

Update on IATO Activities (Monday, 17th May to Sunday, 23rd May 2021)

Dear Members,

Greetings from IATO !

Please find appended relevant activities of our association for the period (Monday, 17th May to Sunday, 23rd May 2021)

Segments covered are

- 1. Communication / Letters that addressed key issues**
- 2. Webinars/ Panel Discussions/Circulars/Meetings/Chapter news**
- 3. Media Coverage**
- 4. Chapter News**

Request your feedback to further the content of our weekly report.

1. Communication / Letters that addressed key issues

Segment 1 update sequence by date:18,20,21 May

Tuesday, 18th May

- **IATO requested Shri Sharad Kumar Saraf, President, Federation of Indian Export Organisations to take up with the Finance Ministry to Release SEIS Scrips of 2019-20 pending for the Tour Operators**

The above request was placed giving reference to IATO's email/letter sent to Shri Saraf on 3rd December 2020 along with a copy of the letter which IATO had written to Hon'ble Minister of Commerce giving its inputs/suggestions on the Foreign Trade Policy 2021-26. Clearly stating the sufferings of the tour operators under the present conditions, the communication highlighted that SEIS is the only hope, which shall help tour operators to survive for next 6 - 8 months and revive their business once e-Tourist Visa and international flight operation is resumed.

A copy of the letter was marked to Dr. Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO, Federation of Indian Export Organisations, New Delhi

A Spontaneous response was received from Director General FIEO on the email sent to him by IATO regarding SEIS. He mentioned that "FIEO is working hard to get the rightful dues of services exporters as services and particularly the travel and tourism sector are the worst affected during the pandemic In the last meeting ,held a week before, the Hon'ble CIM asked the DOC officers to pursue it with MOF as SEIS for 2019-20 was part of the FTP 2015-2020. My President is personally following it up and we will update you."

- **Meeting with Air India regarding Refund: - Mr. Rajiv Mehra and Mr. Manoj Matta had a Zoom meeting with Mr. Melwin D'Silva, Executive Director Commercial, and Mr. Rajinder Nath, General**

Manager Sales & Marketing, Air India with regard to Air India Refund for the IATO Members.

During the meeting, IATO was advised that when the refunds were opened during the month of April 2021, except for the 10 top agents, there was no restriction for other agents to take the refund.

The points discussed and agreed were

1. IATO to collect information from its members whose refunds were pending and send them to Air India

In turn Air India to send the information collected to the concerned Regional General Manager who would be spoken to so as to resolve the issue and expedite the refund as applicable.

IATO to inform its members that who so ever has got the refund and if they have raised the RAs, they must cancel the same on BSP.

2. On the issue of making live the PNRs, which were non – existence now due to time lapse, the same need to be made active by our members to apply for refund. The contact details of the person both in Amadeus and Galileo to be provided so that IATO members can get these PNR live.
3. Air India to communicate to the GM Northern Region that all circulars, which are sent to the agents including the circulars pertaining to opening of refunds on the system, should be sent to IATO as well. This would include new flights being introduced on the tourist sectors, frequency increase or reduction information etc. IATO shall then circulate this information to its members for mutual benefits.
4. As and when things improve and IATO has its physical monthly luncheon meetings, the Regional General Manager and senior officials from Air India HQ will be invited to interact with its members.

Thursday, 20th May

- **IATO requested Mr. Suman Billa, Director, Technical Cooperation & Silk Road, UNWTO to explore possibility of soft loans to the tour operators by UNWTO**

President/Sr. Vice President, in a letter addressed to Mr. Suman Billa, Director Technical Cooperation & Silk Road, UNWTO sought help in exploring possibility of Soft Loans to the tour operators.

In our letter addressed to Mr. Billa, he was apprised that the tour operators had not got any financial support or relief from the Government of India and they are in a financial crisis and are in a dire need for funds to survive and revive their business once E-tourist Visa and international flights are resumed.

