



IAAI Newsletter

July 2015, 1st Fortnight Issue

Another IAAI stalwart passes away



With profound grief we inform the sad demise of our beloved, T. K. Gopakumar, Director—IAAI (Southern Region) on 25 June 2015 at Chennai.

Mr T K Gopakumar, the founder Director of Magellan Travel Services P Ltd, Chennai was also the Founder-member & President of IAAI—Tamil Nadu since 2005. He was instrumental in IAAI's growth in Tamil Nadu to the current level. He had a spectacular tenure as President of IAAI-Tamil Nadu for 3 consecutive terms till 2011 & was elevated to the post of Director—IAAI in 2013, in charge of South India. Everyone knows him for his selfless dedication & commitment to the cause of IAAI & the travel industry. IAAI is grateful to him for his glorious contribution to our industry & to our association.

May His Soul Rest in Peace.

From the President's Desk...

Lufthansa Group's anti-Competitive and anti-Consumer Proposal

A Damocles sword :



Lufthansa Group's (LHG) has recently announced a proposal that, beginning on 1st September 2015, LH would surcharge its customers a new Distribution Cost Charge (DCC).

This would be in the form of a surcharge of 16 Euros on each ticket purchased from anywhere other than Lufthansa website, service centers or airport ticket counters. It could affect other Airlines, OTAs, Travel Agents, GDSs and Consumers around the world thereby disrupting the smooth and well-oiled system of operation that has been set up by ICAO and IATA for international air transportation.

All over the world, Travel Organizations and Agents Fraternities are worried and anxious over this proposal of LH. UFTAA and WATAA are discussing with their counterparts to try and find a solution to overcome this dilemma.

In India it will massively wipe out ordinary Travel Agents as no customer will pay an additional cost of Rs.1200 over and above the ticket fare. Since LH has dominance over the other Star Alliance Members, all of them may have to follow suit, including our National Carrier. This would mean that all airlines operating in India would eventually enforce similar surcharges. Thus, Lufthansa would be driving the final nail into the Travel Agents' coffin.

Yet, there is a ray of hope. Yes - a Protective Shield for the Indian Travel Agents.

Under the purview of the Indian Aircraft Rule 135, the IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI) is confident that such activities can be curbed and the Travel Agents Fraternity in India saved from this predicament. IAAI strongly opposes this proposal and will ensure that no foreign airline would be allowed to dominate and dictate terms in the Indian skies and implement such policies on Indian soil.

The historic Orders that IAAI had obtained from DGCA (No. AV.26012/2/2008-TE dated 05.03.2010), the subsequent Regulatory Directive of DGCA on 17.12.2012 and the MOCA Order (No. AV. 13030/34/2013-DT dated 16.9.2013) will safeguard the Indian Aviation Industry and will not to allow any airline to charge any additional amount or fees over and above the ticket fare.

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IAAI News

Amount of surcharges, taxes and other charges over the ticket fare is an airline's commercial decision, but the same should be within the ambit of the Indian National Law. Hence, in India, Lufthansa's pricing mechanism has to be necessarily within the definition of "Tariff" as provided in the Indian Aircraft Act and Rules.

The Interim Stay by the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala in October 2012 stalled Air India's and Jet Airways' collection of Transaction Fees from 16.07.2012 (reduction of Commission from 3% to 1% and collection of Transaction Fee as agreed to by TAAI and TAFI) along with the IAAI Case on the execution and implementation of the DGCA Order of 5th March 2010, which is pending Hearing on 15.07.2015.

There was a time when the vested interests in the Travel industry were taunting IAAI saying that "IAAI is only creating controversy and fighting Court Cases for nothing." Now, these very "FOR NOTHING" efforts ONLY can save the Indian Aviation Industry. IAAI will always stand for the Travel Agents' Cause and work within the National Law and as per the IATA Resolutions.

Our relentless fight against Transaction Fee over the years is now turning out to be very helpful.

IAAI will always stand for the Travel Agents' Cause and work within the Indian National Law and as per the IATA Resolutions.

DGCA has been alerted on this alarming situation with a request that protective steps be taken to enforce the National Law and mandate all Carriers operating in India to comply with the Indian Regulations.

When an airline is flouting the Indian National Law in the payment of Commission to Travel Agents as per the Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) directives, how can that airline charge distribution costs to a Travel Agent?

It is in the interests of the IATA -Accredited Travel Agents in India to take a firm decision not to succumb to any such anti-Agents policies by unfriendly airlines. Once they are united on this, no power on earth can break the Travel Agents. Please support IAAI's efforts and, TOGETHER, we can definitely clean up the Industry.

Aviation News

Vistara to commence daily flights to Bengaluru from Mumbai & New Delhi



Vistara will introduce two daily flights, connecting Bengaluru to New Delhi and Mumbai. The inaugural flight from New Delhi to Bengaluru will take off at 6.40 am from Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, while the Mumbai-bound flight will take off from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport at 10.10 am. Bengaluru is Vistara's second destination in South India after Hyderabad, and its tenth overall since it commenced operations in January this year.

