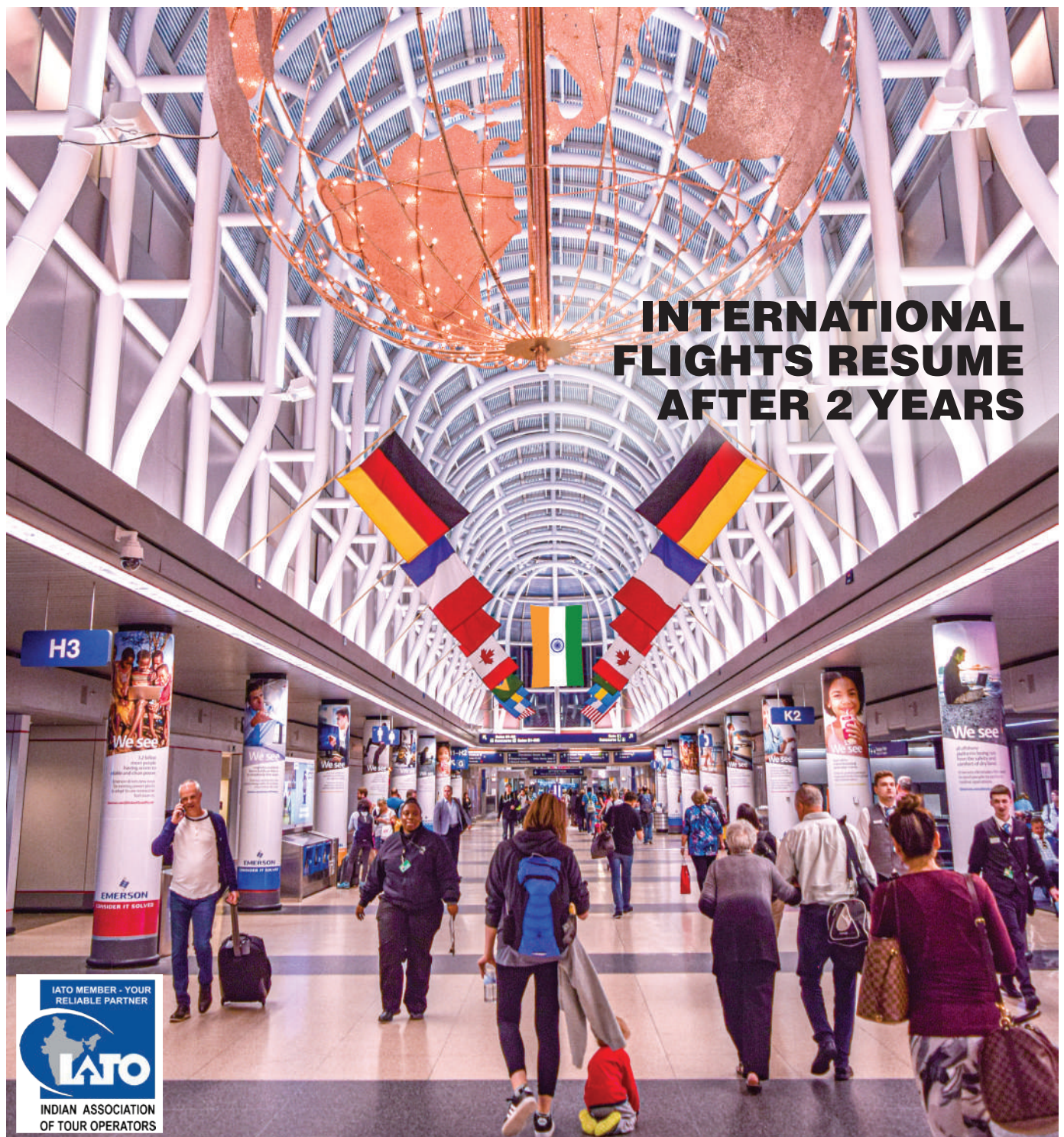


IATO

*A Tourism Industry Communication by
Indian Association of Tour Operators*

SPEAKS





37TH
IATO ANNUAL CONVENTION
AT
BENGALURU

TENTATIVELY IN
SEPTEMBER 2022



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Contents

Inside IATO	05-07
The Postcard	08-09
Professional Wisdom	10-11
Government and You	12-21
Voice of Media	22-45
Voice of Fraternity	46-47
Charms of India	48-54
Spiritual Fountain	55-59
Foreign Shores	60-62
India Fabric	63-64



President's Message



Dear Friends

Dear members,

India has finally opened its doors for foreign tourists. Now we can all get ready to market the country among all tourist destinations and patiently wait for the tourists to visit India. This summer is indeed going to be a tough one for all the agents, both old and young, to put India back on their itinerary.

The Union Ministry of Tourism has recently embarked on some virtual roadshows in 10 countries through their new marketing offices. The Indian embassies will get the new/existing travel agents promoting outbound in their respective countries.

The ministry has taken its own marketing initiatives, and all of us should contribute in this regard. I request you to go a step forward and request your clients to return to India. These old customers would send the correct messages to their peer groups and consumers at large to come and visit India.

IATO has been spearheading these activities with the ministry and we hope that most of our suggestions will bear fruit.

Decks have been cleared so that our customers can come to India without facing visa troubles, and get a seamless exit from the airport as the government has done away with the COVID-19 mandatory tests.

Your association has planned some activities in the next few months, and we would request all of you to participate so that together, we come out as winners.

Till next time be safe and we will meet soon again with a big smile.

With warm regards !

Your President


JANUARY

❖ All active members were detailed on the Taj Hotels Promo Code Special Rates for IATO members, with a booking link for the IATO promo code and a link for terms and conditions.

❖ IATO, represented by Rajnish Kaistha and Ravi Gosain, offered its viewpoint at the Incredible India Digital Marketing Platform VC meeting called by the Additional Secretary for Tourism.

❖ All active members were informed about the FAM trip to Divya Kashi Yatra by Deluxe Tourist Train from 22-25 January 2022.



❖ E.M. Najeeb addressed the webinar organised by the Embassy of Dakar and talked about medical tourism.

❖ Sunil Mishra addressed the webinar on National Tourism Day. It was organised by HCI, Nairobi. The theme of the webinar was tourist and cultural destinations in India.

❖ Rajnish Kaistha addressed a webinar on the attractions of Indian tourism, which was organised by the High Commission of Bulgaria.

❖ Rajiv Mehra and Ravi Gosain offered their inputs to the Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, during the virtual meeting on 27 January 2022, with the stakeholders to seek inputs for preparing a Vision Plan for 2047 for the tourism sector.

❖ A Webinar-Vivanta Sikkim Pakyong was held on Friday, 28 January 2022.

FEBRUARY

❖ A meeting of the IATO Road Shows and Overseas Promotion Committee was held on 4 February 2022 on Zoom.



❖ The IHCL Webinar on amā Stays & Trails was held for the IATO Members on 7 February 2022 on Zoom.

❖ All allied members (tour operators and travel agents) were detailed on the Taj Hotels' Promo Code Special Rates for IATO members as well as Promo Code Special Rates for the IATO allied members (tour operators and travel agents) (for the Taj, SeleQtions, and Vivanta hotels) were also finalised.

❖ Rajiv Mehra and Ravi Gosain attended a virtual meeting under the chairmanship of the Additional Director General (Tourism) that took place on 9 February 2022 regarding the Loan Guarantee Scheme for COVID-affected Tourism Service Sector (LGSCATSS).

❖ All members were informed on the extension of the validity of the Union Ministry of Tourism's recognition and approval in relation to all categories of service providers (tour operators, travel agents, and tourist transport operators) till 30 June 2022 during the ongoing COVID-19.

❖ All members were informed of the MoHFW revised guidelines

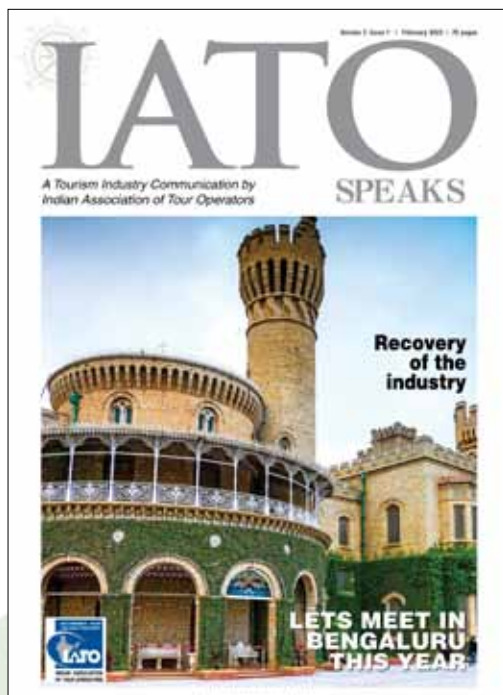
for international arrivals dated 10 February 2019. The 7-day quarantine clause was removed for all nationals.

❖ On regular follow-up by IATO with the government, MoHFW guidelines for international arrivals are revised. As per the revised guideline clause, seven days quarantine has been removed for all nationals and the list of high-risk countries has also been removed, which is good for us as there were some key source markets in the list of high-risk countries.

❖ All active members were detailed on the Invitation for India Travel Mart (ITM) Dehradun, 17-19 February 2022.

❖ All members recognised by the Union Ministry of Tourism were informed on the issuance of the Commercial Airport Entry Pass (AEP) to tour operators and hotels.

❖ IATOSpeaks – February 2022 Edition was circulated to all members.



❖ All members were requested to participate in the Study on the Revival of Tour Operators post-COVID-19.

❖ All members were informed about their registration as buyers for SATTE 2022 being held from 18–20 May 2022 at Greater Noida.

❖ All members were informed about the IMT M 2022-International Tourism Exhibition in Tel Aviv, Israel, 29–30 March 2022.

❖ All active members were asked to submit a piece of information needed by the Ministry of Finance to consider the removal of GST on services provided in neighbouring countries.

❖ IATO had an important meeting with Joint Secretary (TRU), Union Ministry of Finance discuss the removal of the cascading effect of GST on the tourism industry and the withdrawal of tax collection at source (TCS) for foreign tourists. On the removal of the cascading effect of GST on the tourism industry, IATO mentioned that GST is to be levied at 18 per cent on 10 per cent mark-up, i.e., only to charge at 1.8 per cent GST on tour operators services.

A small correction is to be made in the conditions prescribed against the 5 per cent GST notified for tour operator services as there is an anomaly in the notification for the removal of GST on services provided outside India to foreign tourists. On the issue of GST removal on services provided outside India, IATO requested that GST/IGST be fully exempted on the services provided outside India, i.e., in neighbouring countries, even if the package includes an India tour. As a result of the tax exemption, bookings would come to Indian tour operators instead of such bookings going to tour operators based in neighbouring countries. This will add considerable foreign exchange for the country.

All points were well taken. However, the Joint Secretary (TRU) has asked IATO the percentage of foreign exchange being paid to Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, or other

neighbouring countries out of the total combined package tour cost, in addition to how much business IATO members lost as a result of GST on outbound services.

❖ All members were apprised of the pending refund from The Lalit Hotels and were requested to send the HOTEL WISE details to the IATO office by 24 February 2022.

❖ All active members were informed about the invitation from PHDCCI for the Border Tourism Conclave from 27 February to 1 March 2022, at Royal Desert Camp, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

❖ All members were requested to contribute towards the contents of IATO Speaks (the IATO Newsletter).

❖ A virtual training programme on Taj Hotels Promo Code Special Rates for IATO members was held on Friday, 25 February 2022 on Zoom. All members (tour operators and travel agents) were informed. All active members were informed about the FAM tour for promoting Maharashtra Tourism.

❖ Celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the Union Ministry of Tourism and the Association of Indian Universities organised the seventh episode 'Explore India, Discover Yourself' from the 12-episode webinar series, followed by a quiz.

MARCH

❖ On the request of IATO LG. Ajay Bhatt, Hon'ble Minister of State for Tourism, who is also MOS for Defence, Secretary MOT and Secretary Civil Aviation, a review on the resurfacing modalities of Andaman Airport would be undertaken pending which runway closure from 8 March 2022 was suspended. A new NOTAM for a runway closure from 1400 hours to 0080 hours the next day, from 8-11 March, was issued.

❖ Under the aegis of IATO (TS & AP chapter), the "Buddhist sites in Telangana state" seminar was conducted in collaboration with Telugu University to 15 RLGs, five state guides, and 10 tourism students in Hyderabad on 5 March 2022.



❖ IATO also requested Secretary, Union Ministry of Tourism to take up the matter with NGT to allow registration of diesel vehicles with an All India Tourist Permit (AITP) in Delhi.

❖ IATO wrote to Arvind Singh, Secretary of Tourism, and offered suggestions for the Draft National Tourism Policy.

❖ All members were informed regarding the pending refund of the advance paid for wildlife safaris to the Rajasthan government. IATO was following up on the subject, and it was asked to provide a list of its members whose refunds were pending. Members whose refunds were pending with the Rajasthan government were requested to send the details in a prescribed format to the IATO Office by 17 March 2022.



The landscape was wet with a light drizzle, streaks of random sunlight came darting towards us through the tall trees. In the distance, slate-roofed huts kept appearing and disappearing from our sight.

There were five other people in the cabin. A newly-wed Punjabi couple making the best of their marital status through the dark tunnels, the bride's flustered face revealed their intimate escapades every time the train emerged from a tunnel. An elderly couple, who kept yawning and seemed quite bored with the unhurried speed of their journey. And a middle-aged lady holding onto a frisky toddler, who kept trying to reach for the ball of yarn in her hand. A pink throated Rosy-pipet flew into the cabin at one of the hillside stations diverting the toddler's attention.

Patches of tiny clouds hung in the valley. Our mini-locomotive slowly made its way up through the hills, crossing over gothic style bridges, winding along curves, and passing through countless tunnels. It chugged along on its narrow rail-track, whistling through deodars, pines, oaks and conifers, enveloping our senses in the exhilarating fragrance of surrounding woods. Petit rail-stations and quaint hamlets passed by, as we continued our mountain voyage towards the erstwhile traces of a British era hill station perched at 2,206 metres on a ridge. Briefly halting at tidy hillside platforms, it kept playing hide-and-seek with the sunrays.

The images that met our eyes, seemed right out of a fairy tale picture book. It felt like being inside a magnified Hornby's model-railway set, rolling through neatly arranged rail tracks, picturesque villages, misty landscapes, fancy rail stations, dramatic bridges and arch tunnels; everything seemed neatly rescaled and embedded into the hilly folds. The toddler's attention returned back to the yarn, he threw it out of the wide window. It suddenly became dark again, as we entered another tunnel.

In the darkness, we could sense the phantom ghost of 'Bhalku Ram', the shepherd from Jhajja village near Chail, who during 1890-1903, had single-handedly guided the British engineers, lay the Kalka Shimla narrow gauge railway track (recognised by UNESCO). Negotiating steep inclines, it went through 107 tunnels and 864 bridges, and connected the plains to the Himalayas. It was his extraordinary skill and unfailing understanding of the local terrain, that made the 'British Raj' pull off this 'unique feat of engineering'. Repeatedly failing to establish the correct alignments of the tunnels while starting to dig from both ends, the 'British' had to seek the help of 'Bhalku Ram'. Legend has it, that he had mastered the instinct of tapping on the side of hill slope with a solid wooden staff; by listening to its sounds, he would mark the points at both ends to begin digging. Not once did he falter in the alignments. A primitive and unschooled local non-engineer, the British Viceroy himself, awarded the man. After the completion of the rail-track, Bhalku Ram disappeared mysteriously. It remains a grossly awakening intrigue till date.

There was a long whistle, the locomotive pulled into Shimla station. A Kashmiri looking porter in grey kham dress topped with a short sadari hopped into the cabin. The Punjabi couple began to gather their luggage. The youngster started jumping with excitement, his mother lifted him in her arms. The elderly man waved at a small group of school students patiently awaiting him at the platform, his wife woke up suddenly from her slumber. We quickly disembarked and headed straight for Bhalku Rail Museum nearby.

The next afternoon we came across the same elderly man, he was walking on the mall, wearing a colourful local cap. Greeting us warmly, he remarked *"Shimla mein bahut kuch hae dekhne ko ji, angreez to chale gaye par kai nishaniyan choord gaye yahn"* (Shimla has a lot to discover sir, the Britishers finally went away, but they left behind many traces of their presence here).

The elderly man was the headmaster of some school and seemed to know the town like the back of his hand, we took off on a brief discovery walk to the places he mentioned. We had nil idea that we were about to see places, where our history had been made.

It was astonishing to learn that the Viceregal Lodge located on the observatory hill, had electricity as early as 1888, much before rest of Shimla received it, and it was here in one of its rooms that the decision of 1947 to carve out Pakistan from 'India', had been taken. And Peterhoff, the tudor style building of 1800s, built by the British, had housed several Viceroys and Governor Generals, and after our independence, this building had served as the Punjab High Court where the trial of Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatama Gandhi had taken place, and he had been sentenced to death thereafter.