IATO placed its request to Mr Billa to kindly apprise in case UNWTO or any other UN Body can give soft loans to the tour operators in India at lower rate of interest and if it was possible that this kind of loans could be given through any

bank in India who could give these loans on behalf of UNWTO with or without any collateral. Banks could always apply service charges from IATO members.

Friday, 21st May

- **Signing of MoU with DRV and MATTA:-** Letters were written to Mr. Norbert Fiebig, President, DRV German Travel Association and Mr. Datuk Tan Kok Liang, President, Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) to explore the possibilities of Signing of MOU Between them and IATO. The main objective of our proposal of signing the agreement is to start rebuilding from scratch and synergies the confidence and promote tourism to our country which shall of mutual benefit for the members of the association.

2. Webinars/ Panel Discussions/Circulars/Meetings

Segment 2 update sequence by date:18,19,20,21 May

Tuesday, 18th May

- **All Members were requested to offer their inputs regarding their interest of availing loans under ECLGS.**

They were requested to send their response in the circulated question format.

Wednesday, 19th May

- **All Members were informed in detail about the decisions regarding Refund from Air India on account of cancelled air tickets due to Covid -19/lockdown.**

Thursday, 20th May

- **All Members were informed on the email received from Director, Directorate of Lighthouses & Lightships, Visakhapatnam regarding Expression of Interest for 65 Lighthouse Sites for Development of Lighthouse Tourism Projects on Public Private Partnership Mode.**

Members who were interested in development of these tourism projects, could join for the meeting on Friday, the 21st May 2021 at 1500 hrs through video conference in the given link.

Friday, 21st May

- **The Leela, Palaces and Resorts organised a webinar/presentation on 21st May 2021 at 4 PM on Zoom. All members had been informed on the 18th of May**

3. Media Coverage

Segment 3 by date: 17, 18, 21 May

Monday, 17th May

- IATO President motivates members, tourism professional to get vaccinated

<https://www.whereabouts.in/iato-president-motivates-members-tourism-professional-to-get-vaccinated/>

Tuesday, 18th May

DDP PUBLICATIONS

Tuesday May 18, 2021

Tourism Breaking news



Experience something new

seema.datt@buzzindia.in

It is crucial to link agriculture and tourism: Aaditya Thackeray



Speaking at the International Conference on Agri-Tourism 2021, Aaditya Thackeray, Minister for Tourism & Environment, Maharashtra, said, "More than 60% of the country's population engage in agriculture and it therefore crucial to link agriculture to tourism. Agri-tourism is instrumental for employment generation and economic improvement especially in these times."

Deal-making activity dropped by 34.3% in April 2021



A total of 71 deals (comprising M&A, private equity, and venture financing) were announced in the global tourism sector during April, which is a decline of 34.3% over 108 deals announced in March, according to data and analytics company GlobalData. Aurojyoti Bose, its Lead Analyst, says, "Although the rebound in deal activity in March brought in some cheer, it could not be sustained for long with April again reversing the trend."

Three-day Virtual ATB 2021 commences, ahead of Austria's reopening on May 19



Speaking on the sidelines of the 3-day networking platform Virtual ATB 2021, Petra Stolba, CEO, Austrian National Tourist Office, said, "Right now tourism faces many questions. Short-term ones, such as what Covid means for the coming summer season as well as long-term about the future of travel and opportunities through digitalisation."



The only accredited Covid compliance certification body in India
Reach out to us for your Covid compliance certificate

NASCE Accredited
Ready for ISO 9001:2015 compliance

+91 70420 71990, +91 9910031313, +91 98187 07141,
info@qualstar.co.in, meenukshi.dairegi@qualstar.co.in

FHRAI recommends 3-year moratorium extension on all loans to rescue industry



The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has submitted a representation to PM Narendra Modi, FM Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of MSME Nitin Gadkari and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel requesting urgent support. It has pleaded for fiscal help including 3-year moratorium extension on all loans and complete waiver of interest on loans.

