



# IAAI Newsletter

April 2016, 1st Fortnight Issue

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## IAAI News

### **Need for APJC-India reconstitution under IATA Resolution 818g**

It is indeed very depressing to see that Travel Agents in India are again being harassed and misguided by IATA and APJC-India in the Financial Guarantee matters. Today, many countries of the world have adopted the Default Insurance Programs (DIP), which does not require any cash deposits, collateral guarantees / securities or any kind of advance payment of premiums. After the Sales, as per the BSP payment schedule, the Travel Agent only has to remit nominal fees either based on the number of tickets issued or volume. And the Travel Agent also has the flexibility to increase or decrease the volume of business according to his/her own discretion and financial capacity.

When such an ideal financial system and facility as the DIP is available the world over, it is very strange that APJC-India or the Agents Representatives in APJC-India are implementing the Joint Bank Guarantee system? For the Travel Agents' benefit or the Associations' benefit? In the Indian Travel Industry scenario, none of the Travel Agents seem to be bothered about what is happening. Neither are they being treated or paid equally nor are they even concerned about the amenities and facilities that can be easily availed commonly by putting up a united front.

The recent circulars directing Travel Agents to join the JNB system obviously show that Travel Agents' business flexibility is within the hands of the promoters and controlled by a certain group. The open agenda itself paves the way to the truth that the entire system can be manipulated and may be used as an instrument to monopolize and consolidate the Industry according to their whims very shortly.

The narrative reason is very simple and logical. Today, Travel Agents are not being paid any commission by the major players. A few of the Travel Agents collect their remuneration through Transaction Fees by flouting the National Law. But, sooner or later, the Law will curtail that facility. Then, the only available means of survival for the ordinary Travel Agents would be to depend on Wholesalers, OTAs or Consolidators and be satisfied with the "baksheesh" doled out. In the JNB system, the Financial Guarantees as well as volume/targets of the business shall be decided and controlled under "favoritism", meaning that, the Financial Guarantor (the Association) will always have the upper hand & control through "favoritism" as the ordinary Travel Agents will be controlled with "halters and nose rings" which would ultimately lead to consolidation and monopolization.

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## IAAI News

The Travel Agents Fraternity has still not been able to understand the impending danger to their very existence as they are already losing their importance & usefulness and shall very soon be totally wiped out from the Industry with the introduction of NDC.

India was under IATA Res 810i (India specific) and migrated to Res 818g (Global) in June 2011. The IATA Passenger Agency Conference (PACnf) had issued new guidelines of January 2014 under Appendix "F" of Res 818g directing that the IATA Country / Regional Head be responsible for the reconstitution of APJC in the country and recommends APJC to have up to 18 members and mandates equal representation of all Travel Trade Associations with Chairman to be elected from these 18.

In the matter of this explicit reconstitution of APJC-India, IATA is culpable of breaking one of its own Laws – the IATA Resolution 818g.

This breach has been committed because IATA has failed to maintain an equal representation of 9 Members each from the Airlines and the Travel Agents in APJC-India. Whilst on the one hand the number of Airlines Members was increased to the stipulated 9, the Agents' Representation was retained at only 7 Members leaving IAAI without any representation in APJC-India. Apart from this, APJC-India has continued to function with an Air India official as its Chairman flouting the requirement of an election for this Post from amongst its 18 Members.

When all democratic efforts, methods and approaches to IATA failed to get IAAI inducted into APJC-India, legal proceedings in the Gurgaon District Court had to be resorted to. Aware that it was skating on thin ice, IATA raked up the question of the Courts jurisdiction. When that matter was judged in favour of IAAI, IATA then obtained a 'stay' over the proceedings from the Haryana & Punjab Court,

Now, the matter is with the Supreme Court with IAAI having filed a Special Leave Petition in retaliation and the Hearing is scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> April.

The need for the reconstitution of a new APJC-India, with all three Associations having equal representation is imperative as only such only an APJC can revert weekly payment to fortnightly payment, introduce DIP (Default Insurance) program to enable the Travel Agents to have freedom and flexibility in doing business or make necessary changes that affect their day to day work.

All the present problems facing the Indian Travel Agents Fraternity are undoubtedly attributable to APJC-India, its composition and its functioning. We are confident that IAAI will get a favourable verdict from the Supreme Court.

**Thought of the day:** IAAI had only requested induction to APJC as per the norms set forth by PACnf, Why are IATA, as also TAAI & TAFI who are the Agency Representative in APJC-India, so reluctant to comply with the IATA Res. 818g? What was the "BIG" deal to drag this Case to the Punjab-Haryana High Court that has now taken it to the Supreme Court of India??!!