It became cloudy and began to drizzle, we rushed towards Annadale ground, which the British had named after their Annandale valley, in their County of Dumfries, back in Scotland. It had become their playground for social events, fête champêtre type garden parties and entertainment, where they hosted horse races, polo matches and cricket, in an extravagant display of their imperial lifestyle fueled on Indian wealth and slavery.

Daylight began to fade, the distant landscape turned into silhouette. A Himalayan pied-woodpecker rushed out of its nesting-hole, screeching its way towards another tree. The drizzle stopped, we thought of 'Balku Ram' and the 'train-track'; had he not guided the British colonisers, not much of what Shimla is, would be.



The author, Neelam Thakur (Neel) has been a devoted Tourism and Travel professional for over 3½ decades.
thakurquest@gmail.com

Author Note

This is a good time to rewrite the somewhat over glorified 'British Raj' tales in India, with far more deserving and more appealing, factual narratives of the lesser known native facts. Its also time to erase our British enslaved mindsets, and take daring new initiatives to think, create, and promote products, that highlight the informations which have remained lost under many of their glorified narratives. "Namaste World", India is ready to welcome you. We have so much more to tell you, than you know.



THE PATH OF MENTORING AND MEANDERING



■ IATO Bureau (Sourced by Tapas Banerjee)

Whenever we climb up the professional ladder, one of the most frequently asked questions is what the definition of 'professional wisdom' is and how one acquires it? To summarise, a professional is someone who works in an occupation that requires a high level of training and proficiency. While not axiomatic, 'wisdom' seemingly emerges from a professional foundation or reaches some maturity through a 'hard-earned', growing pains process or journey that enriches both the intellect and the heart. 'Integrity' and 'character' are two key elements of the processes shaping a wise personality that exudes wisdom.

course would only lead to a downward trajectory.

Character: It is the expression of one's temperament and vitality, such as the degree of pessimism and optimism, helplessness or hopefulness, as well as a capacity for authentic, empathetic connection, and so on; it is especially shaped through interaction with others. Hence, it is important to surround oneself with positive influences. These would invariably arise from within if you allowed extraneous



influences to affect you. It is entirely up to you to decide which influences to imbibe and which to reject. Character blossoms in solitude when you introspect deep within and examine the forces around you. The long distance runner derives his strength from his isolation.

Wisdom is a lifelong journey, not a set destination or a personality trait shown by a score or grade, and especially by material achievements. Of course, wisdom

”

Character blossoms in solitude when you introspect deep within and examine the forces around you. It is up to you to decide which influences to imbibe and which to reject

”



Integrity: It reflects a strong inner compass, clear values, and an ethical system, as well as an integrated sense of self capable of being or standing alone; it is especially forged in solitude. Hence, whatever steps we take in the course of doing business with our clients should be backed up by our integrity.

If we conduct business in which we fall in the eyes of others, we will fall in our eyes sooner or later. Such commercial or even personal transactions would struggle to withstand the pressure of time. You would undoubtedly fly above the heavens, but without integrity, you would float like a kite with its strings cut. Your unassailable



is often situational, that is, one may be a sage in practices of work and foolish in matters of love. Now that we have defined wisdom, let us identify the role of 'mentoring' and 'meandering' in wisdom generation. Most of us associate mentoring with a knowledgeable and understanding supervisor or senior colleague (or teacher, coach, and therapist, among others) who took us under their wing. This individual shared ideas and experience, assisted us in bandaging wounds, and helped us get back on our feet after a daunting learning curve challenge.

They also offered practical shortcuts based on more time spent on the battle lines. For many, this individual becomes a role model, affecting both our professional substance and style, especially during our formative years. Accepting mentorship, on the other hand, entails drawbacks as well. Embracing a mentor's approach completely, whether because the mentor is seen as Guru or it is easier to follow a known or safe-track, may thwart the development of one's own personality and confidence to explore.

In contrast to mentorship, meandering (or charting one's own course) can lead to the development of skills, experience, and, ultimately, wisdom, less through coaching and more through on-the-job training, especially while flying solo. A meandering learning curve, predictably, has a longer duration, unexpected detours and learning paths, and a higher frequency of errors.

In contrast to mentoring, through meandering (or charting one's own course) one may evolve skills, experience and, ultimately,

some wisdom, less by coaching and more by on the job training, especially when (mostly) flying solo. A meandering learning curve, not surprisingly, is often of longer duration, with unexpected detours and learning paths and has greater frequency of errors.

In conclusion, true and unique wisdom comes from a combination



of mentorship and meandering. While the mentor's personal behaviour may inspire you and offer thoughts and possibilities that you had not considered, do not allow your mentor to dissolve themselves into your existence. This will kill the opportunity for you to become a unique example or mentor oneself. Keep in mind that your mentor is from the past. You are the present, lunging towards an unknown future.

As a result, while the mentor builds your foundation, you must fly out of the nest, make mistakes, learn from them, befriend the vultures, and make a mark for yourself. The way you execute this over a succession of events and time grants you 'professional wisdom'. You are ready to transform yourself into a mentor to a new generation of professionals, some of whom may meander as you did. ❖

”

While the mentor's behaviour may inspire you and offer thoughts that you had not considered, do not allow your mentor to dissolve themselves into your existence

”





CALL FOR ENHANCED REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY UNDER UDAN

In response to a communication from Assistant Director General (TT), Ministry of Tourism, IATO offered its inputs on the Regional Connectivity Scheme under UDAN.

IATO recommends adding the following sectors under the Regional Connectivity Scheme of UDAN:

- Jhansi-Khajuraho-Khajuraho
- Lucknow-Khajuraho-Lucknow
- Varanasi-Khajuraho-Varanasi
- Agra-Khajuraho-Agra
- Gwalior-Khajuraho-Gwalior

Other recommendations were:

- A new airstrip should be developed and connected with the main city of India to the Statue of Unity. City: Kevadia,

district: Narmada, state: Gujarat.

- A new airstrip should be built and linked to Dwarka from India's main cities. City: Dwarka, district: Dev Bhumi Dwarka, state: Gujarat.

- There was only one flight from Mumbai to Bhuj. More flights should be added.

- Keshod airport in Gujarat required more connectivity as it is close to Sasan Gir, Somnath, Junagadh, Pinjore Airfield and Flying Club, and Pinjore. ❖

”

There was only one flight from Mumbai to Bhuj. More flights should be added

”

EXTENSION OF MOT RECOGNITION

IATO has requested that the validity of MOT recognition for tour operators be extended until 30 June 2022, and that the guidelines for MOT recognition for service providers be revised.

IATO called the ADG Tourism's attention to its prior communications dated 30 September-28 December 2021, urging that tour operators and other tourism service providers be granted extension until 31 March 2022, whose validity expired or was about to expire in the interim.

As international flight operations had not begun, the balance sheet, forex requirements, and other documents for FY2019-20 were not evaluated for granting an extension until 30 June 2022.

IATO also advised the ADG of a pending request to ease the conditions for service provider recognition. Qualifying criteria for MOT recognition for tourism service providers will be relaxed for qualified staff, and those who have completed a certificate course from the Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) will be deemed qualified staff. In this regard, the Union Ministry of Skill Development also sent a letter to the Secretary of Tourism, but the matter was still pending with the TT Division. ❖

”

IATO advised ADG of pending request to ease conditions for service provider recognition

”

SUPPORT INBOUND TOURISM INDUSTRY, A PRESSING PRIORITY

IATO has written to Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting assistance for inbound tourism industry, which is suffering from severe financial crisis and is battling for existence, as well as preferential treatment for inbound tour operators.

The IATO requested for financial assistance to incoming tour operators and, as asked in its letter of 11 January 2022, IATO reaffirmed and demanded financial assistance for inbound tour operators so that they could

exist until the inbound tourism industry was resurrected.

According to the request, at least 75 per cent of wages earned in fiscal year 2019-20 should be awarded as a one-time gift.

In light of the departure of SEIS, a special status for inbound tour operators has been proposed, as well as an incentive of seven-10 per cent of net foreign exchange earnings during a financial year be offered, and that the new policy be reintroduced to evaluate this proposal. ❖



Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi

“
At least 75% of wages
earned in FY2019-20
should be awarded as a
one-time gift
”

REOPENING OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR

IATO has asked Jitendra Narain, Chief Secretary, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, to schedule the opening of tourist attractions in Emerald Islands in phases, in accordance with COVID-19 hygiene and safety guidelines.

IATO said that the tourism business has been in a grave crisis since March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, and that the Andaman tourism industry has only had an eight-month window in the last two years.

Due to the Omicron variant, all tourist places were closed from the first week of January, putting stakeholders in a financial bind.

However, as the overall scenario started to improve,

IATO requested for a calibrated reopening of tourist spots in the South and Middle Andaman districts, as well as the North and Middle Andaman districts, beginning in February 2022, with strict adherence to the necessary COVID-19 safety protocols.

The number of tourists at each tourist point should be capped in a bid to avoid overcrowding. As the situation improves, the authorities may relax the restrictions as they see fit. ❖



Jitendra Narain
Chief Secretary
Andaman and Nicobar Administration

SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR INBOUND TOUR OPERATORS

IATO has asked Arvind Singh, Secretary of State for Tourism, to assist inbound tourism industry, which is going through severe financial crisis and is battling to stay afloat.



Arvind Singh
Secretary, Union Ministry of Tourism

”
Some overseas travellers would visit India, and some business would be generated
”

IATO requested the Ministry's aid in pressing three issues with the Hon'ble Prime Minister or the respective ministries in order to support incoming tour operators, as it was becoming increasingly difficult to exist without government financial assistance. The three issues include:

1. The government should provide financial assistance to inbound tour operators in order for them to survive until the inbound tourism industry recovers. IATO requested that at least 75 per cent of the wages paid in the financial year 2019-20 be given as a one-time grant.
2. Special status for the inbound tour operators to be given under which an incentive of 7- 10 per cent of the net foreign

exchange earnings during a financial year might be given and to reintroduce the new policy to consider our request.

3. International travellers arriving from non-high-risk countries who have received both vaccination doses and uploaded a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report of testing completed within 72 hours of departure should not be quarantined for seven days. If no symptoms are identified after thermal scanning at the airport in India, passengers should be permitted to depart the airport, and foreign travellers from high-risk nations should be quarantined at home for seven days. Some overseas travellers would visit India, and some business would be generated to help the country survive. ❖

CREATE WINDOWS TO SELL DUTY SCRIPS

IATO has asked Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Director General of Foreign Trade, to establish a window exclusively for tour operators to trade tariff scrips.

”
Brokers have capitalised on their fears by encouraging members to stockpile scrips for profit
”

IATO requested that the appropriate authorities give the necessary instructions to open the window for the sale of duty scrips, allowing tour operators to sell them at genuine market prices between 2015 and 2018. This was especially important because IATO

members were facing liquidity concerns, and brokers were capitalising on their fears by encouraging them to stockpile scrips for profit. IATO wrote to Amit Yadav on 27 December 2021, and 11 January 2022, advising him that the problem was being looked at. ❖

NEED TO REVISE MOHFW GUIDELINES

IATO has urged Arvind Singh, Secretary of State for Tourism, to update MOHFW guidelines for the international visitors arriving in India.

IATO drew Arvind Singh's attention to IATO's letter of January 24, 2022, as well as its letter to Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in which the organisation asked support for the inbound tourism business.

Passengers from non-high-risk nations be exempt from the seven-day quarantine provided they have received both vaccination doses and uploaded a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR report of testing done within 72 hours of boarding their cruise, advised IATO. They should be allowed to exit the airport after passing through thermal screening upon arrival in India once no symptoms are detected.

Foreign visitors from high-risk nations may be subject



to a seven-day quarantine. However, this restriction is expected to be lifted by the middle of February 2022.

This may entice some overseas visitors to come to India. IATO members received inquiries from overseas clients and tourists, but due to the ongoing limitations, they postponed travel to India, causing bookings to be rescheduled. ❖

”
Foreign visitors from high-risk countries may be subject to a seven-day quarantine. This restriction may be lifted by the middle of February 2022. This may entice some overseas visitors to come to India
”

HAULAGE RATES FOR LUXURY TRAINS

IATO has asked Ashwini Vaishnaw, Hon'ble Union Minister of Railways, to keep the cost of luxury train packages and haulage charges the same for the next five years.



Ashwini Vaishnaw
Hon'ble Union Minister of Railways

Because of COVID-19, nearly all tourist trains have been out of service for the past two years. In order to resurrect business for luxury trains, India should be able to compete with the neighbouring countries and deliver Indian tourism products, including luxury train packages, at competitive costs. As a result of this, IATO has humbly requested that:

- For the next five years, all luxury train haulage rates should be maintained and not increased.
- Indian luxury train tariff must be maintained for all luxury trains for the next five years.

This will assist us in retaining and attracting new business for our luxury trains. ❖

ELIMINATE CASCADING EFFECT OF GST

IATO approached G.D. Lohani, Joint Secretary (TRU-I), Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, Union Ministry of Finance, regarding elimination of cascading effect of GST on tourism industry and discontinuation of tax collection at source (TCS) for international travellers.



Discussion would be to resolve key issues pertaining to the cascading effect of GST on the tourism industry.

It was suggested that GST be levied at 18 per cent on the 10 per cent mark-up (deemed value), with no ITC, so that the effective rate of tax on package costs is 1.8 per cent of total billing.

In their tours to India, for international tourists, several of our members include Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and other neighbouring countries. On such holidays,

If the services are provided by a tour operator situated in Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, or elsewhere, the GST is not applicable.

This is causing Indian travel firms to lose business, and our country to lose money.

It was proposed that GST/IGST be completely exempted on services rendered outside of India, i.e., in neighbouring countries, even if the package included a trip to India.

As a result of the tax exemption, bookings will flow



”
Bookings will flow to the Indian travel operators as a result of the tax exemption, rather than bookings going to the tour operators in neighbouring countries. This will bring a large sum of foreign exchange into India
”

IGST is imposed on the overall package cost, which includes services delivered in neighbouring countries.

However, if services are provided totally outside of India to foreign tourists, IGST is absolutely excluded.

to Indian travel operators rather than to tour operators in neighbouring countries. This will bring a large sum of foreign dollars into the country.

CGST Notification No. 11/2017-CT(R) dated 28 June 2017 (as amended) covers tour operator

services that are taxable at 2.5 per cent CGST and 2.5 per cent SGST.

One of the conditions given in column 5 of the table is as under:

- The bill issued for the supply of this service indicates that it is inclusive of charges for accommodation and transportation required for such a tour, and the amount charged on the bill is the gross amount charged for such a tour, including the charges for accommodation and transportation required for such a tour.
- It is acknowledged that in many circumstances, a tour operator organises hotel accommodations on their own or in combination with other services such as sightseeing, guides, and other such services, but not air or rail transportation.

We are concerned that the department may interpret this criterion to mean that a tour operator must supply both accommodation and transportation in order to qualify for the 5 per cent GST rate; otherwise, the tour operator will be subject to the 18 per cent general rate. The association believes that this is not the government's goal.

It was therefore requested that:

- In condition No. 2 against Sr. No. 23 of CGST Notification No. 11/2017-CT(R) dated 28 June 2017, the word "and" appearing between the words "accommodation" and "transportation" may be replaced by the word "or" instead of "and."

- The government may clarify by way of a circular binding on the lower authorities that this was the intent from the very beginning when GST was rolled out, so that the GST authorities should not raise objections from 1 July 2017.



It was urged that the TCS regulations apply only to Indian citizens and enterprises, not to foreign citizens and tour operators based outside India, because they do not have an Indian PAN Card with which to seek refund.

The TCS restrictions should not apply to foreign tourists who visit India and then travel to another nation, including a neighbouring country or vice versa.

As described in Section 206C (1G) of the I-T Act, 1961 such as composite package does not qualify as an "overseas tour programme package." ❖

”
TCS regulations apply only to Indian citizens and enterprises, not to foreign citizens and tour operators based outside India, because they do not have an Indian PAN Card with which to seek refund
”

EMPHASIS ON SIGNIFICANT ISSUES RELATED TO ECLG SCHEME

IATO praised Amit Agrawal for announcing the expansion of the ECLG Scheme's guarantee cover and emphasised some of the issues surrounding it.



