

# The TAAI Magazine

# NamasTAAI

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AUGUST 2022



66<sup>th</sup> TAAI  
CONVENTION  
CELEBRATING  
CRUISING

SPECTRUM





# Welcome aboard TAAI's 66<sup>th</sup> Cruising Convention!

In an endeavour to support our members and provide them with the best of services, I have been working tirelessly for more than two decades now. And I especially wish to convey my gratitude to each one of you for the support extended, especially during the last three years of my tenure as President. Irrespective of the challenges faced by the tourism sector, particularly the travel trade, by an unprecedented event like covid, I personally, and with the support of the entire TAAI team, ensured we took a collective stand for all of us to handle this crisis together. And now, when the sector is coming back on track, I look forward to receiving your continuing support to take the agenda of mutual growth forward.



The idea behind organising our convention in Singapore, and that too on a cruise, is the outcome of what I learned and garnered in the last two years. Firstly, it is because I realised the importance of regional tourism, the unmatched strength in terms of business it holds, and above all how we all can benefit if we join hands with our neighbouring countries. Why can't India be promoted as a regional cruise hub? Why are we not encashing on each other's strengths as neighbours? There are many such questions to ponder and act upon. Secondly, this Cruising Convention is also an opportunity to spend these three days together to reinforce our bonds, and business relationships, and above all set the agenda for our trade for the next decade. I assure you that the outcome of the business sessions planned will help all of us to focus on our strengths and develop strategies to mitigate potential risks, especially post-pandemic.

I am of the firm belief that our great nation has the potential to become a home port to many international cruise liners, both on the west side and the east side of our magnificent coastline which is over 7,000 km. Therefore, I am looking at setting an agenda for our travel trade to come together, learn from this experience on board and help TAAI to promote cruise tourism in India. I am sure that by working together towards this vision, we can push the government at the central and state level to develop the requisite port infrastructure to cater to massive cruise ships in all our coastal states. That in turn will create the opportunity to attract large capital investments, create jobs, forex earnings and tax revenues which are so critical for India currently.

In addition, from the policy perspective, India's Look East Policy, which was framed to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with Southeast Asia for regional cooperation is an area that can definitely be tapped for tourism promotions. We, at TAAI, work very closely with all major foreign missions and tourism boards to ensure that diplomacy and tourism can go hand in hand for the growth of the tourism industry, both inbound and



outbound. That's a crucial balance that we have to strike... and I'm proud to say that TAAI has been able to lead the way in this regard.

Our intent behind organizing a cruise convention is to support both inbound and outbound tourism, with a focus on developing cruise tourism in India. TAAI and myself are very keen to introduce a similar cruising experience in India for travellers from across the globe. I believe that TAAI is no longer just a representative of the Indian travel trade, but we can also play a much larger Regional role in this industry, and evolve into a Global industry Association which can influence travel decisions and decision-makers on a global scale, in due course... this is my Vision. And, to implement this Vision, I need your presence, support and assistance in all our future endeavours.

I wish to thank all of you once again for placing your trust in TAAI and my leadership... and I look forward to working closely with each and every one of you in future too.

Thank you and welcome aboard!

Jyoti Mayal  
President  
president@taai.in



# Messages from Office-Bearers

## JAY BHATIA, VICE PRESIDENT

"I convey my gratitude to each and every member of TAAI for extending their co-operation to us, especially during the challenging Covid period, and whole heartedly welcome them to the 66th Convention. We are organising our maiden cruising Convention because we are optimistic that the segment (Cruising) could be the next big business avenue for travel agents as India has a vast coastline waiting to be explored. This Convention will give them a first-hand experience of sailing on a cruise which will ultimately help them in business. India is witnessing a paradigm shift in terms of the development of modes of transport, be it roads, highways, air or railways and lately the ferry services, river cruise, etc."



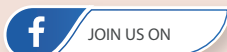
## BETTAIAH LOKESH, HON SECRETARY GENERAL



"I welcome all our members and dignitaries to this signature event. I am grateful to every member of TAAI for extending full support to us; especially in the past two years. We have tried our best to live up to their expectations. The decision to hold our 66th Convention on cruise is not without reason. As we firmly believe that our country has everything to emerge as a home port to many international cruise liners, and the cruise tourism segment is all set to flourish in the immediate future. I sincerely believe you all will have a wonderful time on this cruising Convention."