IATO President requests the travel industry to get themselves vaccinated



Rajiv Mehra, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) has made an appeal to all its members and all tourism professionals to get themselves, their staff and their families to register for vaccination. He said, "It is very important for all of us in the tourism and hospitality industries to get ourselves and our staff vaccinated at the earliest."

ASI extends closure of monuments till May 31



Union culture minister Prahlad Singh Patel shared a notification that stated that the Archaeological Survey of India has decided to keep all its monuments closed till May 31, or until further orders, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On April 15, ASI announced the closure of all the centrally-protected monuments under ASI till May 15.

If you want your events enlisted here, please email to talk@ddppi.com
For more information, log on to www.tourismbreakingnews.com

For more news & updates please log on to



- IATO urges members, tourism professionals to get vaccinated
<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/iato-urges-members-tourism-professionals-to-get-vaccinated-11621253598192.html>

രൂട് കീ ടീകാ ട്രേവൽ യാത്രാ പാക്കേജ് പര പര്യടൻ ഉഘോഗ കോ റീ ശ്യായ, ജാനിറ ക്യാ റ്റേ ട്രേവൽ കമ്പനീ
➤ കീ ലോകലുഭാവൻ പേഷകശ

<https://www.jagran.com/delhi/new-delhi-city-ncr-delhi-travel-company-offer-24-day-tour-package-with-two-doses-of-sputnik-vaccine-for-rs-one-lakh-38-thousand-jagran-special-21661549.html>

THE HANS INDIA

Vax tourism idea goes viral before takeoff

A flyer of Dubai-based travel agency Arabian Nights Tours has gone viral on WhatsApp. It offers a 24-day-long trip from Delhi to Moscow including two-doses of Sputnik V vaccine

N SHARATH CHOWDARY
HYDERABAD

AS India is facing acute shortage of vaccines amid a raging Covid 2.0, vaccine tourism is the new buzz on internet from last few days. This term began trending online when travel operators from European countries started offering a vaccination-cum-vacation trip to Russia. Such a tour package is also doing rounds on social media attracting the Indian travellers. Several travel enthusiasts have shown interest to buy the tour package but in vain.

A flyer of Dubai-based travel agency Arabian Nights Tours has gone viral on WhatsApp. It offers a 24-day-long trip from Delhi to Moscow in Russia including two-doses of Sputnik V vaccine, visa support, sightseeing in Moscow and St Petersburg, transport, food

and accommodation in three-star hotel at a cost of Rs 1.29 lakh per person. Even the below middle-class Indians fall flat for this lucrative deal. Thousands of people tried calling the number displayed in the advertisement and finally they were upset to know that the package is yet to take off.

"Amid lockdown and curfew, this package seems to be a perfect escape from the boredom here, but it was not happening. These trips for vaccine tourism to Russia must start soon," said R Pavan, an IT employee. "The package offer was suspicious. Forget vaccination, 24-day ac-



commodation in Russia at Rs 1.29-lakh budget is not realistic," says P

Chaitanya, an entrepreneur. The management of Arabian Nights Tours was not willing to respond to Bizz Buzz queries. According to a reliable source, the travel agent did not get necessary approvals to commence the package from either of the countries and its information was leaked unofficially prior to the official launch. Over 2,000 phone calls were received by the travel agent in a single day enquiring about the offer. The members of Indian Association of Tour Operators

(IATO) also wondered how this package will work out. The national body of the tourism industry tried to get information from Russian authorities.

They found that only Russian citizens and foreign citizens with registration in Moscow can get vaccinated over there. Any tourist with the assistance of a travel agent may not be permitted for vaccination.

IATO President Rajiv Mehra said, "Arabian Nights Tours is not our member, so I don't comment on the authenticity of their package. The idea of vaccine tourism is not viable for Indians when both indigenous and foreign vaccines are available here. It may be a good idea if people from African nations come to our country for vaccination."