Amit Agrawal
Additional Secretary
Department of Financial Services, Union Ministry of Finance

IATO thanked Amit Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Union Ministry of Finance, for attending the meeting on 4 February to discuss the Budgetary announcements on expanding the guarantee cover of ECLGS by ₹50,000 crore for hospitality and related enterprises. During the meeting, some of the issues that IATO emphasised were:

- According to the existing standards, any tour operator that desires to apply for a loan must not be in default at the time of application. It was suggested that if any tour operators were not in default as of 29 February 2020, they should be eligible for an ECLGS loan.
- The government and banks provided relief in accordance with Supreme Court orders, which provided for a six-month moratorium on EMI payments. After the six-month moratorium period expires, the majority of IATO members' accounts became non-performing assets (NPAs) because they were unable to pay their EMIs.
- Instead of 29 February 2020, the average loan amount should be calculated on the basis of 1 April 2019 as IATO member loans/overdrafts throughout the summer. The

maximum loan amount will be based on the OD limit/loan amount as of 31 March 2021, or the greatest amount of OD/loan between 1 April 2019 and 29 February 2020, whichever is greater.

- If there was no loan or relationship with the bank, tour operators should apply for a loan based on their turn over for FY2019-20 as reported on their balance sheet, GST paid, or any other methodology determined by the ministry, but they must apply. Because there was no business in 2020-21 or 2021-22, FY2019-20 was proposed.
- Because there is currently no business, repayment of principal and interest on all ECLGS loans should be suspended until 31 March 2024.
- Thousands of tour operators were in a distress situation and were unable to pay their EMIs and were facing SARFAESI notices and action from their banks and financial institutions. Our humble request was to direct the banks to restructure the loans that have become NPA after 29 February 2020.
- All loans/ODs are to be restructured for one year under RBI resolution framework 2.0 and the moratorium on ECLGS 1.0

”

The government and the banks provided relief in accordance with Supreme Court orders, which provided for a six-month moratorium on EMI payments. After 6-month moratorium period expires, the majority of IATO members' accounts became non-performing assets

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to be extended for a further two-year period.

- Though the government had announced loans to the tour operators under the Loan Guarantee Scheme for the COVID-affected Tourism Service Sector (LGSCATSS), loans were not being provided to the tour operators who had availed loans under ECLGS 1 and 3. Hence, the guidelines of the LGSCATSS need to be revised and relaxed to help the tour operators.
- On ECLGS, the RBI/Finance Ministry/NCGTC should direct all banks/NBFCs to follow the NCGTC standards and sanction

the loan without making it tough for no reason. Private banks, in particular, were causing unnecessary delays or refusing the ECLGS loan by alleging grounds that were contrary to the NCGTC standards or by refusing to grasp the guidelines. The ECLGS plan is fully guaranteed by the NCGTC, posing no risk to banks or NBFCs.

- Undue delay and refusal of individuals who were eligible was completely against the NCGTC standards, and thus defeated the objective of the scheme by adding additional suffering to this already pressured sector. ❖



WITHDRAWAL OF TCS FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS

IATO requested J. B. Mohapatra, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Ministry of Finance to discuss the withdrawal of tax collection at source (TCS) for foreign tourists.

The provisions of TCS should not be made applicable to foreign citizens and tour operators, according to IATO, who met with Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Union Finance Minister, in her office and requested that the provisions of TCS not be

”

Such composite package does not technically qualify as "overseas tour programme package"

”

made applicable to them because they do not have an Indian Pan Card to claim refunds. The TCS

restrictions should not apply to foreign tourists who visit India and then travel to another nation, including a neighbouring country or vice versa. As described in section 206C (1G) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, such a composite package does not technically qualify as an "overseas tour programme package."

The Minister acknowledged the concern and stated that TCS would be abolished for foreign citizens and tour operators since it was irrational to impose TCS on foreign visitors because they were not eligible to pay income tax in India and did not hold an Indian PAN Card and thus could not claim a refund. ❖



J. B. Mohapatra
Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes
Ministry of Finance

SECURE 'APPLY FOR E-TRAVEL TRADE RECOGNITION' WEBLINK

IATO informed Neeraj Sharan, Assistant Director General (TT), Ministry of Tourism, about the problem tour operators and other service providers are facing in renewing or submitting new applications owing to an insecure URL for "Apply for e-Travel Trade Recognition".



Indian Association of Tour Operators requested that an SSL certificate may be obtained for URL for "Apply for e-Travel Trade Recognition", and the site should be secured.

Until the site was secured and an SSL certificate was obtained, all service providers whose renewal had expired or was about to expire during the period should be given the opportunity to upload their documents within a maximum of 15 days of the site resuming normal operations.

Service providers should be given opportunity to upload their documents within 15 days

Those service providers whose renewal has expired should not be treated as expired, and they should not be asked to apply for fresh approval. Their recognition should be under the renewal category. ❖

REVISE GUIDELINES FOR INT'L TOURISTS

V.D. Sharma, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) and State President, Bharatiya Janata Party, Madhya Pradesh, was recognised by the IATO for his support of the tourism industry by launching a flight between Delhi-Khajuraho-Delhi.



V.D. Sharma
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) and State President,
Bharatiya Janata Party, Madhya Pradesh

IATO sought his help in revising the MoHFW guidelines for international visitors arriving in India. Other key concerns were:

- Resumption of international flight operations in accordance with the bilateral agreement in effect prior to March 2020.
- Overseas tourism promotion with aggressive marketing and promotions by organising Incredible India

IATO sought V.D. Sharma's help in revising guidelines for international visitors

events, evening cultural programmes, food festivals, B2B interactions with foreign tour operators, etc., through Embassies of India and High Commissions along with MOT, GOI. ❖

OPERATIONAL BALANCE MUST BE STRUCK FOR RE-CARPETING OF THE RUNWAY

The IATO wrote to Rajiv Bansal, Secretary, Union Ministry of Civil Aviation about the flight disruptions caused by runway re-carpeting work.

IATO was informed by Andaman & Nicobar that the runway in Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, will be closed for four days a week in March, April, and May 2022 for runway re-carpeting work, for which a notice has been issued by the authorities.

Unlike other states, the Veer Savarkar International Airport is Port Blair's lone connection to India's mainland. Tourists often visit these islands for four to five days, and a seven-day schedule would deter them from choosing Andaman as a destination.

The association has requested that the decision be reconsidered and that all options be explored to avoid the runway being closed. Flights could be operated

on all days from the morning to 2 p.m., and work could be done from 2 p.m. till the next morning.

Never before in the history of the islands have the islands been cut off in this way, so a balance must be struck to ensure that the airport stays functional at all times.

The IATO has also informed Ajay Bhatt, Union Minister of State for Tourism and Defence, about the situation and requested that, since the Hon'ble Minister was also Minister of State for Defence, he could kindly assist in the matter and consider the tour operators' association's request favourably to allow flights to operate on all days from the morning until 2 p.m. and work to be done from 2 p.m. until the next day morning. ❖



Rajiv Bansal
Secretary
Union Ministry of Civil Aviation

”
Tourists often visit these islands for four to five days, and a seven-day schedule would deter them from choosing Andaman as a destination
”

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS FINALLY TAKE OFF

Decision of Government of India to reopen scheduled commercial international passenger services to and from India on 27 March 2022, after two years, has been hailed and warmly welcomed by all travel industry stakeholders in the country.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has suspended operations of international commercial services with effect from 23 March 2020, with the view of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Earlier, the Government of India (GOI)

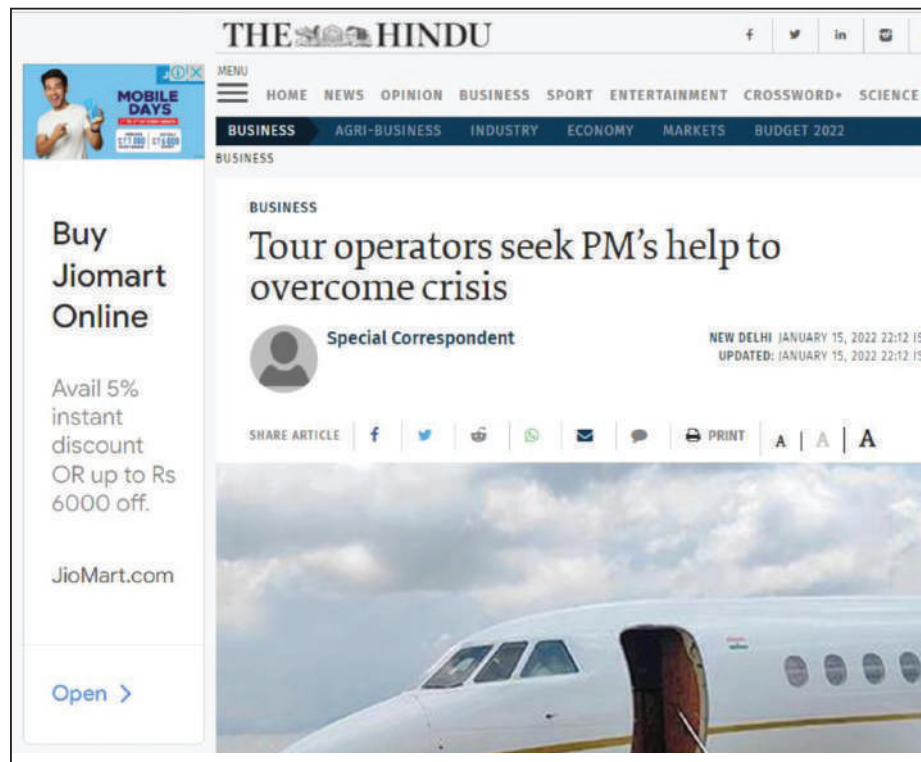
started granting fresh tourist visas to the foreign tourists arriving on charter flights with effect from 15 October 2021.

Hailing the resumption of normal international passenger services, Rajeev Mehra, President, IATO,

said that this will increase tourist traffic to India and that from September 2022 onwards, which is the start of the next inbound tourism season. Mehra also said that a substantial amount of the affected business is expected to be back. ❖

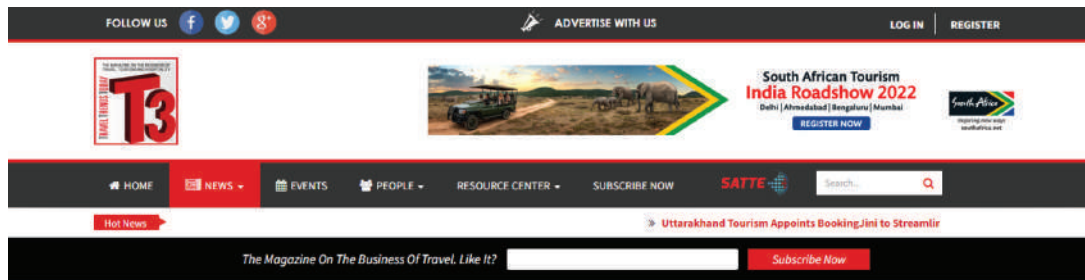
JANUARY

- ❖ Tour operators seek PM's help to overcome crisis



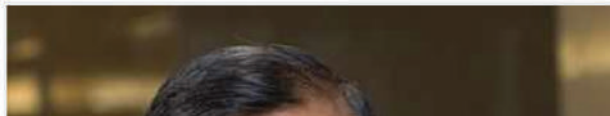
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IATO Seeks Prime Minister's Intervention To Avert Financial Crisis Facing The Industry

T3 News Network 14 January 2022 886



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Need Sharma

Rajiv Mehra
President - IATO

The typical pilot of IATO is to use the situation at hand and then report to the Government what the scheduled flights when the time is opportune. Let me put it this way that the pilot is the end of the Extension of Service. Experts from India

Sharma (IGS) for the tourism industry for the next five years in the upcoming Foreign Trade Policy, 2021-25. Since the current Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 is likely to be replaced by new Foreign Trade Policy 2021-25, the Association has recommended that:

- a) the benefit of the SEIS scheme may be continued to the tour operators and travel agencies for the next five years under the new ITO;
- b) The administrative cost of SEIS may be hiked from 7 per cent to 10 per cent of net foreign exchange earned by the tourism industry
- c) SEIS should continue to be available to the first recipient of foreign exchange.

IATO writes to Director General, Directorate General of Foreign Trade with a request to open window for selling of duty caps by the tour operators.

We have also requested Secretary, Govt of India

regarding confusion caused by Travel Advisors/Guides of State Governments for foreign/international travellers and MOT to take up with MHPW to issue guidelines to all the State Governments/Tourism Territories which they should follow to that some normal international flight operations resumed. Foreign tourists could travel to India without any confusion or hesitation. I spoke about this during my opinion piece in Business on 30th December 2021 at 5 pm.

After the situation becomes normal, our main objective would be to start marketing and promotions in overseas markets and the Ministry of Tourism for conducting roadshows, showcasing in overseas travel fairs, and requesting the Government for aggressive promotions and publicity through electronic and print media.

Secondly, once the travel and business conditions become conducive, there will be no parking space for the tour operators who have returned to a stable extent and are also opening up to tourists.

Other policy facets need to be viewed to promote substantially within the tourism industry, such as:

- Removal of cascading effect of GST on Tourism Industry
- Removal of GST on services provided outside India to foreign tourists
- Withdrawal of tax collection at source (TCS) for the foreign tourists
- Refund of IGST paid by the tourist leaving India on supply of goods taken out of India-Tax Refund for Tourists (TRT) Scheme to be implemented.

Besides the above, we have also requested that the Government extend the time limit for 5 lakh free tourist visas until March 2023. If required, we will do so even by the 10th March

28 www.thehindubusinessline.com_04MAR2021_00022

Associations

2024 as inbound tourism is still on hold and free tourist visas are not being utilised, and the time limit is going to be over, which is March 21.

Meanwhile, IATO members are also engaging and creating cordance with their customers while keeping the personalised

touch, briefing and educating them about destinations, staying in touch with them while they are on their tour, and ensuring the SOPs for every year with trained personnel. These are the strategic areas where associations like ITO and others are always ahead in the present circumstances.

Sanjeet DdpI
Today, 06.27

BSP PUBLICATIONS

TODAY'S BREAKING news

WTTICII appoints executive committee members with Dinesh Khanna as the Chairman

WTTIC India Initiative, appointed executive committee members for 2023-23 with Dinesh Khanna, Co-founder Director Eastern International Hotels Ltd. as Chairman and Deep Kalia, Founder and Executive Chairman, IHTM as Vice-Chairman. Dinesh Khanna takes over from Ajay Singh, Chairman & MD, Spicejet who served as Chairman of WTTIC for 2020-21.

Sustainable practices and MICE to boost tourism in India: Rakesh Verma

Rakesh Verma, Addl Sec., MITA said, "MICE Industry is an important contributor to sustain economies and creates huge employment opportunities. India possesses excellent convention and hospitality infrastructure, unparalleled cultural, natural attractions and a growing economy, that is, all catalysts to India emerging as hub of business and social events."

IATO urges Prime Minister to help avert financial crisis facing the industry

The IATO wrote to PIB seeking inputs in travel sectors and financial aid to overcome the crisis, that has worsened after international flights were suspended. Rajiv Mishra, President IATO, with 1,700 members, wants the "7 day quarantine to be waived for vaccinated travellers with a negative RT-PCR report and financial support from central to help save lakhs of jobs."

1,38,000 FRANCE'S TOURISM WORKERS LOST JOBS IN 2021

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The role of govt is to incentivise sustainable practices by local stakeholders: Arvind Singh

Arvind Singh, Secretary, Tourism, has said that the role of the state or national authorities would be to incentivise sustainable practices by local stakeholders and also to popularise responsible tourism by talking about responsible travel amongst tourists. Singh was speaking at 'World Mafja: Off the Beaten Path - Travel in the 21st Century' session at Expo 2020.

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20,407 PASSENGERS FROM OCT-DEC, 2021 ON VISTADOME COACHES

Maharaja Express & luxury train charters open new avenues for Indian MICE: Sunil C Gupta

Sunil C Gupta, Chairman-Northern Region, IATO, revealed two corporate charters happened on Maharaja Express in December, almost 2 years after the luxury train operated in March 2020. This opens new avenues for incentives on luxury trains. It's a great idea, which has caught on and more groups are likely to operate in May-June," he said.

Sunil C Gupta, Chairman-Northern Region, IATO, revealed two corporate charters happened on Maharaja Express in December, almost 2 years after the luxury train operated in March 2020. This opens new avenues for incentives on luxury trains. It's a great idea, which has caught on and more groups are likely to operate in May-June," he said.

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19th Jan 2022

International commercial passenger flights to remain suspended till Feb 28 in India

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights to and from India till February 28. The suspension authority has decided to extend the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger services to from India till 28 Feb 2022 as per the decision of the DGCA. This decision that not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA. A notification will be issued. Flights under an ad-hoc arrangement will remain suspended.

COVID booster a must to enter Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi has mandated that a booster shot of the COVID vaccine is must to enter the city as Omicron-fueled COVID cases continue to surge in the emirate. According to the government's health app, visitors must show a green pass confirming their vaccination status and they are no longer considered fully-vaccinated unless they have received a booster at least six months after their second dose.