## SHREERAM PATEL, HON TREASURER

"It's my pleasure to welcome you all at our 66th Convention. I am sure the platform will provide everyone great learning experiences, and the networking opportunities will be indeed outstanding. The backdrop of the beautiful cruise ship will add to the pleasure of the meeting and provide lasting memories"





**JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA**  
**Minister of Civil Aviation and Steel**

I am happy to learn that the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is holding its 66th Cruising Convention from 22nd to 25th August, 2022 in Singapore.

I am told that TAAI, established in 1951, is working tirelessly to establish strong industry leadership in India in the areas of Travel & Tourism for which it deserves commendation from one and all. I hope the Cruising Convention showcases the beauty, legendary heritage and diverse culture of India to the people from various parts of the globe.

*I extend my best wishes for the success of the Cruising Convention.*



**G KISHAN REDDY**  
**Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development  
of North Eastern Region of India**

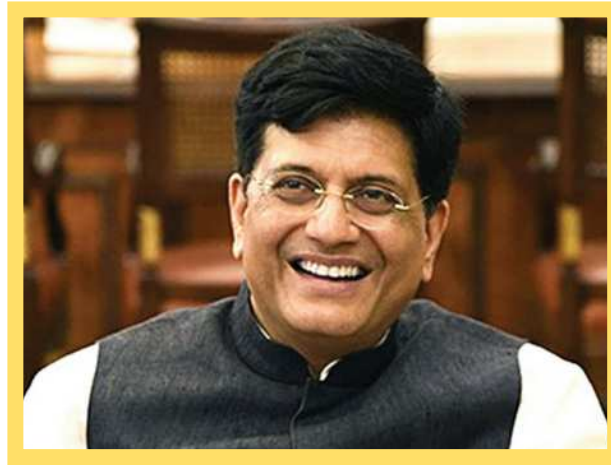
I am happy to learn that the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is organizing its 66th Cruising Convention in Singapore from 22nd to 25th August, 2022.

The last three years have been very challenging for the tourism sector. The convention is being organized at an appropriate time when all stakeholders are ready to bring the tourism sector back on track.

I am confident that this convention will provide an apt platform to network, collaborate, and share knowledge on different aspects related to tourism.

*I convey my best wishes for a grand and successful convention.*





## PIYUSH GOYAL

### Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles

I am pleased to learn that the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) is holding its 66th Convention & Exhibition in Singapore from 22nd – 25th August 2022.

Tourism has today emerged as a major economic activity providing income and employment opportunities and acting as a catalyst for socio-economic change.

I hope that the deliberations of the TAAI Convention would evolve new strategies and schemes for attracting more tourists to India.

*I wish the TAAI Convention all success.*



**ARVIND SINGH**  
**IAS , Secretary, Ministry Of Tourism**

Congratulations to the oldest and largest Travel & Tourism Association in India-TAAI for organizing its 66<sup>th</sup> Cruising Convention in Singapore from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2022.

Globally, travel and tourism has opened up and being one of the large revenue generators for the Country's economy this trade has endeavored to survive and rebound.

This Convention will set an example to the world that trade has made to first move to showcase opening up of travel and tourism, especially in the sub-continent region.

I wish Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, the Committee, its Members and Delegates, all the best for a successful Convention in Singapore which shall enhance regional and multilateral tourism with neighbors.



**AMITABH KANT**  
**G20 Sherpa & Former CEO,**  
**Former NITI Aayog**

I am glad to contribute a message on the occasion of the 66th TAAI's Convention & Exhibition in Singapore from 22nd to 25th August 2022.

TAAI, the oldest and the largest body of professional Travel Agents and Tour operators in India, has played an important role in promoting tourism activities in our country and for the past decade's years, contributed a lot to the growth of tourism in our country. There is no denying the fact that the contribution of TAAI to the promotion of Tourism is tremendous, yet a lot remains to be achieved in making India into a tourist-friendly nation. I hope the exchange of views and suggestions during the Convention will bring the desired change in the industry.