21/05/2021 HYDERABAD Pg 09

4. Chapter News

Segment 4 update sequence by date: 18,20 May

Tuesday, 18th May

➤ For tourism to revive, we need to change the present perception of India: Prateek Hira

<https://travel.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/travel-agents/inbound/for-tourism-to-revive-we-need-to-change-the-present-perception-of-india-prateek-hira/82698247>

Thursday, 20th May

2 ഡോസും എടുത്താൽ യാത്ര അനുവദിക്കുക

ജയിംസ് കൊടിയന്തറ
(ഐഎടിഐ കേരള ചാപ്റ്റർ പ്രസിഡന്റ് എംഡി, കോൺകോഡ് എക്സോട്ടിക് വോയേജസ്)

കേരളത്തിൽ ഇപ്പോഴാണ് രണ്ടാം ലോകപ്രളയം എങ്കിലും 2020 മാർച്ച് മുതൽ ടൂറിസം രംഗത്തു തുടർച്ചയായി ലോകപ്രളയം. ഈ രംഗത്തു ജോലി ചെയ്യുന്ന 15 ലക്ഷത്തോളം പേർ വഴിയായാർമാണ്. നിവൃത്തിയില്ലാതെ പലരും മീൻവീൽപനയ്ക്കും ബിരിയാണി വിൽപനയ്ക്കും മറ്റും പോയി. അടിയന്തരമായി പുനരുദ്ധരിച്ചില്ലെങ്കിൽ കേരള ടൂറിസത്തിനു വേണ്ടി പതിറ്റാണ്ടുകളായി ചെയ്തവഴിച്ച പണവും അധഃപനയും പാഴാവും.



● സർക്കാർ ചെയ്യേണ്ടത്: എത്രയും വേഗം വാക്സിനേഷൻ പൂർത്തിയാക്കുക. 2 ഡോസ് വാക്സിനും എടുത്തവരെ യാത്ര ചെയ്യാൻ അനുവദിക്കുക. അയൽ സംസ്ഥാനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നു വരുന്നവരെയും അനുവദിക്കണം. വിദേശികൾക്ക് ടൂറിസം വിസ നൽകാൻ കേന്ദ്ര സർക്കാരിൽ സമ്മർദ്ദം ചെലുത്തണം. ബാങ്കുകൾ ടൂറിസം- ഹോട്ടൽ രംഗത്തിനു വായ്പ നൽകാൻ മടി കാണിക്കുന്നു. വായ്പകൾ അടിയന്തരമായി നൽകണമെന്ന് എസ്എൽബിസി യോഗത്തിൽ സർക്കാർ നിർദ്ദേശിക്കണം. പലിശ സബ്സിഡി ബാങ്കുകൾക്കു നൽകുന്നതിനു പകരം ഗ്രാന്റഡായി നേരിട്ടു വായ്പയെടുത്തവർക്കു നൽകുകയാണു വേണ്ടത്.

James Kodianthara Chairman IATO, Kerala Chapter & Managing Director of Concord Exotic Voyages.

In Today's Malaya Manorama, the leading daily focused on the swearing in of the new ministry. Translation: Those who have completed two doses of vaccination must be allowed to travel. Though Kerala is experiencing the second lockdown, the tourism Industry has been in lockdown since March 2020. There are I've 15 lacs of employees working in tourism. Most of them have lost their jobs and some have resorted to selling fish , biriyani etc. If urgent survival measures are not undertaken by the government, this industry which has been created in Kerala over the last 40 years will cease to exist and all the investments made will also be wasted. Government must ensure that both the doses vaccines are given quickly and those who have taken them should be allowed to travel and also those tourists from overseas who have taken both the doses should be allowed into India by issuing tourists visas. Banks should not hesitate in extending the required financial support the tourism and hospitality industry.