'Use it or lose it' slot restriction pinches already bleeding air industry

Europe are flying nearly empty passenger planes to keep prized take-off and landing slots at airports at a period of lower travel demand. Airlines are compelled to continue flying almost empty flights due to the restriction.

Dani Shahar takes over as Director General of Israel's Ministry of Tourism

Regional General (RSG) Dani Shahar has taken over as Director General of Israeli Ministry of Tourism and will replace Amir Hani, who served in the position for nine years. Shahar, who is a former Director of Tourism in Israel and the Philippines, said: "With the global tourism industry gradually returning, there is a huge potential for Israel and I am excited with confidence for myself and on behalf of the team, when I join and intend to see the new initiatives and the direction the new Director General will take us to."

IATO writes to PM seeking help to avert financial crisis facing travel industry

The IATO has sought respite in travel sector and financial aid for tour operators till revival of the industry. Rajiv Mehra, President of IATO, has requested the central government to relax the 14-day quarantine mandate for fully-vaccinated international travellers coming from non-high risk countries and halting all protocols established by the authorities. Another important request put up for financial support to seek and procure tour operators to tide over the crisis. This can be done based on the turnover recorded by the operators in 2019-20 and 7% per cent of wages paid in financial year 2019-20 to be given as one-time grant. The grant would not only help stop closure of tour operators' offices but also save many jobs.

Roberta Metsola elected new President of European Parliament

Maltese politician Roberta Metsola, 43, has been elected as the youngest ever president of the European Parliament and the first woman in the role for 50 years.

VFS Global has temporarily suspended passport and visa services in Adelaide since 18th January until further notice.

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Sanjeet Ddpl Today, 06/21

BREAKING news

#UnboxGREATBritain with 'GetReadyForBirmingham' campaign

VisitBritain has launched the 'GetReadyForBirmingham' campaign with the aim to promote West Midlands, England region, using the upcoming Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games as a hook. Log on to www.GetReadyForBirmingham.com and get a chance of the virtual photo booth offering the most scenic backgrounds in West Midlands, that's playing host to the games.

IATO thanks IHCL on rolling out Promo Code Special Rates

Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO has thanked Purand Chitambar, MD & CEO, IHCL, for rolling out the Hotels Promo Code Special Rates for IHCL members. He said that each member has been given a Unique Agency Code and booking can be done online. Promo Code Special Rates are exclusively for IHCL business only and not valid for domestic leisure and are only for 10%.

WTTC DELAYS 21st GLOBAL SUMMIT TO 20-22nd APRIL 2022

AHMEDABAD RPO ISSUES 33% MORE PASSPORTS IN 2021

Ahmedabad airport to partially remain shut from 9am-6pm till 31st May

Ahmedabad airport will partially remain closed for around 9 hours till 31st May owing to runway re-carping work. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport has started scheduled runway re-carping work from 17th January to 31st May 2022, except on public holidays and Sundays. The work will be carried out from 9am to 6pm.

Dharamsala-McLeodganj ropeway to take 5mins instead of 25mins by car

Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh, has unveiled the Dharamsala-Surya (Dharamsala ropeway) constructed at a cost of ₹ 232 crores. It has the hourly capacity of carrying 1,000 persons and would reach Dharamsala to McLeodganj in 5 mins instead of usual 25-35 minutes taken by car. The length of the ropeway is 1.8 km.



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TRADELINE ASSOCIATIONS

IHCL rolls out Promo Code Special Rates for IATO Members

By admin - January 20, 2022 0



RECENT POSTS



Global air passenger numbers to recover in 2024: IATA
Flying High March 3, 2022



IndiGo to operate 20 sanitisation flights under

IHCL rolled out the Promo Code Special Rates for IATO Members

Indian Hotels Company recently rolled out the Promo Code Special Rates for Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) members, for which Raju Mehra, President of IATO, thanked Puneet Chharia, MD & CEO, as well as the entire team at IHCL. The promo codes were announced at the 36th IATO convention in Gandhinagar. Key officials of IHCL, featured at the event, in a month and created a special package for the IATO members. The promo codes are exclusively for inbound business only and not valid for domestic leisure.



Are apart-hotels a new fad?

As we experience this new concept of staycations and workcations, there is an exponential increase in the preference for choosing apart hotels and Airbnbs. New idea of vacation is staying in one place for long and relaxing, probably even working on vacation. These apart hotels were first usually only used by business travellers but now leisure travellers are starting to prefer it. Travellers are looking for privacy and big comfortable spaces for their vacation and it might become the next big thing even after Post Covid period. Would you consider staying in one?

TBO Tek is now tbo.com with a new tag line and logo

tbo.com is leading global travel distribution has unveiled its new expression of customer-centric brand name, logo, tag line and brand identity as tbo.com. Travel Simplified. Speaking on the occasion, Anish Mishra, MD & CEO, tbo.com, said, "We have unveiled this to showcase the young feel of the Company and the vibrancy of the organisation. We want to leverage an active digital presence in the global travel industry to serve our existing and new customers with industry practices and services."

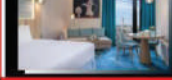
Dominican Republic the focus of first UNWTO tourism investment guide

UNWTO has launched the first in a series of tourism investment guidelines focused on a specific country: Dominican Republic. The new guide provides key insights for investors, with the aim of boosting foreign direct investment in the Caribbean destination. Launched against the backdrop of the FITUR tourism trade fair in Madrid, the investment guidelines represent a comprehensive tool for parties interested in FDI opportunities. In particular, they aim to attract and promote and retain investment in sustainable tourism initiatives in the Dominican Republic, including those that provide local jobs and build greater resilience across the sector.



Avani Muscat Hotel launches in Oman capital

Avani's newest property Avani Muscat Hotel, the contemporary brand's first property in the Sultanate of Oman. The hotel is ideal for business travellers, digital nomads and leisure travellers alike.



IHG Hotels & Resorts unveils new vision for loyalty

As guests embark on a new era of travel and the industry continues to recover, the company has turned to its pioneering loyalty programme

E-post: asharma@indiaah.in Ph: 9818079063

TBO Tek Limited is now tbo.com
TBO Tek Limited has unveiled its new identity, comprising a new expression of customer-centric brand name, logo and tagline. Now called tbo.com - Travel Simplified, the company has a global playbook operating in 100+ countries and their platform supports payments in 56 currencies and operates in 11 languages, as of Oct 31, 2021. The Company also plans to raise funds through an IPO aggregating up to ₹2,100 crore.

Thailand to resume TEST & GO scheme, reopens Pattaya and Ko Chang Sandbox from February 1

From Feb 1, 09.00 (GMT+7) fully vaccinated travellers can apply for a TEST & GO Thailand Pass 60 days in advance. While existing rules under the scheme remain unchanged, all new applications must submit proof of prepayment for two separate nights of accommodation at govt-approved hotels, such as SHA Extra Plus (SHA+), AQ, OQ, or AHQ on Day 1 and Day 5, and the expenses for 2 RT-PCR tests on Day 1 and Day 5, besides following other guidelines.

Youngistan Travellers forays into Sri Lanka market

Youngistan Travellers, the Delhi-based DMG will work towards curating itineraries beyond the usual destinations such as Colombo, Bentota and Kandy. Youngistan will come up with special packages targeting senior citizen groups and honeymooners for Kandy and Galle belt. The company is targeting 80,000 - 90,000 arrivals from India. The company currently specialises in Maldives with more than 30,000 passengers every year.



OTOIAI writes to Finance Minister for certain reliefs and concessions

The requests made to the FM included Roll-Back TCS, not making Pan Card mandatory for foreign remittances, relief from GST for a minimum period of two years, granting lower Interest Loans to the travel agents/tour operators for at least one year, inclusion of Outbound Tours under the LTC Scheme and the much-awaited Industry Status to be granted to the Travel Tourism Sector.



IHCL rolls out Promo Code Special Rates for IATO members

The terms and conditions for the Promo Code Special Rates for the Taj, SeleQtions and Vivanta hotels, have been announced. Each member has been given a Unique Agency Code and booking can be done online. The rates are exclusively for inbound business only and not valid for domestic leisure and are only for FITs. These rates are valid with immediate effect till March 31, 2023.



To read more, visit www.traveltradejournal.com

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OTOAI writes to finance minister, seeks concessions for outbound travel agents

The Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI) recently wrote to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, ahead of Budget 2022, requesting certain reliefs and concessions for outbound tour operators.



For Full story - www.twoai.in

Tourism should be in 'Union List' of India: IATO's K Ranga Reddy



For Full story - www.twoai.in

Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) Vice President and Andhra Pradesh chairman K Ranga Reddy believes Tourism should be transferred to the Union List of India. He said as much to the IATO team, which spoke to him regarding the 'Way Forward'.

"Shipping, Ports, Railways, Highways, Forests, Waterways, Beaches, ASI, major monuments, national parks, hotel classifications and marine tourism all come under the central government. Why is Tourism a state subject?" he asked.

Virtuoso names Fiona Dalton as General Manager, Australia & New Zealand



Austria announces mandatory COVID 19 vaccination for all citizens

Austria has announced mandatory COVID vaccination for all citizens except pregnant women or those exempt for medical reasons from next month. The refusal of vaccination will attract heavy fines of 3600 euros. Austrian MPs voting 33 voted in favour of making the vaccination mandatory for all citizens.

THURSDAY JANUARY 27, 2022

TOURISM BREAKING news

FITUR 2022 Doubles Trade Participation with Recovery in Mind

This year's International Tourism Fair (FITUR) 2022 exceeded all expectations, with 111,153 attendees, 91,153 professionals from 127 countries. The number of exhibitors & participants almost equaled pre-pandemic levels at the FITUR 2022. Among the 6,959 participants at the event were 900 exhibitors from 107 countries, including 78 countries represented by official delegations.

J&K HOSTS CITY HERITAGE TOUR ON NATIONAL TOURISM DAY

THAILAND TO RESUME VISA SERVICES FOR VACCINATED VISITORS

Sustainable tourism development depends on rural communities: Singh

Speaking on the theme of National Tourism Day, Rural & Community Centric Tourism, Anvud Singh, Secretary, MoT, said that rural communities have an inherent ability to coexist with natural ecosystems. "It is important at this juncture that rural communities & landscapes are leveraged to develop & promote sustainable tourism development models," he shared in his address.

G Kishan Reddy unveils digital calendar & book of 75 Indian monuments

G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, on the occasion of National Tourism Day, launched a digital booklet on 75 incredible sites to visit in India and Incredible India 2022 digital calendar by the Ministry of Tourism dedicated to tourism sales. The National Tourism Day celebration happened virtually this year owing to Omicron scare & subsequent restrictions.

Norwegian Cruise Line launches trade portal for India & Asia - Norwegian Central

Norwegian Cruise Line has launched Norwegian Central Asia, an online trade portal to help travel partners in India & Asia. Logging in to Norwegian Central gives partners direct access to NCL's award-winning travel agent training platform, NCL University. Through the reduced rate learning incentive program, travel partners can also earn discounts up to 30% off on their own NCL cruise.

IATO HEAD FOR TS & AP VISIT BHONGIR FORT WITH 10 BIKERS

For more information contact hannah@toppi.com +91 06194 99167 or arunika.gupta@toppi.com +91 96553 99909

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TUI to start three flights to Jamaica from Belgium and the Netherlands

TUI Belgium and TUI Netherlands will be launching three weekly flights between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Montego Bay in Jamaica. This will include two direct flights each week between Brussels International Airport and Montego Bay, while TUI Netherlands will operate one direct flight per week between Amsterdam's Schiphol International Airport and Montego Bay, informed Jamaica's tourism minister Edmund Bartlett.

CISF asks airlines and airport operators to restrict domestic passengers to one handbag each

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), in a circular issued on Wednesday, has ordered airlines and airport operators to meticulously implement the earlier Bureau of Civil Aviation Security's 'One Handbag' order.

Delhi proposes to lift weekend curfew, awaits LG nod

In line with the demand of traders, the Delhi government has proposed to lift the weekend curfew in the city, end odd-even system for opening of shops, and allow private offices to run with 50 per cent staff.

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ICE 2022

75th Anniversary of Amrit Mahotsav

Track 4
27th January 2022
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Track 4: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 5
27th January 2022
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Track 5: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 6
27th January 2022
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Track 6: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 7
27th January 2022
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Track 7: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 8
27th January 2022
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Track 8: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 9
27th January 2022
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Track 9: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 10
27th January 2022
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Track 10: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 11
27th January 2022
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Track 11: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 12
27th January 2022
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Track 12: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 13
27th January 2022
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Track 13: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 14
27th January 2022
9:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Track 14: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 15
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 15: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 16
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 16: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 17
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 17: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 18
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 18: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 19
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 19: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 20
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 20: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 21
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 21: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 22
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 22: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 23
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 23: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 24
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 24: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 25
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 25: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 26
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
Track 26: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 27
27th January 2022
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Track 27: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 28
27th January 2022
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Track 28: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 29
27th January 2022
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Track 29: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 30
27th January 2022
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Track 30: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 31
27th January 2022
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM
Track 31: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 32
27th January 2022
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Track 32: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 33
27th January 2022
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Track 33: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 34
27th January 2022
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Track 34: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 35
27th January 2022
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Track 35: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 36
27th January 2022
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Track 36: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 37
27th January 2022
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Track 37: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 38
27th January 2022
9:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Track 38: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 39
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 39: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 40
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 40: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 41
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 41: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 42
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 42: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 43
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 43: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 44
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 44: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 45
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 45: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 46
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 46: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 47
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 47: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 48
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 48: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 49
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 49: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 50
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Track 50: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 51
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 51: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 52
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 52: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 53
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 53: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 54
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 54: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 55
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 55: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 56
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 56: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 57
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 57: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 58
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 58: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 59
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 59: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 60
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 60: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 61
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 61: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 62
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Track 62: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 63
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 63: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 64
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 64: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 65
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 65: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 66
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 66: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 67
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 67: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 68
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 68: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 69
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 69: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 70
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 70: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 71
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 71: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 72
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 72: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 73
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 73: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 74
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Track 74: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 75
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 75: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 76
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 76: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 77
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 77: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 78
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 78: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 79
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 79: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 80
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 80: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 81
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 81: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 82
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 82: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 83
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 83: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 84
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 84: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 85
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 85: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 86
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Track 86: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 87
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 87: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 88
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 88: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 89
27th January 2022
12:00 AM - 1:00 AM
Track 89: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 90
27th January 2022
1:00 AM - 2:00 AM
Track 90: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 91
27th January 2022
2:00 AM - 3:00 AM
Track 91: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 92
27th January 2022
3:00 AM - 4:00 AM
Track 92: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 93
27th January 2022
4:00 AM - 5:00 AM
Track 93: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 94
27th January 2022
5:00 AM - 6:00 AM
Track 94: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 95
27th January 2022
6:00 AM - 7:00 AM
Track 95: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 96
27th January 2022
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM
Track 96: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 97
27th January 2022
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
Track 97: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 98
27th January 2022
9:00 AM - 10:00 PM
Track 98: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 99
27th January 2022
10:00 PM - 11:00 PM
Track 99: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

Track 100
27th January 2022
11:00 PM - 12:00 AM
Track 100: AI & Digital Transformation, Resilience and Recovery, Smart Cities, Smart Infrastructure

E M NAJEEB, Chairman and Managing Director
Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)

TRAVEL

Tourism sector seeks sops in budget to aid recovery

Varuni Khosla

varuni.k@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The badly hurt travel and tourism industry has set its sights on the upcoming budget to hasten recovery for the sector. Among their demands is extending the leave travel allowance (LTA) exemption limit for taxpayers, said travel firms like MakeMyTrip, ixigo and Thomas Cook.

"We request the government to consider extending the LTA exemption limit and bring it under the yearly allowances list for taxpayers. Currently one can apply for a leave travel exemption once in two years or twice in a four-year block. We are requesting it to be made yearly," said Rajesh Magow, co-founder, MakeMyTrip.

The tax-exempted LTA can currently only be claimed twice in four years. However, the company said it would be better if employees could claim this once every year tax free instead of every alternate year.

IN 2021, BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM WAS SLASHED FROM ₹2,500 CR IN FY21 TO ₹2026.77 CR IN FY22

Online travel portal ixigo's co-founder Alok Bajpai said they expect the government to strategise a sustainable long-term plan to help revive in-bound international travel which is currently disrupted by ongoing waves. He added that they also expect the upcoming budget to allot incentives for domestic tourism and promote it within the country. "IT deductions on domestic travel and tourism spends will help incentivise tourism and boost domestic travel further. Tax breaks and waivers for the airline sector will also help aid faster recovery of the industry. Bringing in Aviation Turbine Fuel under the ambit of GST (which

currently comprises 40-45% of the total operating cost of an airline) will bring much-needed relief to the aviation sector," said Bajpai.