*With this, I wish all success to the organizers of this Convention.*





# Cruising & Entertainment

## 22nd August – Day 1 – Dress Code Smart Business Casuals (NO - Collar Less Shirts/ Half Pants/ Sneakers/ Keds)

- 1100 ~ 1230 Special Boarding for TAAI in batches of 75
- 1130 ~ onwards Lunch at MDR & then can proceed to Cabins
- 1400 ~ 1500 Raising the Mast with a Champagne at the Royal Theatre
- 1500 ~ 1630 FREE FUN TIME
- 1630 Proceed to Muster Station for Drill and enjoy the Sail Away
- 1800 ~ 1900 TAAI Welcome Cocktails at Music Hall by Royal Caribbean & TIRUN
- 1900 The Effectors @ Main Theatre
- 2000 MDR Dinner – Deck 4
- 2230 Optional - Silk Road @ 270 (Reservation Mandatory on Royal Caribbean App.) Don't miss out on the opportunity.

## 23rd August – Day 2 - Dress Code Smart Business Casuals (NO - Collar Less Shirts/ Half Pants/ Sneakers/ Keds)

- Morning Free time and Breakfast at MDR/Windjammer
- 1200 ~ 1500 Illuminating the Minds  
Topic - Ocean of Opportunities at Royal Theatre
- 1500 onwards Lunch at Windjammer
- 1700 Disembark at Penang, Malaysia
- 1730 ~ 2115 Cocktail Dinner by Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau
- 2200 Embark the Cruise
- 2300 Fireworks and with Bollywood Music and Dance (WOW Experience!)
- 2300 Party Continues on the Deck/ Casino

## 24th August- Day3 - Dress Code Smart Business Casuals (NO - Collar Less Shirts/ Half Pants/ Sneakers/ Keds)

- 1100 ~ 1440 Illuminating the Minds
- 1500 Free time and Lunch Windjammer
- 1800 ~ 1900 Farewell Cocktail by Amadeus-Nepal Tourism Board
- 1900 ~ 2000 Showgirls at the Main Theatre
- 2000 Seated Dinner at MDR
- 2200 ~ 2300 Bumper Car (1 hr private session - Entire group)
- 2300 Party till you Dock

## 25th August

- 0700 Au Revoir – See you Again Soon!!
- \*Tentative subject to change*

## NAMASTE INDIA ILLUMINATING MINDS (KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS)

23 <sup>rd</sup> August	24 <sup>th</sup> August
Ocean of Opportunities	The Waves of Change
TOPICS	
War Peace & Tourism	Partnerships Beyond Borders
Singapore Airlines	VFS Presentation
Connected Traveller	Evolved Traveller
Let's TAAI up - India View	TAAI Road Ahead – Mission with the Vision
	Dare to Succeed

## SPEAKERS



- ▶ Former Ambassador Mr. Anil Wadhwa, India
- ▶ Former Ambassador Mrs. Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa, India
- ▶ Mr. G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, Ministry of Tourism, India
- ▶ Mr. Nikhil Desai, Motivator & Coach, India
- ▶ Mr. Aashish Gupta, FAITH, India
- ▶ Mr. Rodney D'Cruz, IATA - India, Nepal & Bhutan
- ▶ Ms. Ratna Chadha, TIRUN, India
- ▶ Mr. Greesh Bindra, The Suryaa, India
- ▶ Mr. Vinay Malhotra, Indigo, India
- ▶ Mr. Chalaka Gajabahu, Ministry of Tourism, Sri Lanka
- ▶ Mr. Galimzhan Seilov, Ministry of Tourism, Kazakhstan
- ▶ Dr. Dhananjay Regmi, Ministry of Tourism, Nepal
- ▶ Mr. Richard Roberts, Travelport, Singapore
- ▶ Ms. Reena G. Motihar, Singapore Airlines
- ▶ Mr. Atul Marwah, VFS Global
- ▶ Mr. Amit Shukla, MMT, India
- ▶ Mr. B Hariharan, Travel House - ITC, India
- ▶ Mr. Rakesh Bansal, Amadeus India



"I am very happy to know that TAAI is organising its 66th convention on cruise in Singapore. I extend my best wishes to TAAI for their strategic positioning of cruise tourism here and for the opportunities to showcase our beautiful country"

- **Valsa Nair Singh,**

*IAS-Principal Secretary, Tourism, Excise & Civil Aviation, Govt of Maharashtra*



# Domestic cruise tourism on the cusp of a paradigm shift

India along its 7,500 km long coastline and vast river systems is yet to be unveiled to the world. Taking due cognisance, the government has taken several initiatives to promote domestic cruise tourism in a big way. TAAI's decision to organise its 66<sup>th</sup> convention on cruise is a step in that direction.