Flight schedule :-

- Delhi to Bangalore : UK 889 : 6.40 am—9.30 am
- Bangalore to Delhi : UK 876 : 7.35 pm—10.20 pm
- Bangalore to Mumbai : UK 875 : 10.10 am—11.50 am
- Mumbai to Bangalore : UK 850 : 5.15 pm—6.55 pm

Vistara to start weekend flights on Mumbai-Goa route

Vistara will commence weekend flights between Mumbai and Goa from July 17, 2015. From September 14, however, the flights will operate daily. Bookings for the flights are open currently on the airline's website and travel partners. With the addition of the Mumbai-Goa flights, Vistara now operates 243 weekly frequencies connecting ten destinations - Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bagdogra, Guwahati, Goa, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Pune.



Flight details :-

Flight no.	Route	Departure	Arrival	Frequency	Effective
UK 820	BOM-GOI	13:35	14:40	Daily X1234	17/07/15-13/09/15
UK 801	GOI-BOM	15:20	16:35	Daily X1234	17/07/15-13/09/15
UK 820	BOM-GOI	13:35	14:40	Daily	14/09/15-26/03/16
UK 801	GOI-BOM	15:20	16:35	Daily	14/09/15-26/03/16

Aviation News

Air Pegasus launched Bengaluru-Madurai service



Low-cost carrier Air Pegasus began flying from Bengaluru, Karnataka to Madurai in Tamil Nadu from June 26, spreading its footprint to the fourth city across South India in its venture to provide direct air connectivity to Tier-II cities. The airline will operate a 66-seat twin engine turboprop ATR-72 thrice a week initially on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Bengaluru with a return flight on same day. The budget airline began booking for the new service with tickets priced at Rs 1,234 for the 80-minute flight. Taking off at 10.40 a.m. from Bengaluru, the aircraft will land at Madurai at noon. It will take off from there at 12.30 p.m. to return to Bangalore at 1.50 p.m.

Interactive Voice Response System at Bengaluru Airport



Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) has installed a custom-developed voice portal and Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB). All airport and flight-related information of airlines operating at KIAB can be received from this system. Passengers can get current information through IVRS assistance by dialing the toll free number 1800 425 4425. The IVRS is an automated telephonic system that interacts with callers, gathers information and transfers calls to the appropriate recipients. The IVRS has been interfaced with the airport's interface systems to automatically get flight data and information, which will be relayed to callers in English, Hindi and Kannada languages. This is in addition to the WhatsApp service +91 888 499 8888 already available to the passengers and real time flight information on the airport website www.bengaluruairport.com

Aviation News

SriLankan Airlines signs code-share agreement with Mihin Lanka for Kolkata-Colombo flights

SriLankan Airlines, the national carrier of Sri Lanka has entered into a code-share agreement with Mihin Lanka for the operations of flights between Kolkata and Colombo. With the commencement of the new code-share with Mihin Lanka, SriLankan Airlines continues to build seamless connectivity from its hub in Colombo across various regions in India. The code-share agreement complements existing code-shares on other Indian routes such as Madurai, Varanasi and Gaya.

The flights from Kolkata will be operated thrice weekly by Mihin Lanka every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The code-share will offer greater access to Colombo on Mihin Lanka, and seamless connections with SriLankan Airline's schedules to key destinations in Europe, Middle East and the Far East. SriLankan Airlines currently operates 86 flights per week to India with direct daily frequencies to the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Trichy, Trivandrum and Kochi.



AirAsia to launch Bangkok-Bengaluru flights

Budget carrier Thai AirAsia is going to start flying between Bangkok and Bengaluru, India from September 1. The airline will operate five nonstop flights a week and is kicking off the route with a fare promotion at THB1,490 one way, available for online booking until July 5.



Hospitality News

Accor Hotels to expand ibis hotel network



India continues to be a key growth market for Accor Hotels with strong demand across all segments. With regards to its economy hotel brand – ibis brand, Accor Hotels plans to open three new ibis hotels at Chennai, Goa and Hyderabad taking the existing number of 11 ibis hotels to 14 across India.

IHG unveils its first Holiday Inn in Chandigarh Panchkula



InterContinental Hotels Group

The InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has opened Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula - its first hotel in Chandigarh and 10th Holiday Inn hotel in India. Located on the Kalka Shimla Highway, the hotel provides easy access to a number of tourist attractions as well as commercial hubs, making it a great choice for both business and leisure travellers. The 127-room hotel is set at the foot of the Morni Hills, an area well-known for its views of the Himalayas, and next to the Panchkula Golf Course. The hotel has easy access to tourist attractions such as Sukhna Lake, Rock Garden, Cactus Garden and the famous Sector 17 market which is ideal for shopping and dining. For guests travelling for business, the hotel is located near the business districts of IT Park, Mohali, Baddi and Zirakpur. Chandigarh Airport and Railway Station are both within a short drive from the hotel. With eight meeting rooms and event spaces, Holiday Inn Chandigarh Panchkula is a great choice for business meetings as well as large scale events, for up to 500 people. A well-equipped fitness centre, spa and an outdoor swimming pool completes the experience for guests.