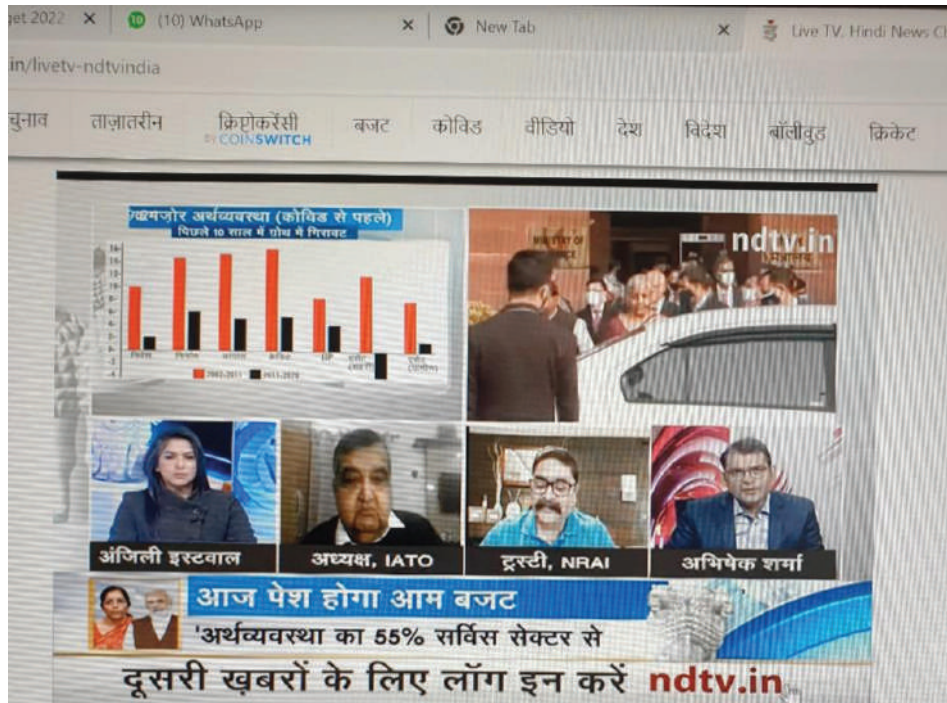
Last year, the budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Tourism was slashed from ₹2,500 crore in 2020-21 to ₹2026.77 crore in 2021-22 which came as a massive blow to the industry.

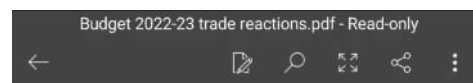
This year, Indian Association of Tour Operators hopes there will be an added withdrawal of tax collection at source (TCS) for foreign tourists that will encourage in-bound tourism. Starting October 2020, Indian tour operators were required to collect 5% TCS on billing to foreign tour operators or individual foreign travellers to India in spite of the fact they do not hold a pan card in India and are not liable to pay income taxes here. The FTOs or foreign nationals are not residents in India and are not liable to pay income tax.

In 2019, the sector's contribution to the GDP was 6.8% of the total economy.



FEBRUARY





Tourism sector continues to tread on uncertain path



The trajectory of the tourism sector continues to remain uncertain with hardly any mention of the sector in the Budget speech by PM Narendra Sitharaman today. While it did announce some boosters for the industry at large such as e-passports and development of the North East region, her speech was devoid of any substantial benefits for those in the tourism business. While the India hotel and travel operators did get a special mention in the speech as part of the emergency credit facilities which has been expanded to ₹52,000 crore, she didn't really figure that is dedicated for bank loans that is made available to them. Nevertheless, PM did mention that a chunk of these additional loans will go to the tourism sector. The onus is now on its stakeholders to take the side at flood that will hopefully lead them on to fortune. Here's what some of the industry leaders have to say about Budget 2022:

No meaning of direct support without infra



The massive infrastructure focus that the government continues with is something that has been helping tourism and shall continue to do so. Hospitality sector once again has found a mention in the ECDC, which shall continue till March 2023 and is again a support in times, which this industry is looking for. Northeast has been our focus area from tourism in the last year also, which was also mentioned in the Finance Minister's speech where an additional ₹1500 crore is being made available for the projects. Government is doing what it's really needs to step in for. Large infrastructure would drive tourism. In terms of investing on tourism related infrastructure, we have been getting the required budget.

Living in hope and dying in despair



The only thing that I can see that is positive for the industry is the extension of the ECLG Scheme, and the infusion of the additional 150,000 crore, which is hopefully allocated specifically for the hospitality and related industries. But in terms of taxation, the TCS was something that all associations had brought up repeatedly. We had even discussed this with the MoT, who in turn had taken it up with the PM. That finds no mention at all in the Budget. There could be certain indirect spin-offs in terms of development at the North East or e-passports.

Budget disappointing; nothing except ECLGS



Very disappointed with the budget. We were expecting some relief for inbound tourism which was without work for the last two years. We were expecting that prime minister Narendra Modi, whose supports tourism industry will do something for us. But nothing has happened except ECOLGOS extension, which is no good for small or medium tour operators. If we do not have this money, what will we live with loans. That is why we were asking for grants, which if we survive and do well, the government can get back in the form of taxes. We will keep fight with the government going on.

◆ President speaks on the budget



❖ Sr. VP on the India Ahead TV speaking on the Budget



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INDEX	GLOBAL	COMMODITIES	CURRENCIES
NIFTY 50	NIFTY Midcap 100	SENSEX	RSE MIDCAP
17205.65	28575.75	57683.59	23582.26
▲ 49.65 (+0.29%)	▲ 105.58 (+0.37%)	▲ 142.30 (+0.25%)	▲ 109.00 (+0.45%)

Closing Bell: Sensex, Nifty close lower for 4th consecutive day, SmallCap index falls 2%

MARKET MOVEMENTS

INDEX	GLOBAL	COMMODITIES	CURRENCIES
NIFTY	MSM 541.10	Maruti Suzuki 9512.70	Nestle 19106.10
▲ 1.28%	▲ 1.28%	▲ 0.51%	▲ 0.54%
			NTPC 131.95
			▲ 0.30%
			ONGC 153.40
			▲ 2.68%

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Budget 2022 ignored plight of tourism sector, says tour operator body IATO




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Union Budget 2022-23: Travel trade reacts sharply, expresses disappointment for overlooking tourism industry

While most industry stakeholders have expressed disappointment, some others have expressed optimism and said that the budget announcements have been forward-looking and growth-oriented and certain concessions will set the tone for

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Home / India / Govt raises credit line for hospitality, industry says expected more

Govt raises credit line for hospitality, industry says expected more

The additional amount will be exclusively earmarked for hospitality and related segments to help them get back to pre-pandemic levels, Sitharaman said.

Written by [Divya A](#) | New Delhi | February 2, 2022 2:36:13 am

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NSE 17206.65 -69.65(-0.40%)

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Budget may have too little to bring major relief for battered tourism and hospitality sector

Gurbaxish Singh Kohli, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India, said the extension of the ECLGS scheme is just a drop in the ocean for a sector that was severely hit

Published: 01st February 2022 05:06 PM | Last Updated: 01st February 2022 05:12 PM

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IATO expresses its deep disappointment over being overlooked in Budget 2022

We sincerely believed the government would consider some substantial relief in the supplementary demand, says IATO President Rajiv Mehra

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IATO expresses its deep disappointment over being overlooked in the budget

By admin - February 1, 2022



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Mixed Reaction From The Industry To Budget 2022-23

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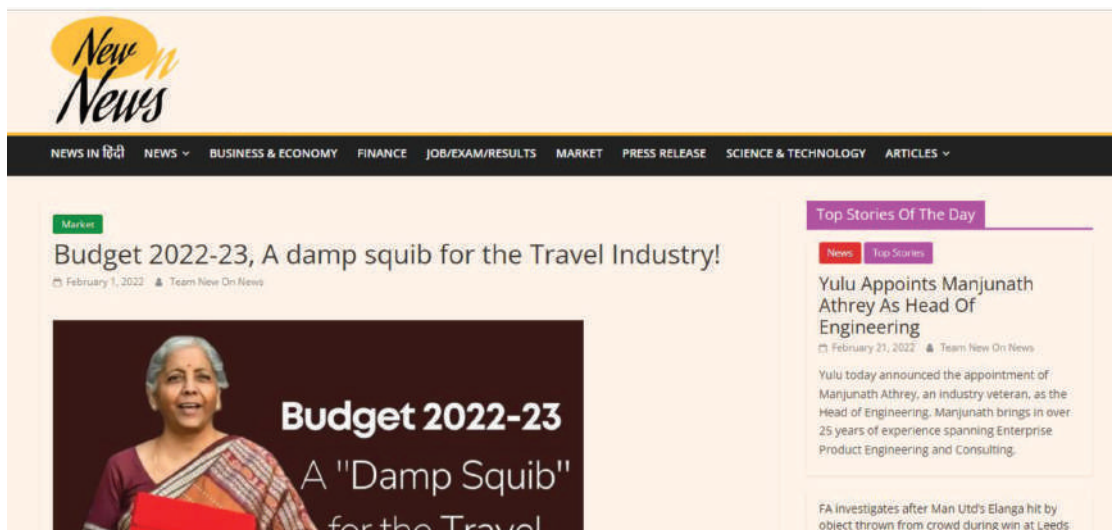
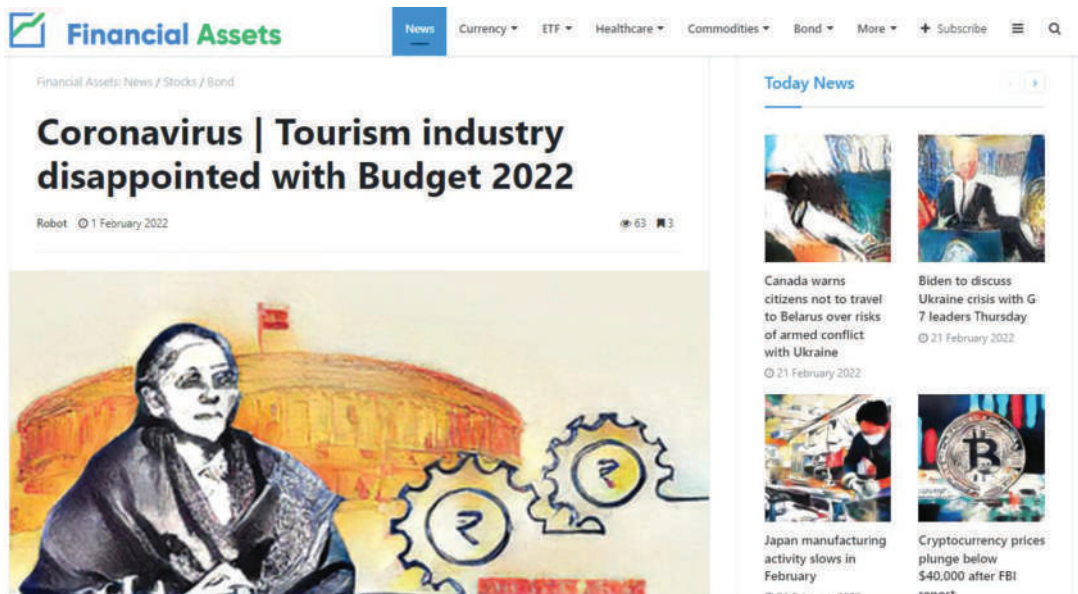


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Travel and Tourism ignored once again: TAAI to FM

Our trade has been ignored once again, stated Ajay Mehta, President - Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI). It was expected that the Government would allocate work towards positive upliftment of the travel and tourism in India, which they always portray as a priority. We were also expecting to the least that travel and tourism be brought under the constant list for industry status, she added.

Jay Bharti, Vice President - TAAI stated that it is frustrating that the Government's focus is on 2027 rather than looking at current challenges faced by the travel and tourism trade in India.

For Full story - www.twonews.in

IATO deeply disappointed over Budget 2022

According to Rajiv Mehta, President of IATO, "We had requested a one-time grant based on our 2019-20 turnover, reduction in GST, restoration and enhancement of 303 benefits, reduction of taxes on international arrivals and overall reduction of taxes on the hospitality sector. Most disappointingly, none of these found mention in the Budget."

"There has been huge employment loss, business financial loss in our sector. Just a few years ago, we were earning huge foreign exchange for the government and in this hour of despair we expected some handholding by the government," he added.

For Full story - www.twonews.in

The launch of the issuance of e-passport with embedded chips is a welcome move for the travel and tourism industry as it would ease international travel. In addition, the introduction of 400 Vande Bharat trains in the next three years is expected to assist in online train booking in the coming years.

Ankush Nijhawan, Co-Founder, TBO.com

Budget 2022: Hospitality industry sees ECLGS extension as ray of hope

Gurdeep Singh Kaur, Vice-President of Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), on Tuesday admitted that the extension of ECLGS with additional allocation through Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTFMSE) were the only relief measures part of the Union Budget 2022-23, which he otherwise termed as "grimly disappointing".

The extension of ECLGS moratorium by a year will bolster the much needed liquidity to the sector which employs a large number of people. It is appreciated that in spite of revenue constraints faced by the government and its impact on the widening fiscal deficit, it has taken cognisance of the strain the hospitality sector is going through. This will help the sector look over the cash crunch and working capital issue."

Kam Kapoor, CEO, Resolute Hotels and Resorts

Radisson Hotel Group's Zubin Saxena welcomes Budget 2022

"We welcome the Union Budget and the allocation of strategic aid that will enable the speedy recovery of the hospitality sector. The extension of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) with an increased cover of Rs 5 lakh crore for the hospitality sector is a positive move. With domestic travel picking pace, we believe the government's highway expansion plans will facilitate accessibility and strengthen demand further."

Kerala Travel Mart deferred to May 5-8 due to COVID surge

The eleventh edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), India's largest tourism industry congregation, originally scheduled to be held from March 24 to 27, has been postponed to May 5 to 8 at Kochi in view of the current surge in COVID cases across the world.

E-post : asharma@indiaah.in Ph : 9818079063

❖ IATO Regional Chairman North spoke

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Union budget disappoints Agra's tourism, footwear businesses

No incentive has been given to the tourism trade already facing tough times due to the Corona pandemic, says Rajiv Tiwari, president of Confederation of Tourism Association

Agra: Tourism industry disappointed with Modi govt's budget

Ajitha Debbari / TNN / Feb 1, 2022, 21:05 IST

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Ajay Singh urges FM to give infra status for travel & tourism and include ATF under GST
Ajay Singh, CMD, Srisat, has highlighted the difficulties being faced by civil aviation, travel, tourism and hospitality sectors to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. He requested her to consider granting infrastructure status to these sectors. He also requested her support for inclusion of ATF under GST. She gave a positive response to resolve these issues.

Low overseas promotion budget won't help inbound tourism post border opening: Kaistha
Rajnish Kaistha, Secretary, IITD, has said that the allocation for tourism budget for overseas promotions has been reduced, which would affect the inbound business, especially after borders open. "Govt needs to allocate higher budgets for overseas promotion, publicity and marketing, along with MDA, because that is needed for our survival," he says.

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External Affairs Minister aims to launch e-passports after ensuring efficacy
Union Minister for External Affairs S. Jaishankar has said that e-passports will be launched only after ensuring efficacy of its data security features. "Testing of samples of the proposed e-passports is underway to ensure that they are secure," he said while replying to questions of the members in the House.

Australia set to reopen its borders to vaccinated tourists from February 21
Australia has announced that it will reopen its borders to fully vaccinated tourists from February 21. The announcement has been made by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. "It's almost two years since we took the decision to close the borders to Australia," Morrison said during a briefing to the media.

MP TO ORGANISE NIRJHARINI MAHOTSAV ON NARMADA JAYANTI

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Extension of validity of Ministry of Tourism recognition in all categories
The matter regarding extending the validity of the recognition of the existing stakeholders (tour operators/ travel agents/tourist transport operators) given by the MOT and grant of provisional recognition for the new agencies in view of crisis caused due to the Covid-19 pandemic has been considered in the Ministry. The extension to the existing validity is upto 30.06.2022.

IATO & ATOAI MET BJP MP SHARMA TO PLAN AIR LINKS IN MP

Kerala opens huge investment opportunities in Tourism sector: Riyas
Kerala Tourism Minister Mohammed Riyas, speaking at a press conference in Dubai on the sidelines of the Kerala Week at Expo 2020, said the state is eager to collaborate with UAE-based investors and Non-Resident Keralites (NRKs) in writing a new story of growth and development in key sectors, particularly tourism, as the state recovers from the covid-induced crisis.