The tourism sector of India is growing rapidly and no doubt it has a lot more to offer to the tourists. In the past few years the industry has witnessed some interesting developments like investing & adopting the latest technology, growth of adventure tourism, promoting lesser-known destinations etc. Tourism in any country grows when the government and the stakeholders identify the potential of the segment/segments and act accordingly. Cruise tourism is one such segment in India which is on the cusp of a major overhaul. It is because the government has taken several steps realising the potential of domestic cruise tourism. Thus, one can notice perceptible changes in the character of Indian tourism, with a tilt from pilgrimage to pleasure to luxury.

The government strongly believes that the Indian cruise market is all set to grow many folds over the next few years. Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, recently said that the Indian cruise market has the potential to grow 10 folds over the next decade, driven by rising demand and disposable incomes.

At this point, the TAAI's decision to organise its 66<sup>th</sup> Convention on cruise ship is an apt one. Because it will facilitate the travel trade to understand the true potential the segment holds for domestic tourism.

A closer look says, in the early 18th century, forward thinkers and kings

introduced people to commercial cruise ship services. Although, some historians say that it started before that; however, the most essential part is that human beings realised the importance of cruising way long back. The 20th century saw an uprising in cruise tourism, and the corporate sector ventured into it to help develop a niche form of tourism that is now famously known as Cruise Tourism. Like a small town in itself, these large vessels give access to travellers to all major activities which we may participate in and enjoy on land. And, perhaps, that's the reason cruising businesses have picked up well lately.

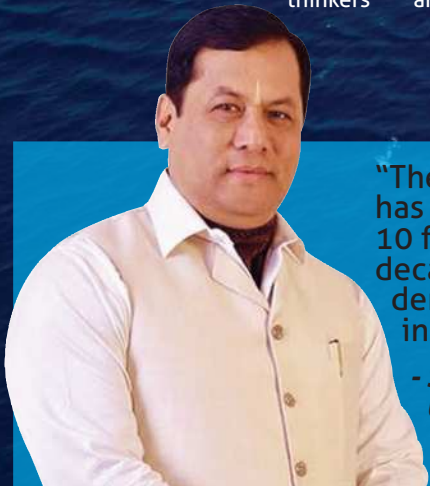
Referring to developing the Cruise Tourism market in India, Jyoti Mayal, President, TAAI, shared that the association decided to organise its first-ever cruising Convention because of the reason that there is a huge untapped potential in the sector. "Niche in terms of value and services, Indian travellers, we are sure would be keen to get on to the vessel like Spectrum of Seas, to enjoy the fun-filled journey in the ocean," said Mayal.

According to her, Asia will be the market leader in the



"The Indian cruise market has the potential to grow 10 folds over the next decade, driven by rising demand and disposable incomes"

- Sarbananda Sonowal,  
Union Minister, Ports,  
Shipping and Waterways





coming years in cruise tourism. Regional tourism is picking up and travellers now look at covering nearby destinations, and cruising could be the one-stop solution for them. The sector has witnessed exponential growth in the last decade, however, have gone through a major slump too due to the pandemic. But, now that travellers' confidence is high and all modes of travel are operational, we expect steady growth in tourism, especially cruising," pointed out Mayal.

Jay Bhatia, Vice President, TAAI, is quite optimistic and said that cruising could be the next big business for travel agents as the country has a vast coastline. "Considering the number of travellers and gauging demand, cruising tourism can multi-fold within a few years. India is witnessing a paradigm shift in terms of the development of modes of transport, be it roads, highways, air or railways and lately the ferry services, river cruise, etc. We are thankful to the government for extensively promoting tourism and developing infrastructure and perhaps that's the reason a specific policy to promote all such modes has been charted out in the last few years," Bhatia said.

