trade fraternity wishes to convey to the travellers that they are looking forward to welcoming them again. "We have rigorously worked on providing safe, hygienic, and hassle-free travel. Along with the celebration, an interaction with the members of the region was organised to brief them about the activities, plans, and current situation of the industry," she said.

Mr. Hemendra Singh Jadon, Chairman, TAAI MP & Chhattisgarh Chapter conveyed his best wishes and thanked the entire travel trade industry of the state for being patient

and supportive during the last two years, which have been the worst for the trade due to the pandemic. "I am sure that this feeling of togetherness will definitely increase bonding amongst the members," he said.

Representatives from the region had a great time networking and interacting with each other as the get-together provided an opportunity to revisit physical meetings, a regular affair in the pre-Covid era. Members joined with their spouses and family members in large numbers.

On the occasion, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board also had a wonderful interaction with TAAI members & showed their keenness to work more in a collaborated manner with them to promote tribal, rural, wellness and all other aspects of tourism to promote Madhya Pradesh. ▲

Ms Mayal calls upon Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to India

TAAI President Mrs. Jyoti Mayal called upon H. E. Francois Delhaye – Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to India, in New Delhi on 17th Nov. She was well received and greeted.

Both exchanged pleasantries and discussed various collaboration opportunities to develop and promote tourism between both the countries and expressed desire to closely work Belgium. ▲



Indian culinary has put us on the world map: Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI at event for street food vendors



Speaking at the launch of the recognition of a prior learning program for street food vendors in the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC), on November 30. Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) extended her gratitude to all the dignitaries and attendees for joining the deliberations. She highlighted the importance of street food as an integral part of the hospitality chain and how food and beverages connect the entire country in its various forms which thus makes it even more important than the quality of food available to us should be hygienic and safe for consumption.

"There is a need for better services to reach our customers, more opportunities to the vendors in revenue and awareness of regulations and adhere to stipulated rules and better services for the local bodies. This program will look firstly at recognising the existing skills of the vendors through formal qualification and secondly provision of necessary value-added knowledge and skills to increase productivity and enhance livelihood pathways," she mentioned.

She felt that there is a need to be more synergies between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Mrs. Mayal, who is also the Chairperson of the Tourism &

Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) said, "As we rebuild our growth, it is clear the Indian tourism sector needs to reinvent and reboot itself. We are committed to supporting the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to aid our "Atmanirbhar mission" which can help bring various vulnerable groups into our ambit and make them a part of our recovery mission. India is a country of cuisines. Not only Indians but even foreigners enjoy the culture & cuisine of India, and this will be a catalyst of the growth of tourism and the economy.

THSC in partnership with EDMC will train 2,500 street food vendors which will help the vendors to improve their skills and the quality of food being served. The focus is to improve the skills level in the unorganised sector which is an integral part of the sector. The trained vendors will also be a potential e-cart licensees in the EDMC area.

Mr. Rajan Bahadur, CEO, Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council of India (THSC), shared details of the curriculum which is of 32 hours. The candidates will be presented with dual certification by THSC & FSSAI.

The project was launched by the Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Mr. Rajeev Chandrasekhar in presence of Mayor EDMC, Chairman EDMC, Secretary MSDE, Chairperson THSC and CEO, THSC. ▲

Another big tick on the list as Singapore & India reaches agreement on commercial flights: TAAI



Commenting on the proposed resumption of flights between India and Singapore from November 29 under the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL), Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) extended her warm wishes and gratitude to the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and India's Ministry of Civil Aviation on the resumption of scheduled commercial flights between the two countries.

Singapore's VTL with India will start with six designated flights daily from Chennai, Delhi, and Mumbai. Applications for vaccinated travel passes for short term and long-term pass holders from India will start from November 29. "Taking such a step-in time of Covid prevalence is indeed a bold move which will not only strengthen the relations between the two countries but will also work as a revival of tourism sector. I strongly feel that more commercial flights are needed to revive inbound tourism to India," she further quoted.

Airlines can also operate non-VTL flights between the two countries, although passengers on non-VTL flights will be subjected to the prevailing public health requirements. "We

at TAAI have been in constant dialogue with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India. The opening of the skies for international commercial passenger routes highlighting our concerns on ease of doing business," said Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Taking positive efforts, TAAI Southern Region in association with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) organised a travel webinar earlier this year in July which witnessed a large participation. "Such productive decisions are always welcomed by tourism sector and travel associations as the good part of the economy is dependent on travel and tourism. Economy everywhere needs a good revival especially after Covid trauma," said Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI.

"Travel agents continue to be acknowledged as one stop solutions for customers, guiding and professionally managing all aspects of domestic and/or international travel which now includes complying with Covid requirements of departing and arriving at destinations," said Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI as he also extended his thanks to the authorities of both the countries. ▲



TAAI congratulates ICC for successfully organising Annual Session & AGM, joins interactive session with Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia



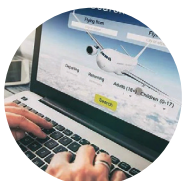
TAAI President Jyoti Mayal had fruitful interactive discussions with the Union Aviation Minister virtually where he was very positive on collaborations and working together with travel trade to support the industry.

The Indian Chamber of Commerce's (ICC) Annual Session and AGM, which was held virtually on 24th November, was joined by Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia as Chief Guest who interacted with members and industry stakeholders. Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) also joined the session.

Mayal, who is also the Chairperson of the Travel and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) and Member of the ICC

Aviation & Tourism Steering Committee on the occasion congratulated ICC for successfully organising Annual Session & AGM and said that she is very pleased hearing Union Minister's positive and futuristic youth approach and feels excited. She sought his intervention and consideration for Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to think beyond airlines and also towards our 3,000 plus members who bear the brunt of no ease of business, no consideration of policies, no collaborative understandings, no one to share our pleasure and pain specially when airlines default and take away our & the consumers hard earned tax paid income.

During her interaction, she asked the Minister to discuss the opportunities to work together in detail. ▲



TAAI President as Guest of Honour at Travel World Online's launch

Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI was invited as Guest of Honour to launch Travel World Online app, which was held on 24th Nov. A platform developed to promote travel and tourism where all major associations will have their presence to showcase their work and to forge business alliances. TAAI has partnered with Travel World and shall soon share the link to download app and avail

the attached benefits. ▲

Download the app by clicking on the link given below:

For Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.travelworldonline.twoapp>

For IOS: <https://apps.apple.com/in/app/travel-world-online-two-app/id1589955857>

TAAI appealed to Maharashtra Govt. to synchronise new COVID protocols with Central Govt.



Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) in its communication dated December 1 to Shri Aditya Thackeray, Minister of Tourism, Govt. of Maharashtra had appealed to synchronise the new COVID protocols, for domestic and international travellers, coming to Maharashtra, in line with the directive of the Central Government.

These guidelines for Maharashtra were issued by the Chief Secretary on 30th November'21, marking it mandatory for all travellers to carry an RT-PCR test report 48 hours before departure, before entering Maharashtra, irrespective of being dually vaccinated.

As regards international travel, it was mandatory for all arriving passengers from At-Risk Countries (as per GOI list) to undertake institutional quarantine for 7 days, due to which there is likelihood that passengers will be re-routing through other states and cities out of Maharashtra and shall stay for a day obtain RT-PCR and then arrive into Maharashtra.

Highlighting the inconveniences which will be borne by arriving passengers and drastic effects on the badly hit travel industry, TAAI appealed that Maharashtra follows standard universal protocols in sync with the Central Government for International as well as Domestic travellers arriving into the state.

Maharashtra Govt amended the travel rules for international and domestic passengers, to align its policies with that of the Central Government.

Welcoming this decision, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, said "At such times, when economic revival is the need of the hour, the decision brings so much relief. Now no RT-PCR test is required for fully vaccinated domestic flyers travelling to Maharashtra. Negative RT-PCR test report not older than 72 hours of departure would only be required for those who are partially vaccinated or unvaccinated."

"All states should have collaborated policies. We are one country and need one set of rules and regulations for the travel & tourism industry. With different policies, what will be the difference between international & domestic borders? TAAI has been advocating that we need coordinated policies globally for crossing international borders," she added.

"The state government has also narrowed down the list of inbound arrivals who need to undergo institutional quarantine from 12 to three ultra-high-risk countries – South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe" commented Jay Bhatia, Vice president, TAAI.

Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI added that such rule alteration will certainly provide some relief in these catastrophic times of business turmoil.

"This will further put a filter and a right check on the passengers who are entering the state to prevent the spread of pandemic and to refrain from another deadly wave or lockdown," said Shreeram Patel, Hon. Treasurer, TAAI. ▲

TAAI and Expo 2020 Dubai Roadshow in New Delhi a huge success



TAAI and Expo 2020 Dubai team organised a presentation for its members at the Park, New Delhi on 25th Nov'21 to educate members on the mega-trade show. It was attended by Jyoti Mayal - President TAAI, Anoop Kanuga - Managing Committee Member & Chairman of the Tourism Services Council and Neeraj Malhotra - Chairman, TAAI Northern Region.

Carl Vaz, Chairman & CEO, Charson Advisory Services, which is the official sales & marketing representative for Expo 2020 Dubai in India, made the presentation and answered queries on facilities, entry & access protocols, etc.

The airline partners - Emirates, Etihad and Fly Dubai informed members about their preparedness and services

offered to passengers travelling to UAE to attend the Expo.

As individually members will not be able to meet the targets to leverage the benefits of preferred agents for distribution of Dubai Expo tickets, TAAI offered to explore the opportunity of consolidating the same for its members so that it collects marketing fee from Expo organisers and distribute it to its members. This was proposed by Jyoti Mayal during the Road show.

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India will be organizing Tourism Week on Dubai Expo from 7th to 14th January 2022 and TAAI will be participating. She urged Dubai Expo and airline partners to support TAAI members with subsidised tickets to participate in the Tourism week and understand the product closely. ▲

Consulate General of India, Ho Chi Minh City organises webinar on 'Wedding Tourism in India & Vietnam - Kerala and Phu Quoc Island' on December 7

Consulate General of India, Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) organized an online tourism meet in association with Kien Giang Province of Vietnam on December 7. The Tourism Department of the State Government of Kerala also participated in the event.

The webinar discussed the Covid-19 induced disruption to the travel industry of India & Vietnam and explored ways to promote tourism of Phu Quoc island for Indian tourists and India for Vietnamese.

Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI, was invited as a speaker and shared her thoughts on how to promote tourism between both countries. ▲



WEDDING TOURISM
IN INDIA & VIETNAM
KERALA AND PHU QUOC ISLAND
Virtual meet | Họp trực tuyến
DU LỊCH ĐÁM CƯỚI
TẠI ẤN ĐỘ & VIỆT NAM
KERALA VÀ ĐẢO PHÚ QUỐC
14H30 (VST) | 13H00 (IST)
07/12/2021

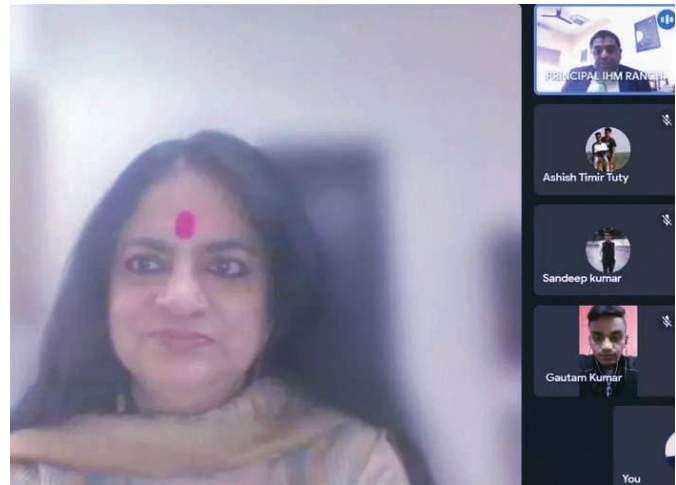
Welcome Aboard!
(latest by Dec 05, 2021)

Patience is a virtue on the road to recovery: Jyoti Mayal during interaction with students of IHM Ranchi

Institute of Hotel Management Ranchi (IHM) established in the year 2019 is an autonomous institution under the Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs, Govt. of Jharkhand conducting various degree diploma and short term courses in various hospitality trades under the academic umbrella of National Council for Hotel Management, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

The first batch of B.Sc. Hospitality & Hotel Administration (H&HA) is expected to pass out in May/June 2022. In its endeavour to provide excellent academic and co-curricular inputs, IHM institute conducted "Smart Classes for Personality Development" for the final year students, virtually on December 1.