## Aviation News

### Vistara to connect Chandigarh with Delhi & Hyderabad from May 2



Vistara has announced the addition of Chandigarh to its rapidly expanding network effective May 2, 2016. With this route launch, Vistara's network will cover 16 destinations across India. Chandigarh, is Vistara's sixth destination in North India after Jammu, Srinagar, Delhi, Lucknow and Varanasi.

The daily service will directly connect Chandigarh to both Delhi and Hyderabad (with same aircraft service between Chandigarh and Hyderabad via Delhi), and will also offer convenient connections via Delhi between Chandigarh and Bengaluru, Pune, Mumbai, Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad. This latest addition to Vistara's network reflects the airline's phase of growth with a focus on scaling up operations and strengthening the value proposition to suit customers' demand.

April will also see Vistara launch services to Srinagar, Jammu, and Kochi. With addition of these services the total number of weekly flights offered by the airline will increase to 400 and further reiterate the airline's commitment to Indian market.

### SpiceJet introduces scheme for frequent fliers



Low-cost airline SpiceJet has launched a pre-paid card scheme for its frequent fliers, offering them rewards points on purchase of products and services through the airline's website as well as online/offline shopping through its retail partners.

SpiceClub offers its loyalty club members opportunity to not just save money, but also get rewarded while spending more with the airline. The programme which can be availed for membership at a minimum of INR 599 offers benefits worth up to INR 5,999/-. These earned rewards can be redeemed on the airline's website as well as for online/offline purchase of partners' products and services.

The card comes with privileges such as a free ticket on birthday, up to 50% discount on domestic air tickets for a couple on anniversaries, free vouchers, priority check-in and updates about new offers, among others, for its members.

## Aviation News

### IndiGo to start non-stop flight between Chennai-Guwahati, Chennai-Jaipur & one stop flight for Chennai-Lucknow

# IndiGo

IndiGo is enhancing its customer experience in the domestic market with the launch of 16 new flights across its domestic network.

The airline will introduce operations on the Chennai-Guwahati route with its first non-stop flight, commencing on April 07, 2016, while also connecting Bengaluru to Chennai, Bengaluru to Guwahati and Delhi to Raipur with new flights, on the same day.

Effective April 09, 2016 IndiGo will enhance operations between Delhi and Bengaluru & Delhi and Ahmedabad with additional frequencies. Furthermore, effective April 12, 2016, the carrier will commence operations with its first flight on the Chennai-Jaipur route as well as the Chennai-Lucknow (via Bengaluru) route, while also beginning new flights on the Bengaluru-Lucknow and Bengaluru-Chennai routes.

With 741 flights connecting 40 destinations across the globe, these new flights will allow corporate and leisure travelers to experience the matchless on-time performance IndiGo is synonymous with, thus further consolidating IndiGo's position as the fastest growing airline in India.

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## Aviation News

### SpiceJet hikes Ticket cancellation charges



Budget carrier SpiceJet has increased its ticket cancellation charges by over Rs 350/-, days after its competitor IndiGo announced a flat charge of Rs 2,250 /-. The revised charges for cancelling a domestic ticket now stands at Rs 2,250/- while for an international air ticket, it is fixed at Rs 2,500/-. The new cancellation charges are effective from April 7, 2016.

Significantly, the move comes amid the civil aviation regulator — Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) — seeking an explanation on the reasons for a flat cancellation fee and a body of air passengers Air Passengers Association of India (APAI) threatening to approach fair trade regulator, CCI for an investigation into the alleged cartelisation.

The Gurgaon-based airline had earlier been charging a fee of Rs 1,899/- for cancelling a domestic ticket and Rs 2,349/- for an international air ticket. Most of the domestic carriers, including IndiGo, had increased the cancellation charges by a significant amount in February.

### GoAir introduces 'Boarding Pass Privileges'



GoAir, announced the launch of 'Boarding Pass Privileges' wherein GoAir passengers can now receive additional benefits on flying with the airline. 'Boarding Pass Privileges' program provides exclusive discounts and offers to passengers at partnering restaurants, hotels, beauty & wellness brands, flowers and gifting. Passengers can avail up to 50% discount at partner outlets and this program is applicable at all partner outlets, including those outside the airports.