Bettaiah Lokesh, Hon. Secretary-General, TAAI, said that they wanted all their members to meet and greet, especially post-pandemic, and celebrate TAAI's convention to take forward the existing business relationships to new levels. "We are thankful to the Royal Caribbean for extending the support and are eagerly looking forward to exploring the opportunities to bring such experiences to India," he said.

From the cost perspective too, cruising is affordable and therefore caters to tourists from all walks of life, supplemented by Shreeram Patel, Hon Treasurer, TAAI. "Like any star hotel, it offers various options to choose from for accommodation. And, like a destination or a waterpark or from an entertainment perspective, the cruise offers everything at a reasonable cost," he said.

### POTENTIAL OF DOMESTIC CRUISE

India with its vast and beautiful coastline, virgin forests and undisturbed idyllic islands, rich historical and cultural heritage, can be



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- **Jyoti Mayal,**  
President, TAAI



a fabulous tourist destination for cruise tourists. With the Indian economy developing at a steady pace, middle class growing in number and increasingly possessing disposable incomes which could be spent on leisure activities, Indians could also take on cruise shipping in a big way. Throwing light on India's domestic cruise prospect, Jurgen Bailom, CEO and President, Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd, said that Indian luxury cruising is new yet rapidly changing; slowly but definitely! Sharing his experience of the last few months he said, "The response that we (Cordelia) have received in the past one year as India's biggest cruise destination for domestic travel has been phenomenal. Not only did we have successful sailings in the West coast but the newly introduced sailings in the east coast have also received a great response since June 2022." What is important here is that people are not just embarking on a cruise for a trip, rather they are opting for a cruise to celebrate their important events of life. This is the real change. "Families come in large numbers, weddings and important events are being hosted on board and guests are making memories of a lifetime through the stellar food, entertainment and destination experiences being offered by Cordelia Cruises," said Bailom. Buoyed by the response, Cordelia is mulling to introduce more ships soon. "We plan to launch more ships in the near future," revealed Bailom.

"The response that we (Cordelia) have received in the past one year as India's biggest cruise destination for domestic travel has been phenomenal"

- **Jurgen Bailom,**  
CEO and President,  
Waterways Leisure Tourism





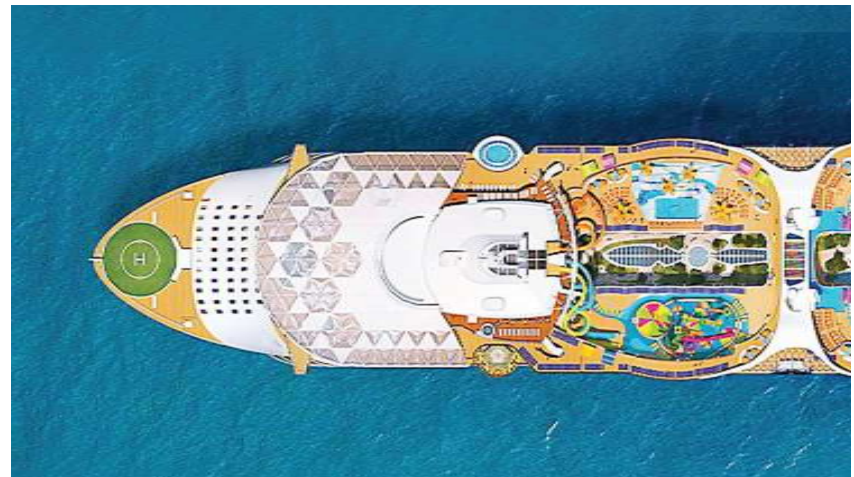

Nalini Gupta of Costa Cruises is more forthright and said that the number of cruisers from India is just 1% when compared with global cruise market size. "This is largely because we don't have cruise liners doing domestic itineraries. This untapped market becomes all the more relevant as cruise liners are constantly looking for new untapped markets. Ships are like floating hotels which can be moved to where there is demand. In India, we definitely have robust demand waiting to be fulfilled," she pointed out.