In this regard, TAAI President Mrs. Jyoti Mayal conducted the session on "Future of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Industry" and shared the industry's perspective with students in terms of proficiency with technology, soft skills, emotional maturity and global mindset. She narrated how this industry has overcome such challenges in the past and expressed confidence that it will bounce back



vigorously, thereby contributing to the country's economy and serving as a potential catalyst of employment generation nationally and internationally. ▲

Government trying its best to prevent the spread of Omicron variant, acknowledge steps taken by authorities: TAAI President

Expressing concerns over the spread of new Covid-19 variant Omicron globally and appreciating the efforts of the Indian Government in curbing the spread of the virus and the fear, Jyoti Mayal, President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that Government is doing whatever is best they can to prevent the spread of this deadly virus. "We as an association acknowledge the steps taken by the authorities."

She extended her gratitude to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) for making this decision best in time of testing passengers (especially from 'risk countries') for further stopping the spread of the virus in the country which could have had disastrous repercussions like shutting down various sectors including tourism. "We all have already seen the worst and what it has done to our pockets,



we cannot afford another lockdown because of any carelessness," she commented.

The Omicron variant is reported to have a significantly high number of mutation rates and thus has serious public health implications for the country, in view of recently relaxed visa restrictions and opening up of international travel. "The need of the hour is to work collectively and build a safer environment by following all the guidelines issued by the Government in order to avoid catastrophe if any," she added.

The Government of India has an agreement for mutual recognition of vaccination certificates with over 100 nations for individuals fully vaccinated with nationally recognised or WHO recognised Covid-19 vaccine and those exempting Indian citizens fully vaccinated with nationally recognised or WHO recognised vaccines. ▲

Compulsion of Air Suvidha for incoming international arrivals is a good step to further prevent the catastrophe: Jyoti Mayal

Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare have made it mandatory for all international passengers arriving in India to declare their current health status prior to boarding on the Air Suvidha Portal. The exemption forms from the Air Suvidha Portal have been discontinued, and filling of the details have been made compulsory for all international arrivals in India.

Commenting on this, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said, "Air Suvidha is first of its kind 'digital portal for easing international passenger arrival in India; developed by MoCA which aids passengers in providing their details of travel and final stay along with RTPCR, vaccination status. Therefore, making it mandatory for incoming international arrivals is definitely a good step to further prevent the catastrophe.

"Updates like segregation of passengers from at risk countries to normal countries by singling them out with a red band and marking with 'H' while associating the green colour with the latter, keeping a tap on passengers journey in the last 14 days, updating the FAQ list are some of the 'in time' decisions which might bring down the risk of virus spread," pointed out Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

There also have been changes made to the list of passengers arriving/transiting from countries at risk, "Submitting self -declaration form on the portal, uploading



RTPCR status, self -quarantining for seven days and retesting on the eight day are necessary requirements in the way to avoid shutting down of newly opened tourism sector after a long halt" commented Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI.

Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI also supported the government's decisions of making such process mandatory in view of rising corona virus and said that this would somewhere benefit the travel trade and people in general. ▲

Saudi Tourism Virtual Destination Presentation - 8th December 2021

Saudi Tourism in association with TAAI Karnataka Chapter hosted a webinar on 8th December 2021 to introduce members to Saudi Arabia which has a tremendous potential as a tourist and MICE destination.

Members of Karnataka Chapter participated in huge numbers, including frontline staff engaged in selling tourism products. ▲

TAAI - Expedia Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP) Webinar on 10th December, 2021

TAAI extended support to Expedia Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP) webinar which was organized by Dex Group on 10th December, 2021. There was introduction by Mr. Ramesh Marwah from Dex Group, who welcomed members.

There was power point presentation on how this ready-built, web-based booking platform that combines accommodations, flights, car rentals, and activities, will empower agents to grow their business and its benefits.

In the Q & A session, lucky draw vouchers were awarded to 5 participants. ▲



TAAI-VFS jointly organised webinar on 15th December '21

TAAI and VFS organized an interactive webinar/session for members of Northern Region, Punjab Chapter, Chandigarh Chapter & UP & UK Chapter. The objective was to understand and address the challenges TAAI Members were facing while applying for visa through VFS after reopening travel and the embassies and how to convert it into opportunities collectively.

The meeting was presided by Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI and attended by TAAI Chairpersons of Northern Region and Chapters of Punjab, Chandigarh and UP & UK. The delegation from VFS included Subhashish Ganguly, Manpreet Arora, Shalini Arora and Talvinder Singh. ▲

Sri Lanka MICE Expo 2021 organises “Virtual Business Forum for Incentive Organizers” on December 2

Sri Lankan MICE Expo 2021 organised a “Virtual Business Forum for Incentive Organizers” on December 2.

This forum witnessed Sri Lankan and foreign Incentive professionals attending the event online and physically at the BMICH in Colombo. The forum is aimed to act as a platform where stakeholders of the Incentive industry met in one place to discuss the future of the Incentive industry

Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI, who was an eminent speaker, narrated about “Indian Incentive Industry Trends & Forecast” and opined how MICE tourism will continue to be one of the key revenue spinners of the travel and tourism economy in modern times.

She threw light upon digital and hybrid meetings and events that often create networking opportunities for sponsors to engage with participants. For increasing the outreach and enhancing the experience, she added that hybrid events, generation clean - the new generation of hotel guests, less and local travel, food and beverage change, sustainability etc. could be the key source of revenue in the future.



She mentioned the benefits of MICE over leisure tourism like spending two-three times over, high yield, extended length of stay and increased tax revenue. ▲

Jyoti Mayal’s term as TAAI President extended by a year as the Members take key decision at Association’s EGM

TAAI’s Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) was held through video conferencing on Monday, 29th November, 2021 at 11.30 hours.

The Managing Committee of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) had recommended to extend the term of the current Managing Committee upto 30th September 2022 in view of the prevailing COVID – 19 global pandemic situation. This resolution was read out by Hon. Secretary General Bettaiah Lokesh to the General Body which unanimously accepted and adopted the resolution.

Hence, the term of the current Managing Committee which was duly elected at the 68th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association held on 28th November 2019, now stands extended upto 30th September 2022.

President Ms. Jyoti Mayal, Vice President Mr. Jay Bhatia, Hon. Secretary General Mr. Bettaiah Lokesh and Hon. National Treasurer Mr. Shreeram Patel, will continue to be at the helm of affairs and take forward the Association with entire Managing Committee. The term of the Region & Chapter Office Bearers also got extended.

70th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of TAAI was also

held on 29th November 2021 at 1400 hours through video conferencing to transact statutory business.

Welcoming members President Ms Jyoti Mayal highlighted the Association’s achievements including signing of various MoU’s signed to educate and update the travel fraternity; efforts taken to restart businesses in form of air bubbles, selling through GDS; issues taken up at IATA/ APJC; initiatives under UFTAA, FAITH, THSC, WITT; tie-ups with Universities; taking out NamastAAI; and organising a successful Knowledge Conclave in Kevadia, Gujarat in March 2021.

She complimented the current team for working unitedly for the betterment of the membership and travel trade in spite of challenges and adversaries and thanked members for their support.

The house unanimously approved and adopted “Report of the Managing Committee for the year 2020 – 21” and “Annual Audited Accounts of the Association for the year ended 31st March 2021”

The existing auditors, GMJ & Co were reappointed as the statutory auditors for the financial year 2021 – 22. ▲

A long wait is finally over as the Bengal-Sikkim rail project picks up pace: TAAI

The work on rail connectivity from West Bengal to Sikkim has made quick progress after Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ticked off officials from Railways and the West Bengal government early this year. The government has set December 2023 as the deadline for this crucial northeast connectivity project.

Extending her wishes and gratitude to the Prime Minister and the government of West Bengal, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, said, "The wait was long but finally the destination has arrived after 10 years of wait. This will not only strengthen the boundaries but also foster tourism which is a need of the hour. Currently, Sikkim and Kalimpong districts are dependent solely on NH-10A from Siliguri which most often gets disrupted due to landslides, this project will ease out that burden and make a smooth passage for visitors."

Following the PM's push, approvals from the West Bengal government came fast and the pace of digging the tunnel has increased. "There has been an immense increase of more than three fold in the past six months from 300 meters a day to 1 km per day and it is likely to touch 1.3 km daily by December end," quoted Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.



Adding to it, Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary-General, TAAI mentioned that such dedication and good speed will definitely prove to be beneficial for the accomplishment of such a huge project in the way of tourism. After getting necessary approvals from the West Bengal government and forest department in June 2019, activities at all the fronts were planned for executions.

Mentioning the pros of the project Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI said that it will provide all-weather connectivity to Sikkim. This will be a big boost for tourism in the region and has strategic significance for the defence of the country. ▲

Extending international flight ban would further create chaos for the newly-opened tourism sector: TAAI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) extended the suspension of international scheduled passenger flights till January 31, 2022, however international flights will continue to operate under the air bubble arrangement as the aviation authority clarified in a communication last week.

The decision to resume regular international flights from December 15 was put in abeyance in light of the evolving situation pertaining to the Omicron variant of Covid-19. While announcing the scrapping of the resumption, the DGCA had said that the effective date of resumption would be announced in due course.

Commenting on the decision, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said, "Keeping in mind the economy structure and travel trade, this move may not prove to be a wise decision so to speak, things have just started to pick up and such restriction could hamper the functioning and delay the recovery."

While, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI commented that it is a good call from citizens' health's prospect but having said that further extension might prove to be an economic disaster.

Adding to it, Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI mentioned that

these types of bans were imposed earlier also but unfortunately this couldn't refrain virus from spreading. To keep things under control without disturbing the economy much, the Government should ponder upon different ways apart from such restrictions," he said.

Scheduled international passenger flight services have been suspended since March 23, 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic but special international flights have been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May 2020 and under bilateral air bubble arrangement since July 2020.

"If the government has decided that the only way out to fight this pandemic is imposing international flight restrictions, then they should also work effectively on increasing the bilateral air bubble arrangements

with other various countries," stated Shreeram Patel, Treasurer TAAI.

India has signed air bubble pacts with 33 countries including the US, UK, UAE, Australia, and France which needs to be increased with immediate effect to balance out the losses that will occur with international flight ban extension, opined the TAAI team. ▲



Job-oriented courses supported by MOT will boost youth's morale & write-off unemployment: TAAI

Speaking about the initiative, TAAI praised the Government for initiating job-oriented courses for the youth under the supervision of Ministry of Tourism (MOT), which are on in full swing in Srinagar's Institute of Hotel Management. Students are offered various courses that include the degree as well as diploma, which will provide them with jobs at the end of their courses.

"This is a healthy way to boost employment among the youth and providing them the security of jobs at the end of their courses will surely build a sense of trust in them and the numbers for enrolment would likely to spike high," said Jyoti Mayal, President TAAI.

With the support of the Ministry of Tourism the track record has been inspirational and encouraging despite the conditions that are prevailing in the valley and campus interviews are taking place accordingly for the placements.

Interest of the students in the valley has increased over the past three years and this could be seen as a parameter of decent success. "Youth involving themselves in such job-



oriented courses is beneficial not only to them but also in terms of tourism and economy which shall reap a good crop," said Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Jammu and Kashmir is known as heaven on earth and a favourite tourist spot for locals and foreigners combined; "Introducing such job oriented courses there would further promote a good tourist base and also engage the youth in something productive and money oriented who have already seen so much of turmoil in the past years," commented Bhattaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI.

Extending his gratitude to the Ministry, Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI added that day by day the competition is increasing, one should really be prepared for the time ahead and these courses would definitely fuel the economy and give students the right platform to prove themselves globally. "A decision taken at the right time does dual benefit and this pandemic era is surely that "right time" to make bold moves and save ourselves from perishing," he said. ▲

TAAI in association with Amadeus organised webinar on December 13 to educate its members on NDC

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) associated with Amadeus to educate its members on NDC and termed it the way forward for airline ticketing to enhance and up sell activities to clients. The association has a motive to prepare its members for the future technological changes to adopt, educate and enhance the business potential through the New Distribution Capability (NDC) along with Amadeus 1A platform. This webinar was conducted on 13th Dec'21.

During the webinar, Rakesh Bansal, CEO, Amadeus India & Subcontinent talked about how travel powers progress and Amadeus powers travel and how his company has pioneered the travel technology market in India for 27 years now. Moving forward, Bansal invited, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI who talked about her vision to raise the standards of tourism industry.

She emphasised on the need to focus on restructuring, rebooting, re-aligning businesses which has seen a massive setback due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "Going down in the history, TAAI and Amadeus have had a long relationship and we are once again collaborating for our mutual benefits. NDC is basically a new communication protocol replaced by the old protocol that has been around since 1980's and through this channel we are allowing airline service providers to deliver rich content to our customers since this is the only way to market ourselves and develop a distinguish brand name," she stated.