ITC HOTEL GROUP LAUNCHES A NEW MOBILE APP

पर्यटन व्यवसाय के लिए सांसद ने दूर ऑपरेटर्स से की चर्चा

खजुराहो (अगरतपुर)। कोरोना के कारण चौपट हो चुके पर्यटन व्यवसाय को पटरी पर लाने और रोजगार के नए अवसर पैदा करने के लिए खजुराहो सांसद वी.डी. शर्मा ने इंडियन एसोसिएशन ऑफ दूर ऑपरेटर्स के अध्यक्ष राजीव मेहरा, राष्ट्रीय रवि गोसेन, एडवोकेट दूर ऑपरेटर्स ऑफ इंडिया के सचिव विनायक कोनर, जर्नलिस्ट दीपिका दुर्ग कंपनी के निदेशक नीलेश द्विवेदी और से मुकेशका करीब छह खजुराहो के पर्यटन व्यवसाय बढ़ाने लक्ष्य का रीजल्ट मूव करने के लिए पार चर्चा की। सांसद वी.डी. शर्मा ने सदस्यों को बताया कि जल्दी प्रत्यक्षता खजुराहो का पर्यटन सुझान है, जिसमें मुख्य और सहायक महत्वपूर्ण सेवा सांसद ने बताया कि जल्द ही खजुराहो-दिल्ली विमान सेवा पुनः प्रारम्भ कराई जा रही है जिसके लिए सांसद का अग्रसर कार्य किया गया।

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► राजकुमार सोनी छतरपुर।

खजुराहो। कोरोना काल में चौपट हो चुके खजुराहो के पर्यटन व्यवसाय को पटरी पर लाने और रोजगार के नए अवसर पैदा करने को लेकर खजुराहो सांसद तथा भाजपा प्रदेशाध्यक्ष वी.डी. शर्मा ने अपने दिल्ली आवास पर इंडियन एसोसिएशन ऑफ दूर ऑपरेटर्स अध्यक्ष-राजीव मेहरा, राष्ट्रीय रवि गोसेन, एडवोकेट दूर ऑपरेटर्स ऑफ इंडिया के सचिव-विनायक कोनर, जर्नलिस्ट दीपिका दुर्ग कंपनी के निदेशक-नीलेश द्विवेदी सहित पर्यटन एसोसिएशन के सदस्यों से मुलाकात करते हुए विश्व पर्यटन स्थल खजुराहो के पर्यटन व्यवसाय को पटरी पर लाने के साथ नए रोजगार सृजन करने चर्चा की। सांसद श्री शर्मा ने सदस्यों को बताया कि उनकी पहली प्राथमिकता खजुराहो का पर्यटन व्यवसाय बढ़ाने की है, जिसमें आपके सुझाव और सहयोग बहुत महत्वपूर्ण होंगे, उन्होंने को लेकर आगे की नीतियों पर पर्यटक सुविधाओं विचार किया जाएगा, सांसद श्री शर्मा ने बैठक में बताया कि उन्होंने खजुराहो-दिल्ली विमान सेवा पुनः प्रारम्भ करवाई है, जिस पर बैठक में पर्याप्त चर्चाओं तथा एसोसिएशन के सदस्यों ने सांसद का आभार व्यक्त किया।



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IATO thanks the Government for revising MoHFW guidelines for international arrivals

Admin February 11, 2022 41 Views



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IATO welcomes government's announcement easing Covid related restrictions imposed on foreign travellers

Further, IATO has requested that in view of falling Covid cases the guidelines may

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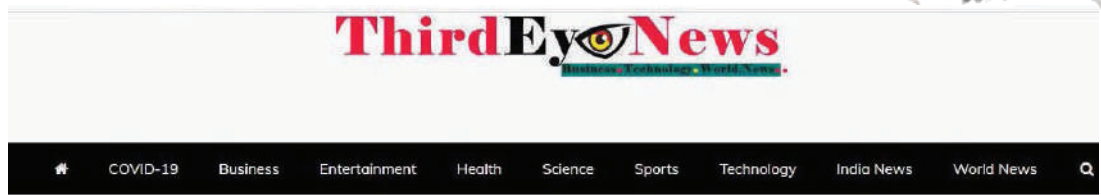
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Fully vaxxed won't need Covid test to enter India

The guidelines uploaded to the Union health ministry website showed that people will now need to either submit a negative report of an RT-PCR test taken not before 72 hours from departure or their vaccination certificate to the government's Air Suvidha portal before they board their flight.

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Latest News | Business Briefs *TAAI Welcomes Revised COVID Guidelines for International Travellers

Get latest articles and stories on Latest News at LatestLY. Travel Agents A India (TAAI) on Thursday welcomed the revised COVID guidelines for international travel and said the move will help open up employment and business opportunities in the travel sector, which is on the verge of collapse due to the pandemic, an industry official said on Thursday.

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IATO thanks Centre for revising quarantine guidelines for international arrivals

Igaur Khanna, President, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), has praised the government for revising quarantine guidelines and easing overseas mandatory quarantine for international travellers. The government has also removed the list of high-risk countries where it goes for the tourism industry as there were some key issues marked in the IAT for her request that the guidelines be further relaxed in the next 15 days. IATOA members Anand Singh, Tourism Secretary, and the international tourism ministry for supporting the industry in revision of rules.

For Full story - [www.tourismbreakingnews.com](#)

Doing away with mandatory quarantine rules couldn't be better-timed: Gaurav Bhatia

Commenting on new guidelines, Gaurav Bhatia, Executive Director, World Group said that COVID-19 cases both in India and abroad are declining. The announcement for doing away with mandatory quarantine rules couldn't be better-timed. Mandatory quarantine was resulting in many international travellers going into the red. "We hope that the government revises quarantine rules and high-risk areas and ease the rules of the relaxation in order to ease the impact that will result in a place and enhanced tourism opportunities, this country will see a whole improvement in tourism tourism sector."

For Full story - [www.tourismbreakingnews.com](#)

"IATO welcomes the recent relaxation in guidelines for international arrivals. This will not only simplify the process but in a way also encourage foreign visitors to act on their travel plans to India. We are hopeful that this move will soon be followed by the reopening of India's borders to tourists, allowing all inbound and outbound commercial flights to operate at full capacity."

Pradeep Shetty, Joint Secretary, IATO

Trade welcomes the Government's move of opening doors for tourism revival by easing out restrictions

Vishal Lohar, GM, Brand Development, Ramat Hotels & Resorts said that mandatory quarantine was resulting people from other countries to travel. The pandemic situation is a challenge for the industry but with government's move, international travel will be revived and all will return to normal. International travel will see a whole improvement in tourism tourism sector."

For Full story - [www.tourismbreakingnews.com](#)

Tourism leaders call for urgent action to protect the oceans: UNWTO

Tourism is one of the pillars of the blue economy and plays a key role in the preservation of oceans by providing financial resources and mechanisms to protect ecosystems.

For Full story - [www.tourismbreakingnews.com](#)

Airfare bands protect interests of airlines & passengers: Scindia

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotirupa Scindia has informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply that a fare bands serve the purpose of protecting the interests of airlines as well as passengers. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the civil aviation ministry introduced various bands with upper and lower limits as a temporary measure under the Airfare Act, 1934.

He also explained that under normal circumstances, airlines are neither stated nor regulated by the government. "The fare bands serve the dual purpose of protecting the interests of the airlines as well as of the passengers, and have been revised from time to time."

For Full story - [www.tourismbreakingnews.com](#)

ADTOI to launch 12th Chapter in tourist hotspot UP

MP Khanna, President of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), said Travel World Centre that ADTOI will launch its 12th Chapter in Uttar Pradesh on February 12 under the chairmanship of Shri Ram Singh of Janta Party, Sunil C. Gupta, MP of Uttar Pradesh, will be the Address Person of the Chapter.

Domestic tourism is in big demand country. As we thought it is the right time to open the Uttar Pradesh chapter and leverage the huge potential of domestic tourism in the state, the ADTOI President said.

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Ex-Turkish Airlines Chairman Ilker Ayçi is the new CEO & MD of Air India

Tata Sons have announced Ilker Ayçi as the CEO & MD of Air India. The Air India board decided to consider his candidature with its Chairman, Chairman of Tata Sons. The board approved the appointment after due deliberations. Before taking up this role, Ilker Ayçi was the Chairman of the Turkish Airlines and will assume his responsibilities on or before 14 April 2022.

IATO thanks MOT and MoCA for reinstating airport passes for tour operators & hotels

Rajiv Mehra, President, IATO has thanked MOT and MoCA for reinstating the Commercial Airport Entry Airport Pass (APEP) for recognised tour operators and hotels. "We've been trying for a long time and now the entries have finally come. Now, at least when the borders open, our members can apply for airports passes in the same manner as they used to," he said.

ABSOLUTE HOTEL SERVICES SIGNS 550 KEYS HOTEL IN LUCKNOW

ABSOLUTE HOTEL SERVICES has signed a 550 keys hotel in Lucknow. The hotel is located in the heart of the city and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Goa welcomes 500 pax from Moscow every 10 days and we expect this to increase: TTAG

Atish Shah, President, Travel & Tourism Association of India (TTAG), reveals that international charter flights resumed from December 2021 from Russia and Ukraine. "From Moscow we are welcoming almost 500 passengers every ten days and we expect this to increase. However, the charter from Ukraine has been paused for the time being," he shares.

QATAR AIRWAYS IS OFFICIAL PARTNER AT FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP

Qatar Airways has been named the official partner of the FIFA Club World Cup. The airline will provide flights for the participating teams and fans.

World's first parallel airline company 'WINAIR' from India to take off soon

World's First Parallel Airline Company 'WINAIR' has been formed, and it is expected to take off soon. The company is a joint venture between Indian and international investors.

VIETNAM TO END TRAVEL CURBS ON INTL FLIGHTS FROM 15th FEB

Vietnam is set to end travel curbs on international flights from February 15th. The country has been one of the most restrictive in the region.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TOURISM

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.302
ANSWERED ON 03.02.2022

REPRESENTATION FROM IATO

302. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of **TOURISM** be pleased to state:

- whether Government has received any representation from the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) for one-time financial assistance and relaxation of seven-day quarantine rule for travelers from non-high risk countries, to help prevent closure of business and jobs losses;
- if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto; and
- the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to revive current tourism industry by bringing more foreign tourists to the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF TOURISM

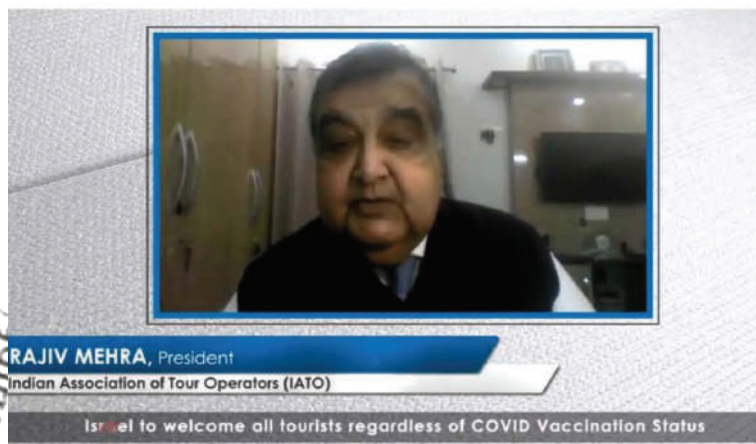
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

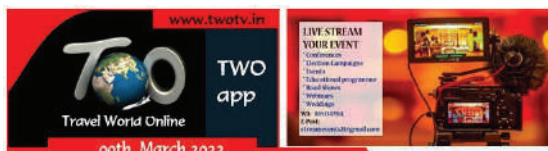
(a) to (b): Yes, Sir. The representation of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) regarding one-time financial assistance and relaxation of seven-day quarantine rule for travelers from non-high risk countries has been received in the Ministry of Tourism and this has been forwarded to the concerned Ministries such as Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW) for consideration and taking appropriate action.

(c): Following are the steps taken by the Government to revive current tourism industry by bringing more foreign tourists in the Country:

- The Government allowed foreign nationals to enter into India for tourism purpose on e-Tourist Visa/ Tourist Visa through Chartered flight (for Group Tourism only) w.e.f 15th October,2021 and for Individual foreign nationals w.e.f 15th November,2021.
- Free Tourist Visa to 5 Lakh Tourists: As per the announcement, once Visa issuance is restarted, the first 5 lakh Tourists Visas will be issued free of charge. The benefit of free of charge visa will be available only once per tourist during the issuance of the first 5 lakh tourist visas (free of charge visas). The scheme will be applicable till 31st March 2022 or till 5,00,000 visas are issued, whichever is earlier.
- The Ministry of Tourism under its Overseas Promotion and Publicity Scheme promotes India as a holistic destination in the tourism generating markets overseas with a view to attract foreign tourists and increase India's share of the global tourism market. The above objectives are met through an integrated marketing and promotional strategy, and a synergized campaign in association with the Travel Trade, State Governments and Indian Missions.
- The Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) programme of the Overseas Promotion and Publicity Scheme provides for extending financial assistance to approved Tourism Service Providers and States Government/ Union Territory Administrations for undertaking promotion of tourism to India in the overseas markets.

 tourism.gov.in





IATO thanks the Government of India and welcomes resumption of International flights

It is a sign of relief for us as we had almost zero income for past almost 2 years in the absence of foreign tourist arrival. Whatsoever we welcome the decision, however, it was also a much-needed one too, as in the absence of normal running of international flights the opening of Tourist Visa including e-Tourist Visa from November 15 was not much of help as airlines were overbooked high. The normalisation of flight situation would reduce the airfares and make it attractive for foreign tourists to visit India for leisure and other industry."



For Full story - www.dailymail.in

"It's a huge relief": Ajay Prakash, President - TAAI

"It's a huge relief that our Government has finally decided to do away with the Air bubbles and to open up the Indian skies to scheduled commercial aviation again. We hope that health requirements will also be tweaked adequately and that all airlines will now move safely to regular schedules and capacity. Unfortunately, we had the entire incoming season and beyond the operators will have to jump-jump for another six months but the resumption of flights opens some hope for the outbound summer travel season. In view of the anticipated surge in demand, there is a tremendous pent up demand and we should see a significant uptick in bookings."

For Full story - www.dailymail.in

"Global travel will become easier as the regular commercial international flights resume later this month" said Mr. Anikush Nijhawan, Joint Managing Director, TBO TEK Limited. "Today's announcement to resume international passenger flights is a welcome move for domestic and international travellers who have been waiting for a long time to make travel plans. We are pleased that these measures will once again give a big boost to foreign tourism in the country."

Anikush Nijhawan - Joint MD TBO TEK LTD

International commercial flights will also regularise the demand-supply

"This is a great news for all travellers and the industry, especially before the peak summer season. The demand for international travel is picking up in India and there has been a significant uptick in travel search queries for popular international destinations like Australia. In Lanka, US & UK, travel search queries from India for Australian cities like Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney have jumped 15-20% this month. We are seeing a trend of travellers now eager to book long haul destinations..." said Aloke Bagpal, Co-founder Hago.



For Full story - www.dailymail.in

IATA Agents Association of India chief Biji Eapen warns of new problems amid Russia conflict

Eapen welcomed the restart of regular international flights after a long two-year gap due to the Covid pandemic, but warned of new problems emerging in the wake of the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

"We all were waiting for this travel but now new issues are cropping up due to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Prices of crude oil are going up, touching \$139 a barrel which is close to 2008 levels. ATF rates will be hit. War insurance premium is going to come more. All these roadblocks will also affect the prices," he said.

E-post : asharma@indiaah.in Ph. : 9818079063.

TAAI President Jyoti Mayal says 'need to plan' as regular flights open but war looms

Jyoti Mayal, President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), has stressed on the need to live with Covid, and plan ahead as the summer travel season approaches.

"I was writing columns, sharing thoughts on different news platforms about the need to open regular international flights. I was saying we have to learn to live with the Covid - the virus doesn't need aircraft to travel, it doesn't need open doors. I expected this again and again, we might not do the virus but if this situation prevails, we will die of poverty," she said.

The TAAI is expecting the government to start e-visa services at the earliest.

For Full story - www.dailymail.in

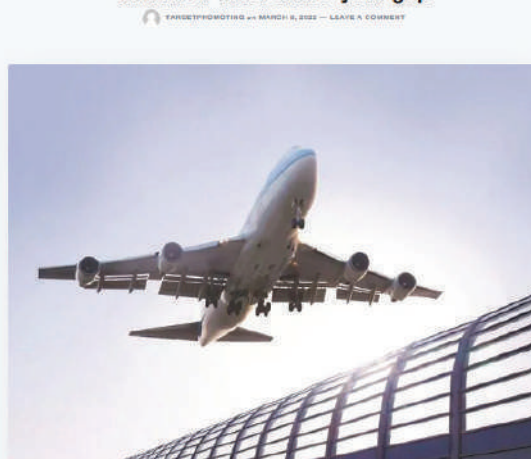


Gurbax Singh Kohli, Vice President - FHRAI

We thank the Govt and Civil Aviation Ministry for it. We had been following up with the Ministry to restart international travel especially because most countries have already thrown open their gates for international travelers. The industry was anxiously awaiting an announcement on this since early bad gets the worm. The latest announcement has come as a ray of hope for hospitality businesses and those employed in the sector."