Varun Chadha, CEO, Tirun Travel Marketing, feels that domestic cruise tourism is a feather in the Indian government's hat, as they have facilitated this form of tourism in the country. He is hopeful that in the near future a lot more brands would come to India. "That's when the true potential of cruise can truly be exploited. It can't be done with one brand alone," Chadha pointed out.

It is important to mention here that Tirun represents Royal Caribbean International (In India) on which TAAI is organising its convention. While speaking about the TAAI convention, Chadha said that they are getting a bunch of the trade people together for 3 days to enjoy and experience their product. "Through this, we are getting the benefit of hosting more than 200 members of TAAI. To make their experience of a lifetime, we have made elaborate arrangements in terms of planning and designing the programme for the TAAI members," he said.

### INFRASTRUCTURE NEED OF THE HOUR

There is not even an iota of doubt that providing a cruise experience needs robust infrastructure. Better port infrastructure not only in terms of berthing, safety, ease of operations, customer facilities but also hygiene, all the more vital, especially in the post Covid

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**- Nalini Gupta, Costa Cruises**



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**- Varun Chadha, CEO, Tirun Travel Marketing**

scenario. "With over 7,000 km of coastline and a vast untapped network of lakes and rivers, India's potential in cruise tourism is quite evident. However, due to a lack of infrastructure, India ranks quite low on the cruise tourism map of the world & we need to invest in building a home hub," said Mayal.

Understanding the importance of infrastructure to flourish cruise tourism the government took steps which included infrastructure upgradation, rationalisation of port fees, removing ousting charges, granting priority berthing to cruise ships, providing e-visa facilities etc. "The government of India realises this potential and is determined to position India as a global cruise hub with state-of-art infrastructure for both ocean and river cruises," said Sonowal . Several attractions of India along its 7,500 km long coastline and vast river systems made it an ideal cruise destination.

Valsa Nair Singh, IAS-Principal Secretary, Tourism, Excise & Civil Aviation, Govt of Maharashtra, said that despite the 7,500-km-long coastline, India's position as a cruise destination is yet to be fully exploited. "Our policies were heavily centered around infrastructure development, marketing and heritage promotion for a long time. The much needed push came when a Joint Committee of the Ministry of Shipping and Tourism was constituted to bring in reforms in the Sector. What followed was a slew of measures to pump new energy. New cruise terminals, development of inland cruise routes, ease in rules for immigration and customs, new e-visa facilities, removing





ousting charges etc. gave a new lease to the business," said Singh.

Singh believes that all new initiatives will also yield results in a slow and steady manner. "Post Covid, the travel boom has opened new vistas and the timing is now right for investment in the cruise sector. The Government will ensure that all the deliverables are fulfilled on the infrastructure development side, while ushering in policies for enhanced facilitation," she said.

Take the example of the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) project which is likely to be readied by March next. The construction of the berth has already commenced for the INR 96-crore cruise terminal. Once it is ready, it will accommodate 2,500 passengers. The collaborative endeavour of the Ministry of Tourism and Visakhapatnam Port is getting grounded as part of the Sagarmala project. K Rama Mohana Rao, Chairman, VPA, said, "Given the pace, the project is picking up. It is likely to be completed by March next. Currently, strict timelines are being followed to accelerate the work." This clearly shows the intent of the government towards developing cruise tourism.

Rajiv Jalota, Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust, also said that current cruise ecosystem, including the infrastructure and policy environment, is fast changing and will match international standards within a reasonable time.

If the ongoing activities are any indication then the cruise segment in India is poised for phenomenal growth in near future. The best part is government is keen to transform the sector and initiated slew of measures.

"Our policies were heavily centered around infrastructure development, marketing and heritage promotion for a long time"

**- Valsa Nair Singh,**  
IAS-Principal Secretary,  
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Aviation, Govt of Maharashtra



"Current cruise ecosystem, including the infrastructure and policy environment, is fast changing and will match international standards within a reasonable time"