She added that the Association's top priority is to cater to the needs of customers which has doubled since this pandemic. Going forward, NDC expert Ramona Bohwonaprasart,

Senior VP- India & Southeast Asia - Inside Sales Travel Sellers, Amadeus talked about the relevance of NDC for the industry stakeholders and shared the global perspective of its use.

Nitesh Senapati, Head of NDC growth, APAC, Amadeus and Swati Bhatia, Head Products & Solutions – Indian Subcontinent, Amadeus India, presented data and spoke about India being the potential scorer despite uncertainty around. They echoed thoughts shared by Mayal and put forth how NDC is bringing these retailing capabilities to life. The stable platform of Amadeus has a fully open system providing flexibility, scalability and equipped with high normalisation, integration, operational efficiency, and dual payment method that makes Amadeus different from others in the market.

TAAI members can get latest updates on industry trends and Amadeus' upcoming NDC enabled solutions first-hand from the industry experts like the booking of NDC content on Amadeus, selling platform connect, checking out the key capabilities, how to get connected to NDC content in Amadeus. They could further learn about latest airlines that are Amadeus NDC enabled and insights on future NDC roadmap.

The webinar showcased all the features of the system and also compared it to other platforms, singling out key features like its availability only on graphical user interface which makes it unique and easy to access.

TAAI members actively participated in this educative webinar & many questions were raised & answered. This truly was one of the most educative webinar. ▲



TAAI participates in ‘Business Opportunities’ meeting between India and Romania in Chennai

TAAI MC Dr. P.Murugesan attended an event at the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce, Chennai on December 3. The event was focused on the business opportunities between India and Romania, HE. Mrs. Daniela Mariana SezonovTane, Ambassador of Romania, HE.Mr. Vijay Mehta, Hon.Consul of Romania, HE.Mr.Purshottam Bhaggeria, Hon. Consul of Moldova were among the dignitaries who attended the event. TAAI Managing Committee Member Dr P Murugesan represented the Travel Agents Association of India.

Romania is wooing Indian investors to invest in areas like digitalisation of the agriculture sector, irrigation infrastructure, drainage and soil erosion, mechanisation and the extensive use of modern technology, collecting, storage systems and processing of agricultural products and the organic farming segment. Investors will get various fiscal incentives to set up their operations in the country. Officials from Romania, at a meeting, said that the country is a good gateway for Indian goods to access various markets in Europe. ▲



S Jeyasekaran represents TAAI at Tourism Malaysia Appreciation & Networking session on December 16

Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Malaysia conducted an appreciation & networking session on December 16 at ITC Grand Chola, Chennai. Mr Razaidi ABD Rahim, Director, TM Chennai delivered welcome remarks at the event. Ms Kavitha welcomed the guests and presented the Program. TAAI

Southern Region was represented by Honorary Treasurer Mr S Jeyasekaran. TAAI Southern Region was represented by Honorary Treasurer Mr S Jeyasekaran. He also received the appreciation award on behalf of TAAI, in recognition of the ongoing commitment and dedicated support in 2020 and 2021. ▲



TAAI joins Tamil Nadu Tourism Minister for inauguration of IITM in Chennai



TAAI Managing Committee Member Dr P Murugesan was invited to grace the Inauguration ceremony of the travel trade show held on October 18 and 19, at ITC Grand Chola , Chennai. Honourable Tourism Minister of Tamil Nadu, Shri M Mathiventhan, inaugurated the India International Travel Mart (IITM) in Chennai amidst the presence of Tourism Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu, TAAI Managing Committee Member Dr P Murugesan , IITM Director Mr Rohit Hangal and other dignitaries from Travel and Tourism Industry.

Sharing details about the event, Dr P Murugesan informed that TAAI was invited to join the inauguration ceremony and represent the travel trade. He further said in-person travel exhibitions are a good sign for the recovery

of the industry and the stakeholders should come forward to support each other.

After the inauguration, the Tourism Minister congratulated the organisers for a good show and said that their efforts will definitely help in promoting tourism. In a Twitter post, the minister said, "Sphere Travel Media & Exhibitions this year organised the India International Travel Mart (IITM) in Chennai, showcasing the specialities of various state tourist destinations promoting tourism across the country. States like Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and others presented their unique tourism attractions and offerings through video and films. I hope their efforts to promote tourism will definitely bear fruits. My heartfelt congratulations to all the organisers of this event." ▲



Last-minute booking cancellations pose threat to already-fragile tourism recovery: TAAI

Concerns over the Omicron coronavirus variant and fresh travel restrictions have led to a spike in hotel and travel booking cancellations globally and have put an added pressure on the already fragile tourism industry. The Omicron outbreak has led to a flurry of new testing rules and border closings, raising concerns ahead of the important Christmas travel season.

Commenting on which Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said, "Cancellation rates have increased to 35 per cent since November 2021 and holiday travel planning was down to 10 per cent and most travellers were choosing domestic destinations. Multiple events ranging from sports and trade shows to corporate parties have been canceled, also leading to a slowdown in hotel bookings. Things could become hard to manage and recovery at this on- off pace would do no good to the revival, she also urged the government not to go for the previous same structure of overall shutdown."

Comparing the statistics with the previous financial years, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI said that overall activity around holiday travel planning has slowed down, growing by just four per cent since the variant was discovered. "By comparison, Christmas travel increased by 34.7 per cent in the same one-to-two-week period in 2019," he pointed out.

"Last month, there was a decent increase in the number of travellers and bookings which was taken as a good sign for



the tourism sector to replenish, but this new variant followed by changed guidelines and decrease in the travellers' traffic have altered the scenario and posed a serious threat on the already weakened industry," added Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI.

While, Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI mentioned, "Uncertainty is all over the place, people are unsure what step to take next whether to plan a trip or spend the holiday season homebound. There is a sense of confusion, and it is now the role of the authorities to come into the picture and guide people about the possible situations that can arise and help them sail through." ▲

Adopting Uttarakhand's homestays model can be considered to kickstart economy & boost business: TAAI

Appreciating the steps taken by the Uttarakhand government to promote homestays, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has urged the Centre to consider the same model for other states as well while saying that 'such baby steps would prove to be fruitful in the time to come.'

"We have already seen the worst and speaking from the wise man's perspective, we all must know the survival amid COVID by now. We need to keep ourselves more than ready to go to any lengths if we want our tourism sector to flourish" Mayal commented.

The Uttarakhand government aims to boost the economy and tourism sector in the state through homestays which are on their way to be prepared in the villages too. Around 3,600 homestays are registered so far providing employment to 8,000 people.

Sharing his opinion on the employment generated by these homestays, Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI said, "This seems to be a welcoming move especially in the times when people

who lost their jobs and bread winners in this pandemic are in dire need of money."

Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI in his comments acknowledged the state government's move for engaging people and generating business and revenue. "The government is already providing self -employment through various schemes and has also simplified the process of loans; this homestay plan would not only provide bread to the locals but also boost tourism from travellers who like to enjoy local and comfortable places rather than luxury hotels."

"We all have seen a lot in the years gone by and are definitely ready if situations become fatal, but we cannot afford to let this pandemic be a hindrance in any way to our businesses. We as an industry stand strong and shall try our best to come up with ideas to keep the flow alive and we wholeheartedly support any good move like homestays that are directed towards strengthening the economy and boosting the travel sector," stated Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI. ▲

TAAI participates in ETTravelWorld's Roundtable discussion on "Omicron and Travel Recovery: What to Expect" on 22nd Dec

After a gruesome 20 months of no or very little business, the Indian travel and tourism industry was slowly returning on the path of recovery. However, the Omicron variant has now created new roadblocks and halted this recovery. The brief pause has brought back the mantra of, 'Survival before Revival' as consumer confidence is a little shaken, especially for international travel. With the rising fear and panic around the spread of the virus, countries have again started bringing up new guidelines and restrictions, which are a deterrent for travel restricting travellers from making any plans. With hopes of revival in sight and overview of good business in 2022, leaders and experts from the travel and tourism industry got on a live conversation during a Roundtable Discussion organised by ETTravel World on the topic, Omicron and Travel Recovery: What to Expect and shared thoughts on what the future holds for the industry in 2022.

The session moderated by Peden Doma Bhutia, Editor,



ETTravelWorld, saw discussion on the current scenario in the industry and what can be expected in the times to come. The panelists included Vipul Prakash, Chief Operating Officer, Make My Trip; Dipak Deva, Managing Director, Travel Corporation of India and Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI).

Discussing the hurdles the industry is facing in its road to recovery and are there any bright spots for 2022, the leaders said that the situation looks challenging with the way things are moving but there is light at the end of the tunnel. Ms. Mayal in her comments said even survival has become hard. "Things are challenging the way they are moving, new protocols every now and then are frustrating. The hurdle is more in our mind than actually it is, and I believe we will have to learn to live with Covid. We are taking baby steps currently and I strongly believe as I reiterate, we need to work together in a collaborative manner with more coordinated policies from the government," she said. ▲

TAAI requests MOT to start state-wise registration drive, set up an Outbound Tourism Desk

TAAI, in its focus 2022 document presented to Shri Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism highlighted that how the government's support and encouragement to tourism and help travel trade stabilise and sustain the challenges posed by COVID 19 pandemic. The association paid its gratitude and appreciated the ministry's efforts and support extended to the travel trade during the tough times.

Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI highlighted the key issue of accreditation of members and travel agents with MOT and requested them for undertaking a state-wise registration drive along with TAAI, for the trade members to register with MOT. "We request to relax norms for over 1,400 IATA accredited agents, who are members of TAAI and automate the registration process," she said. She also took up the issue of setting up an Outbound Tourism Desk, which she said is urgently needed to support and regularise the operations for outbound travel from India.

She also brought up the issue with airport entry passes for tour operators and urged them to resume the services like before. "We urge you to ensure smooth handling of inbound/outbound and domestic special groups, children, seniors and other travellers, who require our hand-holding be permitted to apply for such permits, like before. Special arrival handling by

trade members for inbound and outbound tourists shall not only assist but also glorify Incredible India," she added.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President elaborated that TAAI wishes to commence certified educational programs for its members and the entire trade on Incredible India. "Training on NDC / GDS / visa rules, inbound, outbound, MICE organisers, education on financial matters, agro-tourism packages etc. are a few programs that could be designed by TAAI on the basis of the experience and expertise its members hold because of the understanding of the challenges and being part of the trade since many decades.

Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI commented that the Indian travel trade faces a lot of challenges while promoting both inbound and outbound tourism, and competing in the global world, especially pertaining to the GST, TCS, Credit Control, Tax rebates, incentives, support and much more. Taxes like such need to be abolished or at least substantially reduced, to start with, so that our Indian travel trade can compete in both inbound and outbound market and generate a huge foreign exchange for the exchequer.

Shreeram Patel, Hon. Treasurer, TAAI highlighted and emphasised the importance of MOT being the one point of contact for all issues of travel trade and ensuring that other Ministries in the government support and encourage the fraternity to do business with ease.

TAAI National office bearers unanimously, in the Focus 2022 document, urged that these points must be jointly addressed to ensure that India leaps in the future to regain its past glory. ▲

Increasing air bubble flight agreements with more countries will give much-needed impetus to business: TAAI



Soon after the Indian government signed yet another air bubble travel agreement with Australia, followed by signing the dotted lines with Saudi Arabia there are speculations and responses all around in the industry, mostly of which are positive, and the increasing agreements are being looked upon as some sigh of relief for the Indian aviation fraternity. After the latest agreement, direct flights between India and Saudi Arabia will commence soon, as the agreement will come into effect from January 1, 2022.

Speaking on the development, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) praised the government for taking a wise step in these times and expanding its air bubble flight agreement count for the betterment of travel and tourism sector and also the economy as a whole. "Such tough times call for an immediate action and I think this is the best that could be done to avoid travel difficulties to some extent," she commented.

With this agreement India has now an air bubble agreement with 34 countries including Afghanistan, Australia, Bahrain Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Russia and so on.

Commenting on which Jay Bhatia, VP, TAAI said that this has come as a good sign, and it has not only expanded the horizons of international travel for Indian travellers but has also worked as an element strengthening bilateral bonds. "The government earlier had informed the Parliament that they have proposals from 10 countries to sign the air bubble agreements out of which Australia and Saudi Arabia have been accepted as of now and definitely more to follow," he said.

"Scheduled international passenger flight operations will remain suspended in India till January 31 meanwhile agreements like these could work as a catalyst in taking business forward which already has seen an avalanche of ups and downs during Covid crisis," Bettiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI mentioned.