Mango.Hotels to open 55-keys property in Hubballi this July



mango.hotels

Intellistay Hotels Pvt. Ltd. that owns the Mango.Hotels brand of boutique independent hotels will launch its newest hotel in Hubballi. This will be the fifth hotel for Mango.Hotels in Karnataka. The Group already has three operational properties in Bengaluru, one in Mysuru and Mango.Hotels in Mangalore under development. The 55 keys property is located in a prime location along the Hubli-Dharwad corridor in Vidyanagar, opposite KLE Society's College of Education. It will come fully equipped with a 24 hour restaurant, a bar, fast & free Wi-Fi, a Gym, meeting and conference rooms and banqueting facilities.

Hospitality News

Luxury Tax & Entertainment Tax to go up in Delhi



The Delhi government has proposed a sharp hike in Luxury Tax and Entertainment Tax from the current 10 per cent to 15 per cent and from 20 per cent to 40 per cent, respectively. The sharp rise in the two tax components are expected to make hospitality and entertainment avenues costlier for the public in the city. One of the major announcements for the tourism sector in the state budget was the proposal to develop Yamuna River as a major picnic spot in the next five years.

Railway News

Automatic Refund of Railway e-Tickets on Train Cancellations



The Railways has decided to grant automatic refund of tickets on cancellation of trains, similar to waitlisted e-tickets.

There shall not be any requirement for cancellation / filing of ticket deposit receipt (TDR) for refund of e-tickets in case of cancellation of trains. The new refund system will come into effect shortly.

In case of cancellation of tickets, tickets booked at the passenger reservation system (PRS) counters shall continue to be refunded across the reservation counter as per the existing provisions.

Visa News

VFS Global to launch mobile apps for iOS & Android users



To enhance the experience of mobile device users, VFS Global plans to launch native apps for iOS and Android users in five to seven weeks. These apps will be available on Apple's App Store and Google Play Store for smartphones, iPads, and palmtops. VFS Global is exploring possibilities of extending this app to users of other platforms such as Windows and Blackberry. With the launch of the new apps, customers will be able to initiate and complete their visa application process through handheld devices, and would not be required to visit any particular website. These smart apps will provide end-to-end mobile visa application and service delivery - a first in the mobile-commerce space with enhanced user experience.

Kenya launches e-visas for Indian travellers

From July 2, 2015, major changes in Kenya's visa policy have come into place. Unlike in the past when Indians were able to get their visa on arrival in Nairobi or Mombasa, intending visitors will have to apply for an e-visa in advance, with processing days taking as much as a week. Travellers would be able to apply for entry visas via a dedicated portal www.ecitizen.go.ke from 2 July 2015. The e-visa process will then become compulsory from September 1, 2015.

How to apply :

1. Open website www.ecitizen.go.ke
2. Select register as a visitor
3. Once logged in, select Department of immigration services
4. Select submit application
5. Select Kenyan Visa
6. Select the type of visa & read the instructions
7. Fill in the application form
8. Pay using visa card, MasterCard & other debit cards
9. Await approval via email, then download & print the e-visa from your eCitizen account
10. Present your printed eVisa at the Port of Entry.

Photo Feature

Pamukkale, Turkey

Pamukkale, meaning "cotton castle" in Turkish, is a natural site in Denizli Province in southwestern Turkey. The city contains hot springs and travertines, terraces of carbonate minerals left by the flowing water. It is located in Turkey's Inner Aegean region, in the River Menderes valley, which has a temperate climate for most of the year. The ancient Greco-Roman and Byzantine city of Hierapolis was built on top of the white "castle" which is in total about 2,700 metres (8,860 ft) long, 600 m (1,970 ft) wide and 160 m (525 ft) high. It can be seen from the hills on the opposite side of the valley in the town of Denizli, 20 km away. Tourism is and has been a major industry. People have bathed in its pools for thousands of years. As recently as the mid-20th century, hotels were built over the ruins of Hierapolis, causing considerable damage. An approach road was built from the valley over the terraces, and motor bikes were allowed to go up and down the slopes. When the area was declared a World Heritage Site, the hotels were demolished and the road removed and replaced with artificial pools. Wearing shoes in the water is prohibited to protect the deposits.

Open Space

Lighter Moments

A teacher asked a student to write 55.

Student asked: How?

Teacher: Write 5 and beside it another 5!

The student wrote 5 and stopped.

Teacher: What are you waiting for?

Student: I don't know which side to write the other 5!

Thought for the Fortnight

A true leader does not search for consensus but moulds
consensus into all followers.

— Martin Luther King

IAAI Director Board

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