For Full story - www.dailymail.in

Regular international passenger flights start from March 27 after a two-year gap



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INDIA NEWS

After 2 yrs, international flights resume on Mar 27

India suspended scheduled international flights on March 23, 2020 and in July that year, opened a so-called air bubble arrangement with 37 countries to and from which flights were allowed in a limited manner.



Ticket booking service providers said resumption of international commercial flights will help reduce the airfares (HT file photo, Representative image)

Business Standard

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Regular international passenger flights from Mar 27 after two-year gap

By Arvind Bhatnagar

ET TravelWorld News / Latest ET TravelWorld News / Aviation / International

Scheduled international commercial flights in India to resume from March 27

Making the announcement, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyoti Radhika Scindia said that air bubble arrangements will also stand revoked thereafter. Regular international flights in the country are suspended since March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic first struck. The move is expected to bring cheers to the ailing tourism and travel industry, which was demanding resumption of flight services from a long time.



India to allow scheduled international flight ops from March 27

08-03-2022 Tue 21:42 IST | IANS | Business



New Delhi, March 8: India will allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from March 27.

"After having recognised the increased vaccination coverage across the globe and in consultation with the stakeholders, the Government of India has decided to resume scheduled commercial international passenger services

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India to allow scheduled international flight ops from March 27

SME Times News Bureau | 08 Mar 2022

India will allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from March 27.

"After having recognised the increased vaccination coverage across the globe and in consultation with the stakeholders, the Government of India has decided to resume scheduled commercial international passenger services to or from India from March 27, 2022," an official communique said on Tuesday.

"The suspension of scheduled commercial international passenger services to or from India, thus, stands extended only upto 2359 hrs IST on March 26, 2022 and air bubble arrangements shall accordingly be extended to this extent only."

Last month, India's civil aviation regulator had extended the ban on scheduled international commercial flights till "further orders".

In late 2021, India had announced plans to allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from December 15, 2021 with certain conditions. However, the plan was postponed due to the emergence of the third Covid wave globally.

India had banned the operation of international flights on March 23, 2020 to contain and control the spread of Covid-19. Flight restrictions, however, were later eased under air bubble arrangement with certain countries.

India Inc welcomed the move.

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BUSINESS 1 India to allow scheduled international flight ops from March 27

BUSINESS HOME INDIA

India to allow scheduled international flight ops from March 27

March 9, 2022



Airport:



New Delhi, (Asian independent) India will allow resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services from March 27.

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Tuesday, April 5, 2022

BOTT
Business of Travel Trade

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Tourism fraternity delighted & hopeful with the resumption of scheduled International flights

The scheduled international flights were suspended in March 2020 as the world tourism came to a halt in the wake of the pandemic. Now, as things progress towards endemic, India finally opened its skies and declared resumption of scheduled international flights from March 27, 2022. The tourism fraternity is delighted with this announcement and also hopeful of the good times finally returning to the travel sector again. Here's look at how the industry stalwarts reacted to the news –

March 9, 2022

Priyanka Saxena Ray

"As President TAAI and Vice Chairperson FAITH, I would like to applaud the government, Ministry of Civil Aviation & Ministry of Health for finally agreeing to open commercial flights. We have been advocating to open flights continuously since long as we strongly believe that we need to start accepting the virus & start living a normal life or else the industry will die of starvation. MoCA & MoT have been working in a collaborative manner & soon the e-visa for travel into India will also be opened to facilitate inbound travellers once again. The industry needs to come back into action & start planning for outbound as the holiday season will soon start in India. Opening of commercial flights will bring about ease of travel, lower costs & more choice. Most of the countries are now removing strict protocols & opening borders & I am sure everyone around the world is wanting to experience life, connect back with the world, friends, family and business associates after a long period of 2 years

'DRIVE TO PURSUE ONE'S PASSION IS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESS'

Sanghamitra Jena talks with **Elina Satapathy** about her journey, from working as a tour guide, being the first female guide with a licence to work in five Indian states in a male-dominated sector, to establishing her own venture.

”

We were a four-person team working on focussed tours of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. I envision myself as a mentor to the next generation of women entrepreneurs in the travel and tourism industry

”

What drew you to the tourism business, and how did you start?

My passion for travel, meeting people, learning about their lives and cultures, and sharing the rich culture of my homeland with travellers led me to pursue a career in tourism.

Tell us about your entrepreneurial journey. What is the name of your business, and why did you choose it?

My company was named after one of my Western clients who accompanied me on 17 trips across India. So, the guest's suggestion for naming the firm so was to show the world the treasures of eastern part of India.

In 1992, I began my job as a tour guide. I was the first female guide with a licence to work in five Indian states, including Andaman and Nicobar, as well as the eastern part of India. I am from Odisha. Because the industry is male-dominated, they would not let me work as a freelance guide. I had to accept a position at a travel agency with the promise of getting assignments to go on tour jobs as a guide.

With time, it became more difficult to obtain the assignment by breaking the chain. After a year and a half of effort, when I

chose to quit the job, the office finally assigned me some files. During my 10 years with the company, I covered all of the Indian remote destinations. The less explored destinations were my favourite spots to present to the Western world. I was involved in the entire tour job of creating programmes, exploring the location to gain first-hand information, operating files, and so on.

When I left this travel agency in 2004, I decided to establish my own venture. In 2005, I registered the company. We were a four-person team working on focussed tours of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh. During the visit, we encountered infrastructural issues in a few locations, including Bhitarkanika National Park in Odisha. I decided to launch a community project with a Swiss Camp accommodation unit in 2008 with the cooperation of the residents of this area.

The Nature Camp Bhitarkanika was developed with the support of the Dangamala villagers to accommodate tourists visiting the wildlife sanctuary here and enjoying village life. After four years, the camp became self-sufficient, and the villagers were able to operate it on their own. A second camp was established in



Sanghamitra Jena



Konark, along the Kushabhadra River, in the serene atmosphere of a small jungle. We began planning the Swiss tent concept at the Farm House near Satpada on Chilika Lake with another village in 2020.

How has your business grown over time?

Growth was highly favourable when special attention was paid to the business. Personal attention to the tourists' interests, focussed and uniquely prepared trip circuits were a few of the grounds for growth.

Who was your first client, and when did you meet them?

My first client as a tour guide was a British couple. As a tour operator, my first client was a retired tour operator from the United Kingdom, who booked a trip to Chennai with me.

What role do you see yourself playing in 10 years?

I envision myself as a mentor to the next generation of women entrepreneurs in the travel industry.

Who do you regard as your most significant motivator?

My parents' and family's support was the biggest motivating factor for me. Another source of inspiration was a woman from the United States who was visiting India in the year 1995. She assisted me in my growth as a tourist guide and tour operator.

How has the pandemic impacted your business?

The impact of the dreaded virus on the business has been detrimental. There is nothing we can do about it, but remain patient until the crisis subsides.

How can you make a difference in the industry as a woman?

A woman can be the best curator. Through tour operations and the management of a sustainable tourism initiative, I hope to make a difference in the industry.

What steps would you take to promote gender equality?

Personally, I believe that discussing gender equality makes women inferior. I would love to train more women in our industry and encourage them to have the confidence to say, "I can do it." That, to me, is women empowerment.

What are your primary concerns as a woman entrepreneur?

Women in the travel and tourism industry, in my opinion, have a greater edge in garnering support from local villages as well as the authorities. Entrepreneurship is the same for men and women.

What is your message for budding women entrepreneurs of today?

What I would advise today's aspiring female entrepreneurs is to be focussed and honest about their goals and efforts, and to remember that the drive to pursue one's passion is a prerequisite for success as an entrepreneur.

What are your key suggestions for Indian Association of Tour Operators?

Regional members, whether allied or active, should be able to participate in decision-making. My sole recommendation to the association is that they should consider our marketing and promotion requests on a regional basis. ♦



”

Women in the industry should have an edge in garnering support from villages and the authorities. Entrepreneurship is the same for men and women. I envision myself as a mentor to the next generation of women entrepreneurs in the travel industry

”

DISCOVERING INDIA'S NORTH EAST

Inbound tourism has increased since outbreak of the pandemic and ensuing travel restrictions. North Eastern states are gifted with natural scenic beauty as well as distinct historical, cultural, and ethnic history. Bengia Mrinal based in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh talks about states enormous tourism potential.

■ **IATO Bureau** (Sourced by Elina Satapathy)

Our journey on the road less travelled began in the year 2000, not knowing then that the new century would bring with it the birth of a new idea, new challenges, and new learning. Tourism in India's North East was still in its infancy.

obstacles in order to send the guest home happy and with a sense of belonging to the region. Only then is our job done well and completed! To my mind, tourism is not about one person or one company, per se. It is the collective effort of the entire team



Stepping into this sector at this moment was quite symbolic as we were commencing services in the North East, which would also welcome the first rays of the sun at the turn of the century in the easternmost corner of India, Dong, in Arunachal Pradesh. We took the leap of faith and decided to tread on unknown territories—flagging most of the time, but always learning along the way. This facet of tourism, in my opinion, is what keeps most of us going. We overcome

that makes or breaks tours. It affects the first and last person in the line.

Hence our motto is:
We shall build good trips
At profit if we can
At loss if we must
But always good trips

Being based in the Camellia town of Assam, Dibrugarh, it was only natural that our USP would be tea tourism and with it our boutique properties—the



”

The experiential tea tour through a 160-year-old heritage tea garden in Ethelwold TE begins with you picking two leaves and a bud and provides insight into the various activities on an estate that vary seasonally. It will teach one all about tea, how it is grown etc

”

charming, restored heritage Chang Bungalows. Tea was not unknown to us, but tea tourism was. Also, Dibrugarh was not on the tourist map of India. So, we took a wider, different take on tea tourism so that it would encompass more.

The experiential tea tour through a 160-year-old heritage tea garden in Ethelwold TE begins with you picking two leaves and a bud and provides insight into the various activities on an estate that vary seasonally. It will teach you all about tea, its origin, how it is grown, tea tasting, and its quality. Tea estates come alive with teams of colourfully dressed tea pluckers, predominantly ladies, who pluck the delicate buds and leaves from March. The

harvest is taken every day to the factory where it undergoes the age-old process of being turned into the finished product. All stages of the process are carefully controlled to ensure that the product which leaves the factory is of the highest quality. This is the quality that has made Assam tea famous around the world.

CTC tea is a variety of tea and also a method of processing tea. In this process, the leaves are passed through a set of three rollers with hundreds of small sharp "teeth" that crush, tear, and curl. This style of manufacture has the advantage of the finished product brewing quickly, giving a dark infusion rapidly, is well suited for tea bags, and yields more cups per kg. Over 80 per cent of the tea produced is of the CTC type. It produces a rich red-brown colour when the tea leaves are boiled, and so is best suited for tea made in the Indian style, *masala chai*. This is done by boiling leaves in a mixture of milk, water, and sugar with some spices.

The next tour takes you to another tea estate, which specialises in organic green tea. The entire garden is organic and is located within pristine surroundings. The estate has within its



”

Guests are then driven to Inthong village, three hours away from Dibrugarh. This village is inhabited by the Singpho tribe. Their roots can be traced back to Tibet, from where they migrated to India. The Singphos knew and drank tea long before the British discovered it

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Charms of India



”
After the fag end of the journey, the guests are driven to Inthong Village, about 3 hours away from Dibrugarh. This village is inhabited by the Singpho tribe. Their roots can be traced back to Tibet, from where they migrated to India
”



boundary a tea plantation, a rich bamboo stand, and a wetland which attracts numerous bird species. Visitors can enjoy a first-hand experience of plucking tea by hand and preparing roasted green tea themselves.

Thereafter, we visited yet another tea estate, which specialises in making orthodox tea, another variety of tea. Its manufacturing process is quite different from that of CTC. Instead of the tea leaf being crushed, the leaves are rolled in a machine that twists and breaks the leaves to release the natural chemicals that later react with oxygen in the air to give them their characteristic aroma and taste. It is the leafy variety of tea and is less strong in taste.

This is not the end of the journey of discovery. Guests are then driven to Inthong Village, about three hours away from Dibrugarh. This village is inhabited by the Singpho tribe. Their roots can be traced back to Tibet, from where they migrated to India. The Singphos knew and drank tea long before the British discovered it in Assam. Even today, tea plantations have immense significance in their

lives. Almost every Singpho family grows tea in their kitchen garden and brews Phalap tea. Phalap is an unfermented variety of traditional tea brewed by the SINGPHO TRIBE and is 100 per cent organic tea—a combination of green tea and oolong tea with medicinal properties.

There are two types of phalap tea: NDUM PHALAP, usually found in a cylindrical form as it is stored or stuffed in a hollow bamboo tube; and to use it, one has to cut it into small circular pieces. The second variety is PHALEE PHALAP, a loose form of dried tea leaves.

Making PHALAP is a unique process. The young and tender leaves are plucked and pan dried in large metal pans until their moisture content reduces and the colour of the leaves changes.

These leaves are then dried further on a bamboo shelf above the traditional wood fire in the kitchen. The hot smoke emanating from the fire dries the tea leaves and gives them a smoky flavour. Thereafter, they are crumbled, and PHALEE PHALAP is ready to drink.



NDUM PHALAP is processed in the same way, the only difference being that the pan-dried tea leaves are packed into a hollow bamboo tube. The leaves are cut into small pieces and stuffed into the tube, which is then heated until the leaves are steamed and can be stuffed more firmly into it. This process is repeated till the hollow bamboo is completely full. After that, the ends are tied and hung near the fireplace for better flavour and to ensure that the tea stays fresh for many years.

Horse riding was part and parcel of the tea plantations in yesteryear. *Kanjari* or the work on the tea estate, was overseen on horseback until the modern SUVs replaced them. One of the tours offered on a tea plantation is horse riding holidays. The *pahis*, or narrow paths between



the tea bushes, provide the perfect footing for the horses.

The lifeline of Assam is the Brahmaputra River which runs across the entire state. Can a tour be complete without a boat cruise in a country boat down the river? Stopping on pristine sand beaches for a breather with a picnic lunch makes for a



Charms of India



perfect day out. While there, one can hope to catch a glimpse of the endangered river dolphin and the migratory Ruddy Shelduck! Since the plantations provide so much forest cover by way of shade trees over the tea bushes, one should not be astounded by the variety of bird life they support: Black Hooded Oriole, Pied Hornbill, Lineated Barbet,



Hill Myna, Spotted Owlet, Crested Serpent Eagle, Yellow Footed Green-Pigeon, Common Hoopoe, Sultan Tit, and Racket-Tailed Drongo, among others. Other than birds, the plantations also sometimes see Hoolock Gibbons and leopards!

The icing on the cake is Dibru Saikhowa National Park, which skirts many plantations and abounds in rare and endangered species of over 350 endemic and migratory birds. The big four here are Jerdon's Bushchat, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Marsh

Babbler, and Swamp Prinia. One can also expect to see Baer's Pochard, Pale-capped Pigeon, Falcated Duck, Baikal Teal, and Eastern Spot-billed Duck.

Food is part and parcel of any holiday. Our bungalows offer an array of choices to tickle the palate of the visitor. Of course, local cuisine tops the list. With it, one has an opportunity to enjoy Bihu and Jhumur dance performances. The Communita Festival can be enjoyed in December. It showcases the culture of the tea community quite successfully. The other hidden jewels of the area are very humble and accomplished people like:

- Binanada Hatibaruah, a self-taught birding specialist, his knowledge and passion for birds can put most birders to shame and convert non-birders into die-hard ornithologists.
- Hemprabha Chutia, who lives in Moran, is known as "The" weaving woman because she has taken the art of weaving to new heights by weaving several epics in silk. She initially wove



Sankardev's 'Gunamala' and Madhavdev's 'Naam Ghosa'. Later, he progressed to weaving the entire Bhagavad Gita on muga silk in Sanskrit. Currently, she is weaving the Ramayana. Not surprisingly, she has been awarded various prestigious awards for her incredible work,



Charms of India



the well-preserved Ramayan written in Tai-script.