"Air Bubble agreements are one of the best solutions aimed at restarting commercial passenger services between the two countries when regular international flights are suspended due to Covid and the best part about these agreements is that they are reciprocal in nature which allows airlines from both the countries to enjoy similar benefits," stated Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI. ▲



Domestic tourism gears up as international travel ban extended further: TAAI

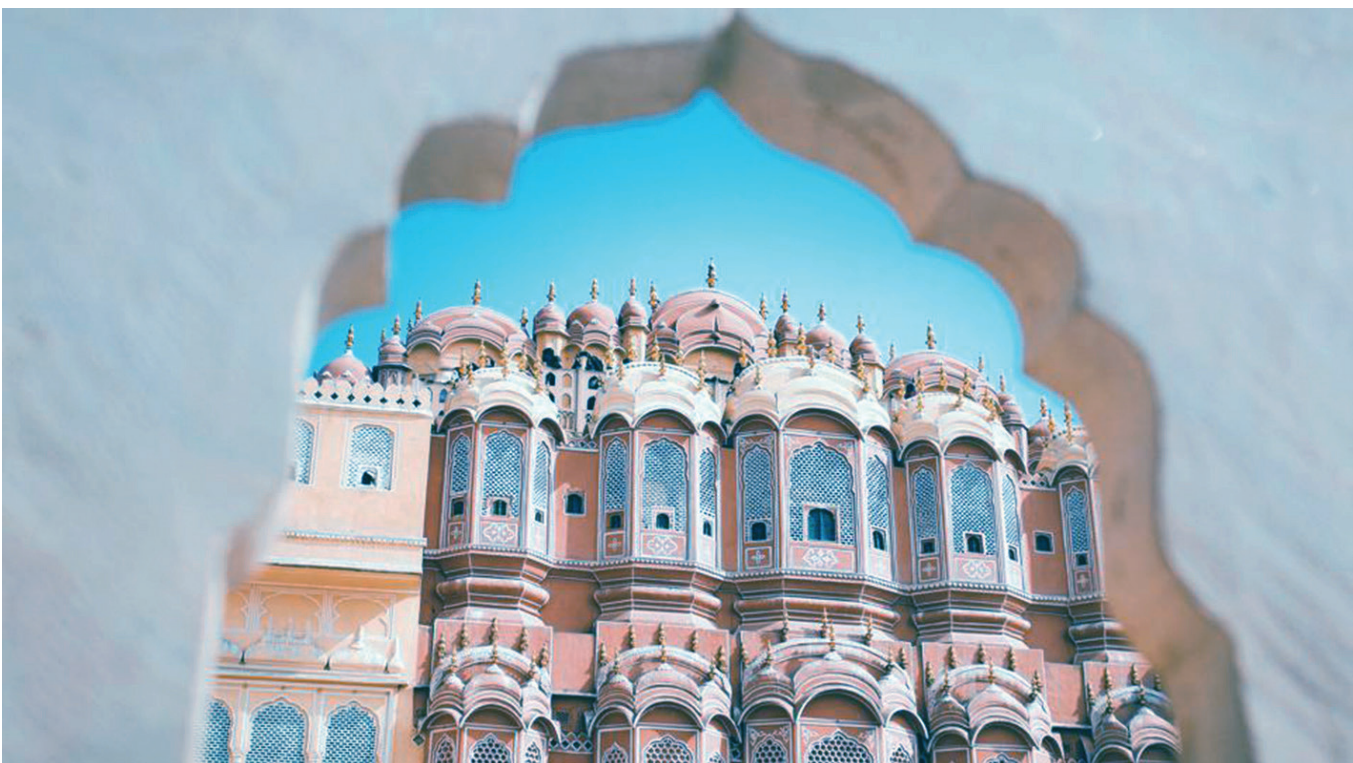
Amidst the global crisis of COVID-19, many businesses have faced a rough patch and tour and travel industry to be specific, has faced a massive crash with rising number of cases across the globe. With current restrictions on scheduled international commercial flights, it was assumed that this might be the end of the business but as they say where there is a will there's a way. Air bubble flight agreements and domestic travel came to the rescue when all hopes from the international travel business were sinking.

Commenting on the situation and rising prospects for domestic tourism in the country, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that it might be a drop in the ocean but at least it is looking like a ray of hope coming from the clouds after a heavy storm. "States like Kerala, Goa and Rajasthan which were already hit among travellers, especially foreigners, are now domestic traveller's favourite go to destinations to beat the COVID stress," she said.

"People are aware of the situations very well now and also about the rising cases of new Omicron variant, but still they are preferring to step out mainly because they have become too homebound and secondly, they want to breathe the outside air before being homebound again if another lockdown happens" she further stated.

Governments of Kerala, Goa and Rajasthan have set the bars high for other states in terms of tourism as they have come up with fun filled activities like maiden water fest launched by Kerala Tourism and light and sound shows being set up at five tourist places to promote tourism in Rajasthan in order to engage local people in the whole event and also to boost tourism in the state. Likewise, the state of Goa has seen a huge footfall with the state having relaxed travelling rules. In order to keep this momentum under control, industry stakeholders have demanded a more relaxed tax regime, streamlining of GST and tax structures for travel agents and tour operators.

Appreciating the steps taken by the state governments to promote tourism in harmony with the economy by engaging local people in it, Mayal mentioned that is something worth noting and inspirational. "Many states other than these have also come up with new tourism structures like the homestays model in Uttarakhand, which is seen as a new way to revive the economy. With such innovative ideas coming forward, I would appeal to other state governments to follow the same pattern and be "vocal for local" in order to revive industry to some extent until international travel is not opening," she further added. ▲



As an industry insider, it's always good to see the development of infrastructure for aviation to boost tourism: Jyoti Mayal



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new terminal building of the Maharaja Bir Bikram International Airport in Agartala, Tripura on January 4, 2022. The new airport is built on a 30,000 sq meter area and will be able to handle 1,000 domestic and 200 international passengers daily. The airport is currently the second busiest airport in the Northeast region.

Extending her good wishes to the government, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) commented that these previous two years have been a roller coaster ride - unpredictable and shocking but news like these works as a healer. "I have been in this industry for nearly four decades and as a veteran and industry insider, it's always good to see the development of infrastructure for the aviation sector, as tourism & travel and aviation go hand in hand and what happens in one place directly affects the other" she mentioned. Earlier the foundation stone of the Noida International Airport (NIA) in Jewar was placed last month in November, marking another achievement of the government in expanding the count of

airports in the country.

Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia and senior officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) would also be present at the programme. The new airport will house one hangar, six bays, 10 immigration counters, five customer counters, provision for link cabs and a bagging system in the new terminal.

"There are no questions when it comes to tourist spots in India, especially our northeast region offering heavenly nature and breath-taking sights. With such developments taking place in these regions, one could safely say that it would not only promote tourist footfall but also engage locals in employment which is a win-win situation for everyone," Mayal added.

The airport was first built as a military airstrip in 1942 on the land donated by the last ruler of the region and hence got its name. The airport currently managed by the AAI handles close to 5,000 passengers daily with close to 20 flights operating in and out of the airport. ▲



People keen to travel even during risky times: TAAI

The rising risks associated with Covid-19's Omicron variant has not dissuaded holiday makers from their plans this season as 58 per cent of citizens still plan to travel during December to March period as per a latest survey. Commenting on which Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) said that such enthusiasm from travellers has garnered a bag of mixed reactions. "While it is a good sign for the travel and tourism industry, it could also add to the already rising cases of COVID and its new variant and could potentially delay the process of revival. It is also a point worth noting that out of 58 per cent only 18 per cent of citizens have made their bookings so far. Whatever may be the case it is people's responsibility to follow all safety measures and the government's role to assure safe travel keeping in mind the economy along with people's health," she said.

"People have become too homebound during this pandemic that they are now kind of overlooking the risk and looking forward to step out in any way possible. This sounds promising if all the protocols and safety measures are followed properly," said Jay Bhatia, VP, TAAI.

Adding to which Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI stated that a comparative analysis of the latest survey with the one conducted in March 2021 showed that the enthusiasm level



of citizens to travel despite the omicron threat is higher than what it was before Delta and the second wave.

"If travel is to continue, it is an absolute must that central and state governments and various authorities enforce the mask and social distancing compliance on the ground, things can get out of hand very quickly if the restrictions and enforcement is not paid attention to," mentioned Shreeram Patel, Treasurer TAAI. ▲

'No Vaccine, No Entry' a good step, will help sensitise public: TAAI

Haryana Government has made the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination mandatory for people to enter malls, restaurants, banks, offices and other public places starting January 1, 2022.

As soon as this statement was issued many eyebrows were raised and speculations were made as this was an apt decision taken or not; speaking on which Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI said that it might be a good step in itself as it can create a sense of awareness and sensitize the general public about vaccination during COVID global pandemic. "Prohibiting entry for non-vaccinated people might prove to be helpful in containing the spread of this deadly pandemic and refraining such people entering into public places will prompt public to get fully vaccinated as early as possible fulfill their duty as citizen," she said.

Adding to which Jay Bhatia, VP, TAAI said, "Though the vaccination drive in the country is going on in full swing, there are still many areas to cover because of uneven distribution of the population and a large number of rural areas where health care facilities are not at par with urban areas. Such a rule might create inconvenience for people who are not



vaccinated and travelling for work. However, there is a need for uniform vaccination compulsion rule in all the states."

The Haryana guideline states that only fully vaccinated people will be allowed to travel from bus stands, railway stations and other places of gatherings like religious places, petrol and CNG stations, LPG gas cylinder collection centres, sugar mills, milk booths, ration shops also to allow only fully vaccinated people. "Such a decision could have a positive impact instead of the negative one. The decision sounds promising but considering the large number of population and availability of the vaccination slots especially in remote and rural areas might become a challenge but for the greater good, such steps are required," said Bettaiah Lokesh, HSG, TAAI.

"We all have seen the severity of this virus by now and how it affects us on so many levels. Vaccination plays a big role in decreasing its severity and avoiding deaths as much as possible. This move may turn out to be a successful one as the vaccination rate might increase significantly in the state," stated Shreeram Patel, Treasurer, TAAI. ▲

TAAi signs MoU with ABTO to promote Buddhist tourism in India



This MoU seeks to establish an understanding of the roles, commitments and partnerships between ABTO and TAAI especially for the Buddhist association's upcoming annual convention scheduled in December 2021.

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) to promote Buddhist tourism in India. Both the associations along with the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India will work together in the field of travel & tourism with an aim to promote Buddhist pilgrimage tourism, culture & nature tourism, MICE, corporate and other segments in the country. According to TMI, this MoU seeks to establish an understanding of the roles, commitments and partnerships between ABTO and TAAI especially for the Buddhist association's upcoming annual convention scheduled in December 2021.

Speaking on the occasion, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI stated that Buddhist tourism has huge potential as it binds Indians with Buddhist followers from across the globe. She applauded the efforts of MOT, state governments of Bihar & Uttar Pradesh, and Government of Nepal, and especially thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his support in



promoting Buddhist tourism and also for the recent initiative of inaugurating the Kushinagar International Airport. "With efforts like such, India will soon become the most visited destination for Buddhism followers," she added.

Vice President Jay Bhatia said that TAAI members would be glad to share their knowledge, experience and expertise for the development and promotion of the Buddhist tourism industry in India. He highlighted the importance of having a Joint Action Committee (JAC) in place to discuss strategies for the development and

implementation of collaborative programmes and projects of mutual benefits.

"It is indeed important to work jointly with government agencies of both our countries for the formulation of industry-friendly policies, schemes, and guidelines for the effective promotion of Buddhist pilgrimage travel and tourism, contributed Bettaiah Lokesh, Honorary Secretary-General, TAAI.

Shreeram Patel, Honorary Treasurer, TAAI highlighted the importance of marketing and promotion of the Buddhist tourism industry by jointly organising International travel shows & mart, roadshows and workshops in India as well as in other countries. ▲

YEAR OF HOPE

Today, India is in a far better position in terms of handling Covid and vaccination of a large number of population has boosted the morale of people. Besides this, realisation of living in Covid-era also plays an important role in making decisions-be it travel or anything else. That is why travellers are looking forward to their travel plans as they continue to embrace the new normal.