**- Rajiv Jalota,**  
Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust





# TAAI - Key Milestones

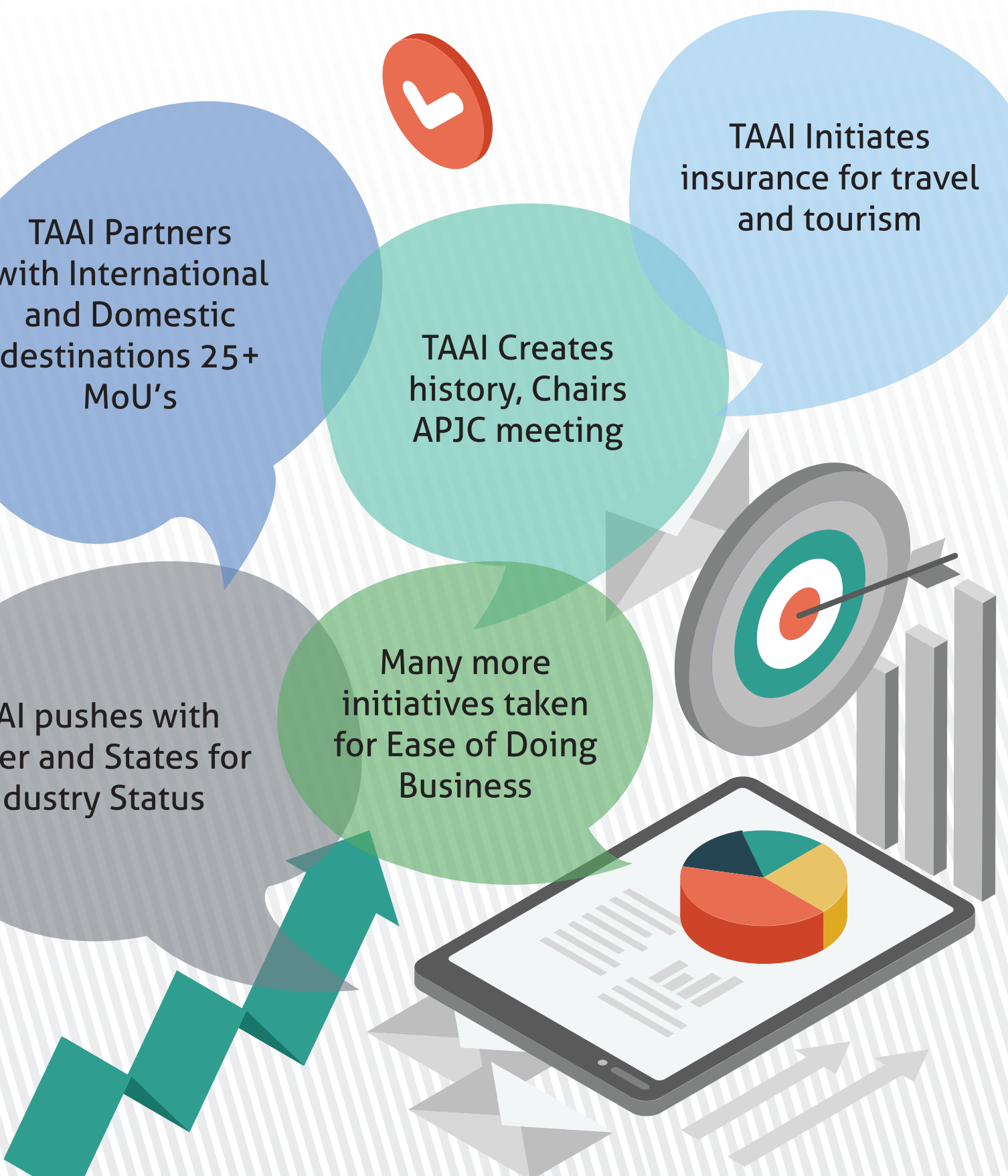
TAAI Partners with International and Domestic destinations 25+ MoU's

TAAI Creates history, Chairs APJC meeting

TAAI Initiates insurance for travel and tourism

TAAI pushes with Center and States for Industry Status

Many more initiatives taken for Ease of Doing Business





**TIRUN**  
Just Cruise



**Royal Caribbean International  
&  
TIRUN Travel Marketing**  
pioneered the concept of cruising  
in India 29 years ago.

As we celebrate three decades  
of partnership next year,  
we thank all TAAI members for  
their support and we wish you  
a great conference onboard.





Welcome to the 66<sup>th</sup> TAAI Cruising Convention

OUR PARTNERS

अतुल्य ! भारत  
Incredible ! India