- Cheleng Chuk village situated about 67 km from Dibrugarh and about 8 km from Naharkatia Moran Tinali, with around 125 houses. This village is also known as 'The Lemon Village' as it produces Assam's famous 'Gol Nemu'

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Namphake village is the largest of the Tai-Phake villages in Assam, boasting 70 odd families who trace their ancestry to the great Tai race. The village folk speak the dialect and still follow the traditional customs of their Tai ancestry. The hamlet is famous for the Namphake Buddhist Monastery

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including the Bakul Bon Award, the Aai Kanaklata Award, and the State Government's Handloom and Textile Award. The tour of the region would remain incomplete without guests visiting:

- Namphake Village is the largest of the Tai-Phake villages in Assam, boasting 70 odd families who trace their ancestry to the great Tai race. The village folk speak the dialect and still follow the traditional customs of their Tai ancestry. The hamlet is famous for the Namphake Buddhist Monastery, one of the oldest and most respected Buddhist monasteries in Assam. It has in its archives

and 'Kaji Nemu' in abundance. Jaanmoni Gogoi, a resident of this village, leads the initiative run by women who also engage in making different types of pickle, jam, and juice from the organic produce.

So, just as tea undergoes a metamorphosis from the leaf to CTC, Orthodox, or Phalap, so too do the guests return home with knowledge about tea, its surroundings, its culture, dance, food, and community. A heady mix which never fails to touch hearts! ❖

*The author, Vineeta Janan is Director of
Purvi Discovery Private Limited
www.purvidiscovery.com*





YOUR ENVIRONMENT IS REFLECTION OF YOUR INNER SELF

Short stories more often than not make one ponder about the hidden meanings of life in the morals they contain. Akin to the Father of the Nation's three monkeys, they spell out the path to leading life without a blemish.

■ **IATO Bureau** (Resourced by Mukesh Manra)

A selection of short stories to ponder and self-reflect on:

LAZINESS WILL NOT GET YOU ANYWHERE

A king once ordered his men to place a boulder across a roadway. He then crept into the woods and waited for someone to move the boulder out of the way.

Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers went around it, simply passing by. Many people criticised the King for failing to keep the roads clear, but none of them took action to have the stone removed.

A peasant carrying vegetables came along one day. When the peasant approached the boulder, he laid down his load and tried to push the stone out of the way. He finally succeeded after much pushing and straining.

When the peasant returned to collect his vegetables, he discovered a purse on the road where the boulder had been. Many gold coins were found in the purse, along with a note from the King explaining that the reward was for the person who removed the boulder from the path.



DO NOT SAY SOMETHING YOU REGRET OUT OF ANGER

Once upon a time, there was a young boy with a bad temper. His father decided to give him a bag of nails and told him he had to hammer a nail into the fence every time he lost his temper.

The boy hammered 37 nails into the fence on the first day.

Over the next few weeks, he gradually learned to manage his temper, and the number of nails he hammered into the fence dropped. He learned that controlling his temper was easier than hammering those nails into

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The boy learned that controlling his temper was easier than hammering those nails into the fence. After hammering 37 nails, the boy steadily managed to control his temper

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**You cannot laugh
at the same joke
over and over. So why
always complain
about the same
thing? Complaining
wipes out your
good fortune**

”

the fence. Finally, the day arrived when the boy did not lose his cool. When he told his father, he suggested that the youngster should now pull out a nail every day he kept his cool.

After a few days, the boy was finally able to tell his father that all of the nails had withdrawn. The father walked his son to the fence, taking his hand in his.

The father said, "You did well, my son, but take a look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same again. When you say things out of rage, they leave scars like this one. A knife can be plunged into a man's chest and drawn out.

The wound will not heal no matter how many times you say, 'I'm sorry'."

STOP WASTING YOUR TIME COMPLAINING

People come to see a wise man over and over again, complaining about the same problems. He decided to tell them a joke one day, and they all burst out laughing. He told them the same joke after a few minutes, and only a few of them smiled. Then he told the same joke a third time, but this time no one laughed or smiled. The wise man said, with a smile, "You cannot laugh at the same joke over and over. So why are you always complaining about the same thing? Complaining wipes out your good fortune."

DAMAGED SOULS STILL HAVE WORTH

A shopkeeper posted a sign above his door that read, "Puppies For





Sale." Signs like this always seem to attract young children, and it is no surprise that a boy saw the sign and approached the owner, asking, "How much are you going to sell the puppies for?"

"Anywhere from US \$30 to US \$50," said the store owner.

The youngster took some money from his pocket. "I have US \$2.37," he explained. "May I please have a look at them?"

The shopkeeper whistled and smiled. The lady emerged from the kennel, trailed by five teeny, tiny balls of fur down the aisle of his shop. One puppy was noticeably behind the others.

"What is wrong with that little dog?" said the little boy, pointing to the stumbling, limping puppy.

The shopkeeper explained that the veterinarian had examined the puppy and discovered it did not have a hip socket. It would always limp. It would always be lame.

The boy got excited. "That's the puppy I am looking for."

"No, you do not want to buy that little dog. I'll just give him to you if you really want him." said the shopkeeper.

The boy became upset. He looked the store owner in the eyes, pointed his finger, and said, "I do not want you to give him to me. That little dog is worth just as much as the others, and I will pay full price for him. In fact, I will give you US \$2.37 now and 50 cents every month until I have paid for him."



"You really do not want to buy this little dog. He will never be able to run, jump, or play with you like the other puppies," said the shopkeeper.

To his surprise, the boy reached down and rolled up his pants leg, revealing a severely twisted, crippled left leg supported by a large metal brace. He raised his head to the shopkeeper and softly replied, "Well, I do not run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!"

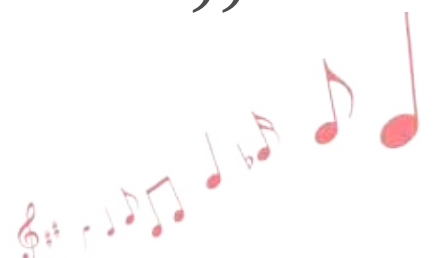
NEVER LET ONE FAILURE FROM THE PAST HOLD YOU BACK IN THE FUTURE

As a man passed the elephants, he suddenly stopped, puzzled by the fact that these massive creatures were only held together by a small rope tied to their front

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He reached down and rolled up his pants leg, revealing a twisted, crippled left leg supported by a large metal brace. He told the shopkeeper, "I do not run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!"

”





same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them," the trainer explained. "As they grow older, they are conditioned to believe that they will never be able to break free. They are convinced that the rope can still hold them, so they never attempt to break free."

The man was taken aback. These animals had the ability to break free from their bonds at any time, but because they believed they couldn't, they remained trapped.

STRUGGLING WILL MAKE YOU STRONGER

Once upon a time, a man found a butterfly in the process of

”

The elephants had the ability to break free from their bonds at any time, but because they believed they could not, they remained trapped

”

hatching from its cocoon. He sat for hours, watching the butterfly struggle to force itself through a tiny hole. Then it suddenly stopped moving and appeared to be stuck.

Therefore, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and cut the last bit of the cocoon off. The butterfly then emerged with ease, despite its swollen body and small, shrivelled wings.

The man did not think anything of it, and sat there waiting for the butterfly's wings to

leg. There are no chains or cages. The elephants could easily break free from their bonds at any time, but for some reason, they did not.

He noticed a trainer nearby and inquired as to why these animals just stood there and made no attempt to flee.

'Well, when they are very young and much smaller, we use the





grow large enough to support it. That, however, never occurred. The butterfly crawled around with small wings and a swollen body for the rest of its life, unable to fly.

Despite the man's good intentions, he did not realise that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required by the butterfly to get through the small hole were God's way of forcing fluid from the butterfly's body into its wings to prepare it for flight once it was free.

YOUR REACTION MATTERS MORE THAN WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU

Once upon a time, a daughter complained to her father about how miserable her life was and how she did not know how she was going to get by. She was tired of constantly fighting and struggling. It seemed that as soon as one problem was solved, another one arose.

Her chef father escorted her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and set them on high heat. When the first of the three pots began to boil, he added potatoes to one, eggs to the second, and ground coffee beans to the third.

He then left them to boil without saying anything to his daughter. The daughter moaned and waited impatiently, wondering what he was doing.

He turned off the burners after twenty minutes. He drained the potatoes and placed them in a bowl. He took out the boiled eggs and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled out the coffee and

poured it into a cup. He asked, turning to face her. "What do you see, daughter?"

She quickly replied, "Potatoes, eggs, and coffee."

"Look closer, and touch the potatoes," he said.

She did, and she noticed how soft they were. He then instructed her to break an egg. She examined the hard-boiled egg after removing the shell. Finally, he asked her to take a sip of her coffee. Its intoxicating aroma made her smile.

"What does this mean, Father?" she inquired.

He then explained that the potatoes, eggs, and coffee beans had all been subjected to the same adversity: boiling water. Each one, however, reacted differently.

The potato went in strong, hard, and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg was delicate, with a thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was immersed in boiling water. The inside of the egg then hardened.

The ground coffee beans, on the other hand, were one-of-a-kind. They changed the water and created something new after being exposed to boiling water.

"Which are you?" he inquired of his daughter. How do you respond when adversity knocks on your door? Do you want to be a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?" ❖



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A man found a butterfly in the process of hatching from its cocoon. He sat for hours, watching the butterfly struggle to force itself through a tiny hole. Then it suddenly stopped moving and appeared to be stuck

”



‘LAND OF SHERPAS’ IMMERSED IN COLOUR ALL YEAR ROUND

Nepal is a tourist's paradise. Great Himalayan Range makes up northern part of the country, containing highest elevations in the world. Not many are familiar with faunal surprises hidden within lush foliage of the country, as it boasts of vast assortment of verdant landscapes and thriving wildlife.

■ IATO Bureau



have several years of tradition and culture in them.

Not many people are familiar with the faunal surprises hidden within the lush foliage of the country. Nepal boasts vast assortment of verdant landscapes and thriving wildlife—some of which include rhinoceros, tigers and exotic bird species. Whether you are the one who prefers ski boarding down the slopes of mountains, or someone who likes to be attuned with nature, Nepal has everything for those who wish to catch up such an experience. So, it would be better to hop on a mountain bike or check into a luxurious lodge atop a peak and experience the old world charm of Nepal.

The great Himalayan Range makes up the northern part of Nepal, which is a Hindu majority country. It contains the highest elevations in the world. Seven snow-capped mountain ranges are near Nepal. They include Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Kanchenjunga, Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Manaslu.

Landlocked amidst the Indian plains and the Himalayas, Nepal is every mountaineer's dream. Tourists from across the world gather here for a regular dose of thrill. The 'Land of the Sherpas' is often recognised by its landmark peak—Mount Everest—and its ancient tradition, vibrant culture. It is divided into three regions such as Himal, Pahad and Terai. Nepal has an amiable climate and a casual walk around Kathmandu, Bhaktapur or Patan will invariably make you stumble upon monasteries, each of which



Nepal occupies the central sector of the Himalayan arc with a small strip of southernmost region stretching into the Indo-Gangetic plain. Two northern districts of the country reach the Tibetan plateau near the Mount Everest.

The Lower Himalayan Range comprises subtropical valleys and hills. Population density is high in valleys, where snow occasionally falls in winter. The Terai region bordering India is on the northern edge of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. Three Himalayan rivers namely Koshi, Narayani, and the Karnali are the major rivers in the region. This region has a subtropical to tropical climate. Broad, low valleys called Inner Terai Valleys (Bhitri Tarai Upatyaka) lie north of these foothills in several places.

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in Nepal, employing more than a million people and contributing 7.9 per cent of the total GDP. The country is literally a tourist's paradise. The premier destinations in the country include Pokhara, the Annapurna trekking circuit and the UNESCO world heritage sites—Swayambhunath Stupa, Patan Durbar Square, Bhaktapur Durbar Square, Sagarmatha National Park, Chitwan National Park, six sites in Kathmandu, including the famous Pashupathinath temple.

A major source of revenue for Nepal comes from mountaineering: Mount Everest is accessible from the Nepal side. The home-stay tourism, in which cultural and eco-tourists stay as PGs in the homes of indigenous people, has seen some success.

After it opened to westerners, Nepal became a popular



Tiger in Chitwan National Park

destination during the 1960s and 1970s. However, the industry continues to face challenges due to lack of a plethora of facilities for high-end tourism.

Varied cultures are practised in Nepal. Kathmandu enjoys a rich tapestry of cultures blending to form a national identity. Adding colour to the otherwise placid life of the people are the festivals which are not only immersed in colour but are also celebrated all year round.

A must visit for travellers is the Indra Jatra festival where the people of Nepal come out in colour attires. The chariot of the living goddess is taken out in a procession during the eight day long Indra Jatra festival which falls in September and is one of the most revered festivals of Kathmandu Valley.

Food plays an important role in during the festivals in Nepal.

”

The elephants had the ability to break free from their bonds at any time, but because they believed they could not, they remained trapped

”



Foreign Shores



The Kathmandu Valley

popular snacks. Rotis (flatbread) and *dhedo* (boiled flour) are also the staple diet in some homes.

Another attraction in Nepal is Province Two where all the province's districts such as Parsa, Bara, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahotari, Dhanusha, Siraha and Saptari come under Terai region. Major attractions of the province include Janakpurdham, Janaki temple, Parsa Wildlife Reserve, Salhesh Botanical Garden (Phulbari), Gadhji Mai temple, Jaleswor Mahadev temple, Birgunj, Simraungadh and Baba Taal lake.

Food habits differ from region to region in Nepal. Indian and Tibetan styles of cooking influence the Nepali style of cooking. The staple Nepali meal is *daal* (lentil soup), *bhat* (boiled rice) and *tarkari* (curried vegetables), often accompanied by *achar* (pickles). Curried meat is a popular dish, but it is prepared on special occasions such as marriages, get-togethers among others. Momos (steamed or fried dumplings) deserve a mention as the most

The regional languages Maithili, Awadhi and Bhojpuri are spoken in the southern Terai region, while Urdu is spoken among Nepali Muslims. Varieties of Tibetan dialects are spoken in and upper reaches of Himalayas where Tibetan language is understood by those with religious education. Local dialects in the Terai and hills are mostly unwritten with efforts on to underway to develop the language either in Devanagari script or the Roman alphabet. ❖



UTTAR PRADESH CHAPTER

❖ Chapter Chair of Uttar Pradesh moderated the session on Perspective of Tourism in Uttar Pradesh at the Tourism Conference on National Tourism Day, 25 January, 2022.

NORTHERN REGION CHAPTER

❖ Northern Region Chairman speaks about budget expectations.



WEST BENGAL CHAPTER

❖ Chapter Chair, West Bengal on budget expectations..



AP & TS CHAPTER

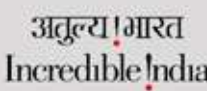



JAMMU AND KASHMIR CHAPTER

❖ Chapter Chair J&K spoke of the need for more hotels in the state.



NORTHERN CHAPTER

BORDER TOURISM WEBINAR SERIES
'Highlighting the Potential of Tourism in Border Districts of India'
Focus STATE: UTTAR PRADESH
Friday, 11 February 2022 | 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

PROGRAMME

3:00 PM-3:05 PM	Opening Address by Dr. Yogesh Srivastav, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI
3:05 PM-3:10 PM	Presidential Address by Mr. Pradeep Multani, President, PHDCCI
3:10 PM-3:15 PM	Theme Address by Mr. Pawan S. Jain, Chair – Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI
3:15 PM-3:20 PM	PHDCCI Presentation on Uttar Pradesh
3:20 PM-3:25 PM	Address by Mr. Pradeep Agrawal, Co-Chair-Uttar Pradesh Chapter, PHDCCI
3:25 PM-3:30 PM	Presentation on Incredible India
3:30 PM-3:40 P	Address by Mr. Mukesh Kumar Meshram (IAS), Principal Secretary – Tourism and Culture, Government of Uttar Pradesh
3:40 PM-3:50 PM	Address by Mr. Rama Kamaraju, Senior Consultant-Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog
3:50 PM -4:00 PM	Address by Mr. Sunil C. Gupta, Chairman – Northern Region, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)
4:00 PM-4:10 PM	Address by Mr. Vivek Pandey, President, Travel Trade Association of Uttar Pradesh (TTAUP)
4:10 PM-4:15 PM	Vote of Thanks by Mr. Rajan Sehgal, Co-Chair-Tourism & Hospitality Committee, PHDCCI



TS&AP CHAPTER

❖ On 4 February 2022, the IATO chapter (TS & AP) organised the new series of 'Ashurkana's' in Hyderabad. More than 20 'Ashurkhanas' were identified. No other tour operator offers these specialised tours.



GUJARAT CHAPTER

❖ Chapter Chair Gujarat met the New MD of Gujarat Tourism Alok Pandey along with two IATO members. They had good discussion with him on tourism prospects in Gujarat and also briefed him about IATO & handed him the IATO manual.

TS&AP CHAPTER

❖ GMR, Hyderabad is the first airport in India, to initiate the discussions and presentations to the Govt, "How to Increase Inbound Tourism". IATO (TS&AP) was part of that initiative.



❖ IATO chapter (TS&AP) trained MoT guides and took them on FAM tours to new destinations.





INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF TOUR OPERATORS

Offices and chapters across the country