The year 2022 is now seen as the year of hope for the tourism sector and its growth. And this expectation is not without reason. Today, the entire world is better equipped with vaccines, booster doses etc. Not only that, people have come to terms that they are living in the Covid era and variants are a reality. To be more candid, this is the 'new norm' of life. As far as Omicron is concerned, of course, it is very contagious but far less virulent (as of now) when compared with that of the Delta. Many in the industry believe that various governments are overreacting on the issue. This reminds us of the comment of Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO. He said, "Closing borders will not prevent the spread of new variants. The latest variant is increasingly being detected in countries around the world. The way to keep safe is to focus on the vaccination status of individual travellers rather than placing whole countries onto red lists. Rather than stigmatising countries such as South Africa, which rely heavily on a strong Travel & Tourism, we should be applauding them for identifying this new variant so quickly." This speaks volumes of the situation.

Industry stakeholders strongly believe that the growth will be led by family reunions followed by avid travellers and people who travel to beat the stress. A closer look says that many travel agents and associations are now focussing on promoting travel the entire year rather than just focusing on seasons. This is the right step looking at the current situation and might prove to be a pragmatic step in the time to come.

With work from home being the new normal, people now have the luxury to travel throughout the year without waiting for particular seasons and vacations. This is a huge advantage for the industry and can be termed as a blessing in disguise. Apart from this, the concept of 'solo trip' is also gaining momentum and will surely add significantly to the emergence of the sector's health. The tourism industry is moving forward with all the necessary precautions and former experiences to tackle catastrophe if any. A massive decrease in the number of delta cases worldwide has surely provided a sigh of relief but the collective effort is necessary to keep things normal and in control. Lockdown crippled not just the economy but also the psychology of people all around the world who were forced to stay back at their homes to break the chain of corona spread. The tourism sector has significantly contributed not just in terms of just finances but also in the well being and happiness of people who always look up to travelling to beat their stress. This collective



Aashish Gupta,
Consulting CEO, FAITH

chaos was seen as something unmanageable in the first three quarters of 2020.

Towards the end of 2020, as the number of cases started reducing, people who were stuck at home for more than nine months started going out. But now what mattered more was the hygiene and the crowd of the hotels rather than the complimentary breakfast menu and the location of the property. Corona scared people to the limit that they started paying attention to the minute details which were not even into consideration earlier.

Let's understand how the business was done in the tourism industry from December 2020 to March 2021. During that period Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, Kerala, Andaman, the north-east region and Sikkim

had emerged as the most preferred destinations as most of these states had lifted travel restrictions. Many hotels and airlines did a brisk business. Of course, there was a scarcity of foreign tourists. What is important here, if we take the number of people vaccinated in that time and now, there is a huge difference and that is where the HOPE lies!

But as they say, there is dawn after every dusk. Hoteliers and travel agencies are not worried like last year because they have already seen the worst and now have backup plans in case there is a disaster like situation. But chances are slim for a disaster like situation.

Rather, the stakeholders in the industry are eagerly looking for scheduled international flights to resume. Aashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, FAITH, said, "The Indian Tourism Travel & Hospitality industry was eagerly looking forward to the resumption of international flights in December. Since March 2020 the inbound tourism has been shut and the flight's resumption as was earlier announced was one ray of hope. To salvage some business and have some cash flows to support tourism employment we look forward to a very early re-review of this decision of extension of flights if hopefully, the variant omicron doesn't pose a serious threat." According to him, Indian inbound earned almost \$ 30 bn pre-pandemic and October to March which is the main season was fully lost in 2020 half of this season lost in 2021.

Yes, resumption of international flight is necessary, once resumed, will address many issues of the travel & tourism industry, currently facing. Moreover, five lakh free e-visa being granted to tourists by

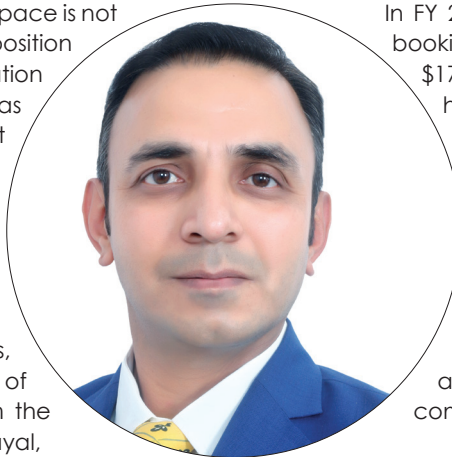


Jyoti Mayal
President

the government is meaningless if the airspace is not fully open. Today, India is in a far better position in terms of handling covid and vaccination of a large number of population has enhanced the image globally. Against this backdrop, the government should consider the early resumption of international flights. "India is a leader in sustaining and bringing the pandemic under control. Today, Indian travel trade, be it travel agents, tour operators, MiCE facilitators, Car Rentals, Hotels, Resorts or ground handlers, each one of them is geared to handle tourists from the world into India," pointed out Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI.

The covid-19 pandemic may have slowed down India's travel and tourism sector, but a new report expects it to bounce back and cross USD 125 billion by 2026-27. According to 'Travel market in India' by RedCore, research firm RedSeer's arm, the travel business in pre-pandemic India was USD 75 billion in FY19-20. This will expand beyond USD 125 billion by FY2026-27, taking into account both domestic travel, inbound and outbound travel by Indians. This really augurs well for the industry and in all probability, the growth process will start soon.

The report also said the country's travel market is dominated by about 300,000 travel agents who represent the largest volumes of business in bookings at about 52% and the role of these agents significantly increased after the pandemic. This is certainly good news for all the associations, particularly TAAI (being the largest association).



Hemendra Singh Jadon,
Chairman - TAAI M.P. & C.G.
Chapter

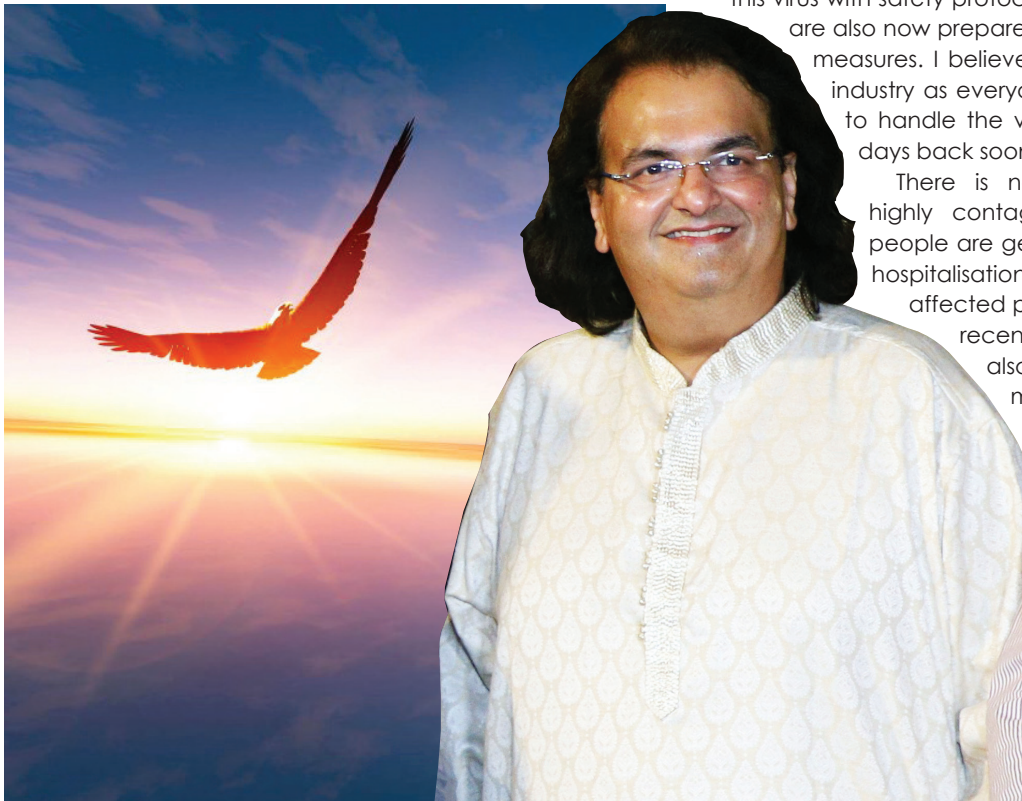
In FY 2019-20, a majority of these agent-based bookings came from holiday packages worth \$17 billion, flights (\$10 billion) and standalone hotel bookings of \$5 billion. Cabs and intercity buses and railways contributed the remaining USD 6 billion.

Agents are expected to add more than USD 65 billion to the travel market by FY26-27. "Travel in India is still heavily dependent on agents who people trust but also offer price competitiveness. They represent over half the travel market share and are expected to maintain this share in coming years," said RedCore.

According to the report, during covid, the uncertainties related to travel including tests, change of travel date, delay in travel due to restrictions motivated travellers to take the agent route for making the ticket booking.

No doubt, the growth of the industry will be led by domestic tourism followed by outbound and inbound sectors. By the time outbound and inbound sectors revive it is prudent to focus on the domestic sector. Jay Bhatia, Vice-President, TAAI, rightly pointed out, "Focusing efforts on encouraging domestic travellers to visit—and revisit—each destination; reinvigorating the workforce to enhance visitors' experiences; and reimagining India as a hub for business travel by keeping up to date with changing working norms." Echoing similar sentiment, Hemendra Singh Jadon, Chairman - TAAI M.P. & C.G. Chapter, said, "After the 2nd wave, we saw revenge tourism in domestic as well as international tourism (those countries which are open). I think now the travel industry is aware and ready to deal with this virus with safety protocols. Not only this, but travellers are also now prepared to travel by adopting safety measures. I believe now it should not affect our industry as everyone is familiar and knows how to handle the virus, hope to have our olden days back soon."

There is no denying that Omicron is highly contagious and more and more people are getting affected but the rate of hospitalisation is negligible in India and mostly affected people are asymptomatic. Two recent studies released recently also indicated that the highly mutated Omicron is associated with a lower risk of Covid-19 hospitalisation when compared to the Delta variant. This is good news and people associated with the industry believe that it's a passing phase and soon the sector will come back to its original form. ▲



Jay Bhatia
Vice President

Eastern Region

TAAI Eastern Region has constantly shown growth in the travel and tourism sector year after year. TAAI Eastern Region members met a few times in the past couple of months, both virtually and physically. The chapter successfully conducted its AGM virtually. One of the memorable events conducted in the last couple of months by the chapter was the Dubai Tourism event, which was followed by a Diwali dinner for the chapter members. The event was partnered by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. Of India - India Tourism, Kolkata under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Abhiyan'. Dignitaries from Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany Kolkata – Mr Manfred Auster (Consul General), Consulate General of the United States of America – Mrs. & Mr David W. Warner (Consular Chief), Deputy Director General & Regional Director (East) at Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India – Mr Sagnik Chowdhury (Deputy Director-General & Regional Director (East)) and few others attended the occasion.

TAAI Eastern Region is committed to the future growth of the travel and tourism industry and shall together sail through these challenging circumstances. ▲



Southern Region



TAAI MC Dr. P.Murugesan attended an event at the Hindustan Chamber of Commerce, Chennai on December 3. The event was focused on the business opportunities between India and Romania, HE. Mrs. Daniela Mariana SezonovTane, Ambassador of Romania, HE.Mr.Vijay Mehta, Hon.Consul of Romania, HE.Mr.Purshottam Bhaggeria, Hon. Consul of Moldova were among the dignitaries who attended the event.



TAAI MC Dr. P. Murugesan attended IITM event and its inauguration which was done in the presence of Hon'ble Tourism Minister of Tamil Nadu - Dr.Mathi Vendan & Tourism's Secretary - Dr.Chandramohan, along with IITM Director. The event was organised at ITC Grand Chola , Chennai on October 18.

Mr. Razaidi Abd Rahim, Director, Tourism Malaysia hosted appreciation & networking session on December 16 at ITC Grand Chola, Chennai. He also presented the application shield to TAAI.



Southern Region



SOUTHERN REGION CHAIRMAN INSPECTED JW MARRIOTT, CANCUN, MEXICO

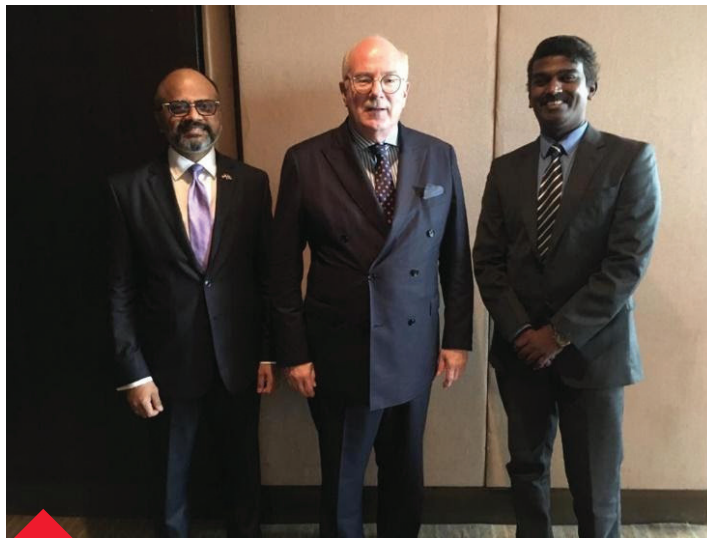
Mr Sakhivadivel, Chairman TAAI Southern Region visited Mexico and inspected JW Marriott , Cancun, Mexico. on September 13 . He also has visited the caves and pyramids which are of historical importance. ▲



Southern Region

The Ambassador of Iceland, New Delhi hosted a business lunch on November 25 at The Leela Palace-Chennai. Fisheries, Renewable Energy and Travel & Tourism trade partners were invited for the event. Mr Gudni Bragason, Ambassador,

Embassy of Iceland and Mr Kumaran Seetharaman, Honorary Consul General, Consulate General of Iceland hosted the Program. The event spoke about the various developments of travel and tourism trade between India and Iceland. ▲



Honorary Treasurer, Mr S. Jeyasekaran represented TAAI Southern Region at the event.

Czech Republic & Tamil Nadu Tourism organises a webinar on ‘Growing tourism opportunity in Tamil Nadu’ on November 29

The Honorary Consulate along with The Czech Embassy & Tamil Nadu Tourism hosted a webinar focused on tourism, titled “Growing Opportunities in Tamil Nadu” on November 29. The webinar was about destinations and opportunities in Tamil Nadu & the Czech Republic.

The Chief Guest of the event was Dr. B. Chandra Mohan,

IAS, Principal Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. Of Tamil Nadu and Guest of Honor was H. E. Mr Roman Masarik, Acting Ambassador to Czech Republic to India, presided by Ar. Rm. Arun, Honorary Consul of the Czech Republic in Chennai. Mr Marek Kroutil, International Marketing Manager, Czech Tourism also participated at the virtual programme. ▲

Gujarat Chapter



TAAI GUJARAT CHAPTER HOLDS ITS BI-MONTHLY MEETING AT THE LEELA, GANDHINAGAR ON OCTOBER 7

Gujarat Chapter of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) organised its bi-monthly meeting on October 7 at the newly launched luxury hotel, The Leela, Gandhinagar.

After welcoming members, Chairman Mr. Virendra Shah briefed members about various activities undertaken by the chapter since the last meeting. He also thanked TAAI's Airline Council for bringing back Air India's inventory for the Toronto sector on GDS. TAAI National Treasurer Mr. Shreeram Patel and Managing Committee Member & Chairman – Airline Council, Mr. Paras Lakhia, were also present at the meeting.

Mr. Shah thanked the hotel's management group for hosting the meeting and appreciated arrangements made by the hotel. He noted that this property is iconic and provides world-class accommodation facilities to travellers coming to Gujarat.

Mr. Jaideep Anand (Vice President, Development & General Manager - Leela) gave a detailed presentation about the property with members exchanging views/ thoughts in an interactive session during which Mr. Prabhakar (Director, Sales & Marketing) and Mr. Srijit Nair (Senior Sales Account Manager) also participated. Members also got an opportunity to explore the property which is situated right above the Gandhinagar Railway station and in very close proximity to the Mahatma Mandir. ▲



Gujarat Chapter



TAAI GUJARAT CHAPTER CALLS UPON AHMEDABAD AIRPORT OFFICIALS TO EASE THE RT-PCR TEST PROCESS FOR TRAVELLERS

A delegation led by Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Gujarat Chapter office bearers along with National Managing Committee Member Mr. Paras Lakhia met Mr. Naved Desai, Airport Manager, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on October 20. They discussed various issues faced by travellers and submitted recommendations.

It was a fruitful, interactive discussion with Mr. Desai where they majorly discussed issues faced by travellers with respect to the mandatory RT-PCR test required for international travel. Destinations like Dubai mandates incoming passengers to get an RT-PCR test done before six hours of the flight departure but the lack of a proper system at the airport, travellers were facing some inconvenience and the issue which was taken up by the TAAI delegation.

The TAAI team suggested enforcing an advanced token system for the COVID-19 Rapid test for passengers travelling to Dubai. This system is very much in operation at Mumbai and Delhi airports. This will surely help passengers to plan as to how early they need to leave from home. It was suggested to at least start a token system for business class & first-class passengers or separate queue for them. The Airport Manager assured to look into the matter.

Other recommendations included giving airport resurfacing plans to a professional agency to avoid frequent closure of the runway, which badly affects travel schedules, especially during the festive season. The delegation also



suggested to Mr. Desai to form an Advisory Committee comprising representatives from the travel trade community and travellers in communicating key updates about developments at the airport and also suggest solutions to problems faced by passengers.

The TAAI delegation further informed that they were apprised about the free of cost shuttle service operating between Terminal 1 and 2 of the Ahmedabad airport apart from the authority's plan to shift operations of some of the airlines from T1 to T2 to reduce the overburden of domestic traffic on one terminal. It was also revealed that major expansion will take place at the airport in a phased manner. ▲

Gujarat Chapter

GUJARAT CHAPTER MEMBERS MET CHIEF MINISTER MR. BHUPENDRA PATEL

The Gujarat chapter members had attended in Gujarat Tourism Award functions on September 25. In that event, some of the members were fortunate to meet personally to Gujarat CM Mr. Bhupendra Patel. ▲



VIRENDRA SHAH, CHAIRMAN, TAAI GUJARAT CHAPTER INVITED IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr. Virendra Shah, Chairman, TAAI Gujarat Chapter was invited to participate in Parliamentary Committee meeting for transportation, tourism and culture, Govt. of India under leadership of Mr. T.G. Venkatesh (Member of Rajya Sabha). The meeting took place on November 16. Mr. Shah presented his view on how to develop tourism in the state by adding infrastructure. His suggestion to develop world class theme park in Gujarat was well debated by most of the MPs. Meeting was held at Kevadia (Statue of Unity). ▲

Gujarat Chapter



Gujarat chapter members participated in Bloggers & Influencer meeting at Narayani Heights; Ahmedabad, organised on December 1, 2021, along with some other TAAI members. The event was organised by Gujarat Tourism. Tourism secretary Mr. Harit Shukla and Regional Director; MOT Mr. Venkatesh were also present at the meeting.

The chapter members had a meeting on December 23, 2021, at the Courtyard by Marriott; Sindhubhavan; Ahmedabad. The property started its operation a few months back.

After an interactive session, Obs of the chapter felicitated Mr. Nishat Shah of SITC, Ahmedabad for his book - What's Your PNR In Corona. The book is about various events that happened during the pandemic, which affected the travel and tourism industry. The chapter invited other stakeholders as well, such as airlines head; GDS; Cruise liner etc. for a networking session.



Gujarat chapter organises family get together



TAAI Gujarat Chapter recently organised a family get together on September 18. The chapter invited members with spouses along with all stakeholders like airlines; GDS; VFS etc. Members enjoyed various games played during this event. There were also prizes, which were sponsored by Airlines and VFS. The event was followed by a lavish dinner and live music program. The audience witnessed live performances of singers Aparajita and Arif. The unique program was well appreciated by the members and trade. ▲



South Gujarat Chapter



TAAI SOUTH GUJARAT CHAPTER MET UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAILWAYS

Malcom T. Pandol, Chairman, TAAI South Gujarat Chapter along with Mr. Kantibhai Sohagia, Chapter Secretary, felicitated Shreemati Darshanabhen Jardosh, Union Minister

of state for Railways at a meeting of South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industries. In that meeting, TAAI, South Gujarat Chapter requested her to solve the problems being faced by Gujarat Agents. The minister assured them all help to address the problems being faced by travel Industry in South Gujarat. ▲



TAAI SOUTH GUJARAT CHAPTER STARTS TRAINING PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

TAAI South Gujarat Chapter (SGC) along with South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industries have started 3 months Travel and Tourism training program where fresh

young candidates are being trained on how to manage work of a travel agency to overcome the scarcity of staff in South Gujarat. In this direction, Malcom T. Pandol, Chairman, TAAI South Gujarat Chapter, congratulated, Mrs. Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, for her support and permission to start this course. ▲

South Gujarat Chapter



TAAI SOUTH GUJARAT CHAPTER HOLDS ITS 5TH MEETING IN DAMAN

South Gujarat Chapter of the Travel Agents Association of India held its 5th Meeting with members and office bearers at VITS Hotel in Damam on October 8.

Mr. Malcom Pandol, Chairman, South Gujarat Chapter along with Hon. Secretary, Mr. Kantilal Sohagia and Hon. Treasurer Mr. Vishal Shah discussed with members the impact of the COVID pandemic on the industry and what steps can be taken to survive and revive the business. Many members attended the meeting.

He added that his team has visited a number of hotels in the region, most have assured to support the Chapter with some benefits including offering special rates for promoting their respective properties.

Mr. Sohagia introduced new members to the house. During the open discussion, members deliberated on new tourism developments in the region, industry matters and concerns. ▲



South Gujarat Chapter



TAAI JOINS HANDS WITH THE SOUTH GUJARAT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY TO START A TOURISM COURSE IN SURAT

South Gujarat Chapter of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) has joined hands with the South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) to introduce a tourism course in Surat. This will be a three-month basic travel and tourism course.

While sharing the details on October 18, Mr. Malcom Pandol, Chairman, TAAI South Gujarat Chapter said, "With the permission and well-wishes of TAAI President, Jyoti Mayal,

TAAI has given support to the South SGCCI and started a three-month basic travel & tourism course in Surat.

SGCCI Group Chairman Mr. Sanjay Gandhi, Chairman of Travel and Tourism community of SGCCI Mr. Venus Shah, Faculty Mr. Abhishek Modi, South Chapter Secretary Mr. Kantilal Sohagia and Rajiv Shah were present.

Earlier, the Chapter had held its 5th General Meeting with members and office bearers at VITS Hotel in Daman where the team deliberated on new tourism developments in the region and discussed initiatives taken by TAAI with the Chapter members. ▲

Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Chapter



TAAI APTS Chapter Chairperson Mr Nagesh Pampati represented TAAI at the Railway Heritage Presentation on December 7



TAAI APTS Chairperson Mr Nagesh Pampati represented TAAI at India Tourism Review Meet on October 22 at Hotel ITC Kakatiya Hyderabad. The meeting was chaired by Ms Rupinder Brar , Additional Director General at Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.



A presentation was done by the VFS team for the members of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Chapter on November 10.



Rajasthan Chapter



TAAI RAJASTHAN CHAPTER ORGANISED ITS MEETING IN JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Chapter of TAAI organised its meeting at one of the most happening places in Rajasthan i.e Jaipur. The meeting happened on November 9 and was attended by the

people from across the segments. Representatives from airlines, GDS, Tourism Boards etc were present on the occasion. "It was also a Diwali Milan Samaroh of our chapter , everyone enjoyed the hospitality of TAAI and they also came to know how relentlessly working for the overall tourism development," said Regards, Manoj Sogani, Chairman, The Rajasthan Chapter. ▲

Saurashtra & Kutch Chapter



Saurashtra - Kutch Chapter organised its 5th meeting and knowledge sessions by Emirates, Indigo, Amadeus, Spice Jet, Go Air at the Lords Aary Club & Resort, Rajkot. The event was graced by Mr. Shreeram Patel, Hon. National Treasurer and Mr. Paras Lakhia – Chairman Airline Council.



Kerala Chapter

TAAI KERALA CHAPTER HAD SERIES OF EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

November 2021 was a blessed month for the TAAI Kerala Chapter. The rains subsided bringing relief to the people of Kerala. The state government further relaxed the norms for theaters, weddings, travel, shops and malls. There is an increase in business activities bringing relief to the business community and revenue to the Government.

In view of the relaxation, TAAI Kerala had a series of events during the month of November. The annual meeting of the TAAI Kerala Chapter was held on 9th November as stipulated by the Byelaws.

The chapter had a destination promotion program with "Dubai Tourism" on the 11th November with a presentation of the New Dubai products. 35 members from the TAAI fraternity attended the presentation followed by lunch. The event was held at Hotel Crowne Plaza, Cochin. The invitees included members of TAFI.

On the November 22 the chapter had the Charter Day celebrations. The invite also included past chairman who are not associated with the industry any more or retired. The event witnessed a surprise guest Mr. Bahram, Chairman of Pune Chapter with his wife. Mrs. Sandhya Haridas, Manager, Tourism, Government of India Tourism Ministry attended the event. Mrs. Haridas spoke about the bank finance facility initiated by the finance ministry of the Central government. Past Chairmen of the association traced the beginning and growth of TAAI in Kerala which made the event very interesting and fascinating.

On 28/29 November the Kerala chapter Chairman joined the India tourism fam tour to Nagaland combined with the North East Tourism promotion seminar in Kohima. "The infrastructure is very poor in Nagaland, but the people over there are a great asset. Very hard working and polite. There is hardly any industry or trade in Kohima and other towns of Nagaland. A great place for trekking and adventure sports. India tourism at Delhi, Kolkata (transit point to Kohima) and Nagaland Tourism did an extraordinary job in taking care of the delegates. There was a large student delegation picked



up from various universities of the country. The infrastructure in Kohima reminded me of Cochin in the 1980s when Kerala decided to promote tourism in the state. The airport, roads, and hotels are yet to be developed in the state. The tourism ministry had taken a wise decision for an integrated development of seven north east states and now added the 8th state of Sikkim to the group," observed the chairman of Kerala Chapter. ▲



Uttar Pradesh & Uttarakhand Chapter



UTTAR PRADESH & UTTARAKHAND CHAPTER ORGANISES VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 10

Hon. Secretary Ms Swati Dimri called the meeting and welcomed the chapter members. Dimri read out the notice of the annual meeting with an agenda to the attendees and thereafter requested the Hon. Chairman Mr. Syed Mohammad Akhlaq to present the Chairman's report. At the meeting Hon. Treasurer Mr. Mohd. Khalid presented his report - annual account statement for the period ended March 31, 2021. The treasurer then sought approval for the accounts which was then proposed by Ms Gayatri Khanna and seconded by Mr Amir Nazar. Hon. Chairman, they then asked the members if they wish to put forth any views or suggestions etc., after answering all the queries, Hon. Secretary Ms Swati Dimri gave a vote of thanks and the Chairman then adjourned the meeting. ▲



Nagpur Chapter

A special meeting was organised by the Nagpur Collector Mrs Vimaljee and Prashant Sawai Dy. Director Directorate of tourism, Dy. Director Office, Nagpur on October 25. Tourism stakeholders of the region attended the meeting, to discuss the Heritage walk tour and other city tours of Nagpur. The idea behind this was to promote Nagpur's tourism potential amongst tourists. ▲



The chapter held a meeting with Collector Mrs Vimaljee and Commissioner of NMC with Heritage Site owners and Tourism stakeholders, on November 18, regarding the planning of Heritage walk Tour. All Heritage stakeholders were permitted, for the inclusion of their heritage properties within the tour at the same time. Along with that other tours of Nagpur had also been discussed such as Half day tour of Nagpur's British Residential Sights, Full day tour of Nagpur's Historical and landmark places and Archeological sights tour surrounding Nagpur. The idea behind various tour planning was to attract domestic and international tourists to the city. ▲

MP & CG Chapter

TAAI MP & CG CHAPTER CHAIRMAN ATTENDS THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF INDIGO'S SIX NEW FLIGHTS LAUNCH FROM INDORE

TAAI MP & CG Chapter Chairman Mr. Hemendra Singh Jadon joined inaugural ceremony of IndiGo's six new flights, which was a physical event held on 31st Oct at Indore Airport. The new route was inaugurated with lighting the lamp and was graced by Union Minister for Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, both joined virtually along with other eminent dignitaries from Indore including Shri Shankar Lalwani, MP Lok Sabha and Shri Tulsiram Silavat, Minister,

Water Resources, MP Government.

Thanking Civil Aviation Minister for starting new flights, Mr. Hemendra Singh requested three weekly flights to Dubai from Indore like pre – COVID days and starting flights to Sharjah as well.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar - Chief Strategy and Revenue Officer, IndiGo narrated that addition routes from Indore is a part of IndiGo's strategy to enhance connectivity to Central India, which will augment inter and intra-regional accessibility. Direct connectivity from Indore to the political, tourist and business centres of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, will cater to the regional travel demand while promoting trade, tourism, and mobility. ▲

MPTB celebrates World Tourism Day-2021 at Bhopal



Chapter Chairman Mr. Hemendra Singh Jadon with his members was specially invited to the MPTB World Tourism Day event organised at Minto Hall Bhopal. Mr. Sheo Shekhar Shukla- PS MPT, Mr. S.Viswanathan- MDMPSTDC, and Ms. Shilpa Gupta- AMD MPSTDC also attended the event.

TAAI MPCG chapter met senior MPTB officials in Bhopal



TAAI MPCG chapter had a fruitful meeting with Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) at Minto Hall in Bhopal on November 13. Guests present in the meeting were Mr. S. Viswanathan, Managing Director, Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC), Ms. Shilpa Gupta, AMD, MPSTDC, Ms. Jyoti Mayal, President and Mr. Hemendra Singh Jadon, Chairman, MPCG chapter.

Union Aviation Minister, Mr. Jyotiraditya Scindia flags off the new Prayagraj flight in a virtual programme



During the flag-off ceremony of the new Prayagraj flight on November 1, Mr. Shankar Lalwani- MP Lok Sabha, Mr. Tulsiram Silawat- Minister Water Resources, M.P., along with Mr. Hemendra Singh Jadon- Chairman TAAI MP- CG Chapter and other dignitaries were present.

Karnataka Chapter



TAAI KARNATAKA CHAPTER CHAIRMAN ATTENDS MOT'S CONFERENCE OF TOURISM & CULTURE MINISTERS OF SOUTHERN REGION IN BENGALURU

TAAI Karnataka Chapter Chairman Mr. Amish Desai attended the conference of Tourism & Culture Ministers of Southern region organised by the Ministry of Tourism in Bengaluru on October 29. He was an invitee and participated in the conference addressed by Union Tourism Minister Shri, G Kishan Reddy along with other ministers and senior ministry officials.

Mr. Desai represented the association at the conference which was organised to highlight heritage & cultural tourism initiatives, rail tourism, skill development, potentiality of cruise

tourism in the South Indian states. The two days' conference had presentations by various ministries including Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Archaeological Survey of India, NeGD and NITI Aayog on projects and initiatives being taken by the Central government for the development of the region.

State governments & UTs from the region also made presentations on the status of the tourism sector in their states and latest initiatives being taken by them for development of tourism. Under Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Tourism Ministry has sanctioned 15 projects in Southern states worth INR 1088 crores while six projects are sanctioned under PRASHAD scheme amounting to 15 per cent of total scheme outlay. ▲



Karnataka Chapter



The chapter conducted a workshop on MSME Schemes/ Programmes for the travel industry along with Development Institute MSME in Bangalore on September 6.

Mr Bettiah Lokesh, HSG TAAI and Mr Amish Desai, Chairman TAAI Karnataka Chapter, were a part of the opening ceremony of IITM at Bangalore blog on October 22 along with Mr Anand Singh, Hon Tourism Minister, Karnataka; Mr Pankaj Kumar Pandey, Secretary Department of Tourism, Karnataka and Ms Sindhu B Rupesh, Director Department of Tourism, Karnataka.

Mr Amish Desai, Chairman TAAI-Karnataka, was an invitee and participant at the Conference of Tourism & Culture Ministers of South India, which happened on October 28. The event was addressed by Mr G Kishan Reddy, Hon Union

Minister of Tourism along with Tourism and Culture Ministers of the Southern states and Ministry officials.

Karnataka Chapter held the Members Annual Meeting on November 10, This was also the first physical meeting in the year 2021-22. The meeting was attended by Mr Jay Bhatia, Vice President TAAI and Mr. Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer TAAI. After the conclusion of the agenda, the Vice President, HSG and Hon Treasurer had an interaction with the Chapter members. The meeting was followed by the TAAI Karnataka Members Annual Dinner, where the members were joined by teams from airlines, GDS companies, VFS and hoteliers. It was a relaxed evening of fun and fellowship and the guests appreciated TAAI's initiative of having an in-person industry get-together which has not happened in a long time ▲



Jammu & Kashmir Chapter



TAAI Jammu & Kashmir Chapter organises annual meeting

on December 10 at The Snow Land Hotels and Resorts, Old Gagribal Road, Boulevard, Srinagar where a majority of the chapter members attended the meeting. The chapter chairman addressed the meeting and highlighted the below issues for the travel trade fraternity :

a) Steep hike in hotel tariff by some hoteliers which made the business of tour operators very tough as rates get changed day in and day out.

b) Separate registration for adventure tourism is required which previously was permitted in the tour operator

registration. The chapter strongly stressed for removal of such requirements for qualifying of carrying adventure tourism. Secretary Tourism Mr. Sarmad Hafeez assured that a high-level team has been set up to address this issue.

c) The chapter also requested for having a separate gondola ticket counter at the tourist reception center, which will mitigate chaos at Gulmarg. The Secretary of Tourism assured that the same will be set up very soon.

d) The Government is planning to have roadshows at all major cities and require the active role of TAAI at all the events. Also, they expressed their satisfaction with the support which TAAI always gives at the roadshows. ▲



J&K Chapter attends all tourism festivals organised by the State government



TAAI (J & K Chapter) attended almost all the Tourism Festivals held by the Department of Tourism at the following locations. The members have shown active participation at the below festivals :

- 01.Wular Festival
- 02.Aharabal Festival
- 03.Tosamaidan Festival
- 04.Veerinag Festival

Presence of TAAI at the festivals was facilitated with a Token of appreciation and momentous was present to the Chairman at the Veerinag festival on December 4.

"We had our meetings with The Secretary Tourism , Sports & Culture, Mr. Sarmad Hafeez , Director Tourism Dr. G.N.Itoo and Additional Secretary Tourism Mr. Waseem Raja. In addition to these meetings Chapter being the part of United Tourism Forum had several meetings with the Central delegations at SKICC , Royal Spring Golf Course," said Chairman of J&K, Chapter.

The Chairman of the J&K Chapter was invited at the symposium titled " OUR RELATION WITH THE NATURE " at National Institute of Technology (NIT) Hazratbal , Srinagar and was awarded with the certificate as a token of appreciation. ▲



Pune Chapter



TAAI Pune Chapter Chairman, Mr. P. Bahram along with past Chairman and Skal National Secretary Mr. G. Krishna and other dignitaries inaugurated the India International Travel Mart, Pune on November 26, which is a leading platform for the international travel community. The platform helps the travel fraternity to come together

and showcase existing products as well as introduce new ones to audiences from across the country.

IITM events provide a unique opportunity for professionals from the tourism industry to meet and connect with people interested in travel and other related business. ▲



New members after 21st December 2021

SR. NO.	NAME OF AGENCY	CITY	REPRESENTATIVE I	REPRESENTATIVE II
1	Sughra Umrah Services	AURANGABAD	Mr. Abdul Sayeed Abdul Waheed	Mr. Mohd. Abdul Waseem Abdul Waheed
2	Alhind Tours and Travels Pvt. Ltd.	CALICUT	Mr. M. P. M. Mubashir	Mr. Vinesh M.
3	DMC Leisure Private Limited	CHENNAI	Mr. Shamnad SS	Mr. Sonai Elankumaran
4	RTW Global Services Private Limited	GURGAON	Ms. Kavita Verma	Mr. Naveen Verma
5	Pleasant Travels And Holidays	HYDERABAD	Mrs. Venkata Ramani Sudina	Mr. Harisri Sudina
6	Keshav Travels & Holidays	INDORE	Mr. Rahul Maheshwari	
7	Jasyatra Tours And Travels Private Limited	INDORE	Mr. Maninder Singh Arora	Mrs. Kawal Jeet Kour Kalra
8	Luxe Comfort Travels	INDORE	Ms. Miti Nenava	Mr. Vaibhav Malviya
9	Holidayzshopee India Private Limited	JAIPUR	Mr. Pawan Agarwal	Mr. Raghunandan Gupta
10	MG Travels	KANPUR	Mr. Mridul Saraogi	
11	Ajab Associates	LUCKNOW	Mrs. Benu Miglani	Mr. Arvind Singh
12	GITHM Private Limited, T/A GIA Travels Online	LUCKNOW	Mr. Syed Qaim A. Rizvi	Mr. Syed Faizan Umar
13	One Click Visa And Travel Services	MUMBAI	Mr. Asif Shaikh	
14	My Own Tours Private Limited	NAVSARI	Mr. Sanjay N. Rana	Mr. Riki S. Patel
15	Amaan Tours	NAVSARI	Mr. Zuber Iqbal Ruwala	Mr. Rahil Zuber Ruwala
16	K Consultants (Jet Set Go Holidays)	NEW DELHI	Mr. Sunil Kumar Kaura	Mr. Raj Kumar
17	Go Paradise Holidays Tour & Travels	SRINAGAR	Mr. Khalid Ahmed Boktoo	Mr. Muhammad Aslam Boktoo
18	Arrange My Trip Tour & Travel	SRINAGAR	Mr. Gulam Nabi Boktoo	Mr. Muhammad Aslam Boktoo
19	Kushagra Agencies	UJJAIN	Mr. Luv Kumar Saboo	Mrs. Kavita Saboo

TAAI in Media

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

BOTT
Business of Travel Trade

HOME BOTT MAGAZINE HOSPITABLE HOTELS FLY GLOB

TAAI joins hands with ABTO to promote Buddhist Tourism in India

Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) in October 2021 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) to promote Buddhist Tourism in India. Both the associations along with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India will work together in the field of Travel & Tourism with an aim to promote Buddhist pilgrimage Tourism, Culture & Nature Tourism, MICE, Corporate etc. in India.

November 3, 2021



This MoU seeks to establish an understanding of the roles, commitments and partnerships between ABTO and TAAI especially for the ABTO's upcoming Annual Convention scheduled in December 2021.

Speaking on the occasion, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI stated, "Buddhist tourism has huge potential as it binds Indians with Buddhist followers from across the globe. She applauded the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India, State Governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Government of Nepal, and especially thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi Ji for the support in promoting Buddhist tourism and also for the recent initiative of inaugurating the Kushinagar International Airport. With efforts like such, India will soon become the most visited destination for Buddhism followers."

Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI said, "TAAI members would be glad to share their knowledge, experience and expertise for the development and promotion of the Buddhist tourism industry in India. He highlighted the importance of having a Joint Action Committee in place to discuss strategies for the development and implementation of collaborative programmes and projects of mutual benefits."

"It is indeed important to work jointly with government agencies of both our countries for the formulation of industry-friendly policies, schemes, and guidelines for the effective promotion of Buddhist pilgrimage travel and tourism," contributed Betaiah Lokesh, Honorary Secretary-General, TAAI.


Shreeram Patel, Honorary Treasurer, TAAI highlighted the importance of marketing and promotion of the Buddhist Tourism industry by jointly organising International Travel Shows/Mart, Road Shows and

hospemag.me

HOME READ BY CATEGORY HOSPITALITY JOBS EXCLUSIVE INTERV

November 24, 2021

NEWS | Decrease in Covid-19 cases is the new key to revive and evolve business: TAAI President



According to the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), domestic airlines flew 8.99 million passengers last month, as against 5.27 million in October 2020. The number of passengers who flew on domestic carriers in October 2021 increased by more than 70 per cent over the corresponding figures during the same period last year.

Commenting on the development, Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) expressed her gratitude to the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia and the DGCA for working tirelessly in the direction and allowing airlines to operate services at full capacity from last month.

TAAI has been linked with various airlines, travel agents and tour operators at the grass root level for making travel hassle free keeping in mind all the safety measures and guidelines released by the Government of India and various state governments for providing an easy passage for intra-state travel.

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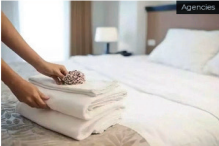
Banking/Finance Cons Products Energy Renewables Indl Goods/Secs Healthcare/Biotech Services Media/Entertainment

Industry Services Hotels/Restaurants Travel & Hospitality sector hopes this is not the beginning of another setback

Travel & Hospitality sector hopes this is not the beginning of another setback

By Anurmecha Chaturvedi, ET Bureau | Last Updated: Nov 29, 2021, 07:35 AM IST

Synopsis
Industry seeks more clarity from govt; travellers haven't cancelled bookings, but situation fluid



The travel and **hospitality industry** is hoping that a new Coronavirus variant of concern and developments such as the government's decision to review the move to relax international travel curbs, new inter state guidelines, rising **Covid-19** cases in some countries in **Europe** and subsequent lockdowns will not upend the promising recovery made so far.

"Resumption of international travel was what everybody was looking up to. A significant chunk of the sector depends on that. With that coming under a cloud, the recovery timelines will be uncertain," he added.

"The world is in a state of flux and nobody knows what's going to happen. Nothing indicates bookings will fall for now, but no one knows what this is going to do. We will probably get more clarity in a week. We are also awaiting more details from the government," said the chief executive of one of the Indian hotel chains that bore the brunt of the panic triggered in the stock market on Friday following fears of the new **Omicron** variant and fresh travel curbs.

While travelers are not panicking or cancelling bookings just yet, the situation


TRAVEL **turtle**

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TAAI joins hands with ABTO to promote Buddhist Tourism in India

Admin November 3, 2021 77 Views



Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) in October 2021 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO) to promote Buddhist Tourism in India. Both the associations along with the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India, State Governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Government of Nepal, and especially thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji for the support in promoting Buddhist tourism and also for the recent initiative of inaugurating the Kushinagar International Airport. With efforts like such, India will soon become the most visited destination for Buddhism followers, she added.

Speaking on the occasion, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI stated that Buddhist tourism has huge potential as it binds Indians with Buddhist followers from across the globe. She applauded the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, State Governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Government of Nepal, and especially thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi Ji for the support in promoting Buddhist tourism and also for the recent initiative of inaugurating the Kushinagar International Airport. With efforts like such, India will soon become the most visited destination for Buddhism followers, she added.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President said that TAAI members would be glad to share their knowledge, experience and expertise for the development and promotion of the Buddhist tourism industry in India. He highlighted the importance of having a Joint Action Committee in place to discuss strategies for the development and implementation of collaborative programmes and projects of mutual benefits.

It is indeed important to work jointly with government agencies of both our countries for the formulation of industry-friendly policies, schemes, and guidelines for the effective promotion of Buddhist pilgrimage travel and tourism, contributed Betaiah Lokesh, Honorary Secretary-General.

Shreeram Patel, Honorary Treasurer, highlighted the importance of marketing and promotion of the Buddhist Tourism industry by jointly organising International Travel Shows/Mart, Road Shows and Workshops in India as in other countries.

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TAAI President Jyoti Mayal had a fruitful interactive discussion with the Union Aviation Minister virtually where he was very positive on collaborations and working together with the travel trade to support the industry.



The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) organised its Annual Session and AGM virtually where they invited the Union Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia as Chief Guest to interact with members and industry stakeholders on Bharat@75. Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) also joined the session and held a fruitful discussion with the Minister where he showed positive intent on growth-oriented collaborations and working together with the travel trade and tour operators to support the industry.



Mayal, who is also the Chairperson of the Travel and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) and Member of the ICC Aviation & Tourism Steering Committee on the occasion congratulated ICC for successfully organising Annual Session & AGM and said that she is very pleased to hear Scindia's positive and futuristic youth approach and feels excited to have him as the Union Minister of Civil Aviation. "I would like your intervention and consideration for the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to think beyond airlines and also towards our 3,000 plus memberships, mainly comprising of IATA agents. We sometimes feel like orphans by not having anyone we could work in collaboration with & bear the brunt of no ease of business, no consideration of policies, no collaborative understandings, no one to share our pleasure and pain specially when airlines default and take away our & the consumers hard earned tax paid income.

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Jyoti Mayal's terms as TAAI President extended by a year as the Members take key decision at association's EGM

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TAAI's Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) held virtually on Monday at 11:30am, where the members took call on the functioning of the association as the Managing Committee recommended to extend the term of the current team.



The Managing Committee of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) on behalf of the members has proposed to extend the term of the existing office officers for another year as a tenure of the team neared completion. The same required statutory approval by the General Body of the Association.

Jyoti Mayal, Director, New Airways Travels (Delhi), who got elected as the President of the association in 2019 for a two-year term will remain at the helm of affairs for another year till September 2022.






Jay Bhatia, Vice President, Bettalah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General and Shreeram Patel, Hon. National Treasurer will also continue to be at the helm and carry on with their active duties and take forward the association and sail them through a path of the recovery along with the entire Managing Committee. The term of the Region & Chapter office bearers also has got extended.

The current team has been very active in terms of organising activities for members in form of roadshows, virtual meetings, webinars, and knowledge sessions & workshops. They have also been in regular communication with the government taking up various issues faced by the members and the travel trade.

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November 25, 2021

NEWS | Another feather in the cap as one more tourist destination opens its gates after a long covid wait: TAAI



Another feather in the cap as one more tourist destination opens its gates after a long covid wait: TAAI

A significant drop in Covid-19 cases and increased vaccination pace has led to a rise in tourist footfall in the state of Odisha. Industry insiders are very happy that normalcy is returning and hoped for a fast recovery in business.

Expressing her happiness towards the revival of tourism business and congratulating Government of Odisha, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) President, Jyoti Mayal commented that it is indeed a much-needed step on the government's part which will encourage other states too in the same direction. "Covid did take a lot from us, now it is time to compensate for all the losses faced during the pandemic," she said.

"After the prolonged curbs for over 18 months, tourists are showing a strong desire to travel & are registering a month-on-month increase in demand. It is indeed a brilliant start to the tourist season with rooms almost full during the weekend and a sizeable number of domestic visitors flocking to spots. If the current situation continues then the recovery could be done in lesser time," mentioned Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Bettalah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI stated, "The government of Odisha is leaving no stone unturned and coinciding with the upbeat mood of tourists by organising series of exciting events, including glamping at seven eco-retreat sites. A collective effort is required for the better and early revival of tourism sector which got massively hit during pandemic days."

Whereas, Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI went on to thank the Government of India for a successful vaccine drive in the country which has encouraged travellers and has created a sense of safety amongst people of all walks.

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November 26, 2021

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She further requested the travel trade associations to the Minister and MoCA's advisory board or task force. "As we are the catalyst of growth for aviation and as travel agents are the ones who fill the bellies and the seats of the aircrafts and are also a strong link to develop tourism and avenue to employ people in this huge value chain of the industry. We are the ones who will be able to create a robust aviation & tourism industry according to the vision of our Honourable Prime Minister.

During her interaction, Mayal asked the Minister to discuss the opportunities to work together in detail. "Jyotiraditya Scindia ji, can we expect ease of business and opportunity to discuss this further with you on priority to build an Atmanirbhar industry and a robust ecosystem of growth for everyone," she commented.

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November 29, 2021

NEWS | Another big tick on the list as Singapore & India reaches agreement on commercial flights: TAAI



Another big tick on the list as Singapore & India reaches agreement on commercial flights: TAAI

Commenting on the proposed resumption of flights between India and Singapore from November 29 under the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL), Jyoti Mayal, President, Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) extended her warm wishes and gratitude to the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and India's Ministry of Civil Aviation on the resumption of scheduled commercial flights between the two countries.

Singapore's VTL with India will start with six designated flights daily from Chennai, Delhi, and Mumbai. Applications for vaccinated travel passes for short-term and long-term pass holders from India will start from November 29. "Taking such a step in time of Covid prevalence is indeed a bold move which will not only strengthen the relations between the two countries but will also work as a revival of tourism sector". I strongly feel that more commercial flights are needed to revive inbound tourism to India," she further quoted.

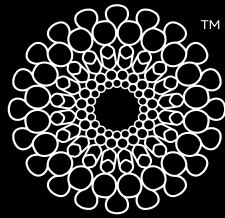
Airlines can also operate non-VTL flights between the two countries, although passengers on non-VTL flights will be subjected to the prevailing public health requirements. "We at TAAI have been in constant dialogue with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India. The opening of the skies for international commercial passenger routes highlighting our concerns on ease of doing business," commented Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI.

Taking positive efforts, TAAI Southern Region in association with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) organised a travel webinar earlier this year in July which witnessed a large participation. "Such productive decisions are always welcomed by tourism sector and travel associations as the good part of the economy is dependent on travel and tourism. Economy everywhere needs a good revival especially after Covid trauma," Bettalah Lokesh, Hon Secretary General, TAAI.

"Travel agents continue to be acknowledged as one-stop solutions for customers, guiding and professionally managing all aspects of domestic and/or international travel which now includes complying with Covid requirements of departing and arriving at destinations," said Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI as he also extended his thanks to the authorities of both the countries.

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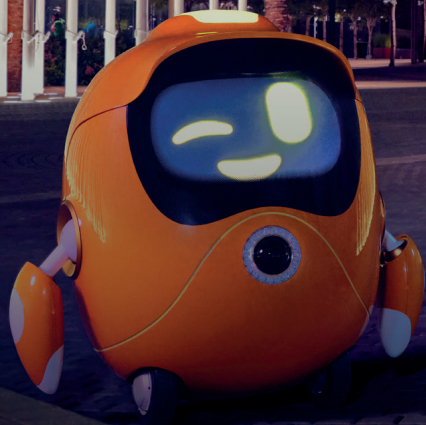
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