Passengers just need to present their GoAir boarding passes at any of the partner outlets within 30 days of their travel to enjoy these exclusive benefits. Since the establishment of the program, GoAir has partnered with over 15 affiliates to offer variety and comprehensive benefits to its passengers.

## Visa News

### VFS Global launches '*On Demand Mobile Visa*' service for UK



In partnership with UK Visas and Immigration, VFS Global announces the launch of the 'On Demand Mobile Visa' service for UK visa applicants in India. Through this service, applicants located anywhere in India and applying for visas to the UK, can complete the entire visa application procedure and enroll biometric data within the comfort of their homes or offices.

The 'on demand' service can be delivered on request at the applicant's residence, office, or any location of choice (subject to risk assessment). The 'On Demand Mobile Visa' service will be convenient and economical for large groups of people travelling to the UK, such as group corporate employees, college campuses, or film production unit members, who do not wish to travel to visa application centres for this purpose.

The service is available by appointment only - on a day of choice (including weekends) and charged separately. To know more about this service, applicants can write to [userpay-servicesindia@vfshelpline.com](mailto:userpay-servicesindia@vfshelpline.com). Also, in another exclusive service for UK visa applicants, VFS Global has launched Home to Home (H2H) - a personalised service that provides chauffeur services and end-to-end assistance with form-filling and submission.

### South Africa plans to further ease visa norms for Indians; to open 4 Visa Application Centres



Having witnessed a sharp decline in Indian tourists from the end of 2014 through a major part of the last year, South African Tourism (SAT) is looking at reviving the numbers by easing visa norms and opening four more Visa Application Centres (VACs) in India.

This will take the total number of South Africa VACs in India to 13 from the existing 9. Travel agents lodging applications on behalf of clients was never a problem, but for travellers to visit to the VAC in the metro cities from far-flung places was an onerous task. The VAC being closer to their base will be an added advantage. The dip in tourist numbers to South Africa was majorly because of two factors—Ebola virus and introduction of immigration regulations. For business travellers, there has been a new dispensation of 10 year-visa, which allows them multiple travel to South Africa. For frequent visitors, travelling for leisure, Govt is working towards offering them three-year visa, which will also decrease the load on visa application centre process.

## Hospitality News

### Hyatt Regency Chandigarh launched



Hyatt Hotels & Resorts has announced the official opening of Hyatt Regency Chandigarh in Northern India. The hotel's 211 generously sized guestrooms, including 25 suites and seven Cabana rooms, are characteristic of Le Corbusier's design elements, including contemporary furniture, inspired artwork and colourful carpets. Urban Café is a multi-cuisine restaurant that features a selection of Northern Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, and Western cuisine. Opening in early June, Amaira Spa will provide a holistic approach to health and fitness by focussing on a balanced mind, body and soul. The hotel is central to the city's business hub and is part of a premium development that includes the Elante Mall and an office complex that houses key multi-national companies and diplomatic missions.

### The Fern Residency, Kolkata opens



The Fern Hotels and Resorts recently announced the opening of The Fern Residency, Kolkata a mid-scale business hotel in state of West Bengal. The hotel is managed by Concept Hospitality and is a unit of 'Project Vanijya Pvt Ltd'. It comprises 48 rooms, a multi cuisine restaurants, state of the art banquet hall and meeting room.

The Fern Residency, Kolkata is located in prime area of Rajarhat and easily accessible to city, industrial and IT hub and city mall. The hotel is 3.5 km from the airport and 19 km from the Howrah Railway station. The 48 exquisitely designed guest rooms reflect modern amenities and facilities. The rooms are classified into three categories - Winter Green, Winter Premium & Hazel Suite. Here, food is an experience too, with a wide selection of local and international cuisines available at 'XII Zodiac' all day dining along with 24 hours in-room dining.

### Holiday Inn launches properties in Chennai & Delhi



InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) has launched two properties, its second Holiday Inn Express in Chennai and first in New Delhi, as a part of its expansion plans. While the 136-room hotel in Chennai is set up in Old Mahabalipuram Road in the vicinity of IT hubs and tourist attractions, the 93-room hotel in New Delhi is near the International Airport Terminal 3.

## Hospitality News

### Latest info on Ocean Cruise

- **What's new in the cruise industry?**

Ships from mainstream lines continue to break size barriers as they compete against megaresorts on terra firma, with giant slides, skydiving simulators & cooking classes. If you enjoy Orlando's Disney World or Nassau's Atlantis resort, megaliners such as the 5479-passenger Harmony of the Seas—launching in May—



can dazzle. Increasingly, major lines enlist outside brands to sell their experience : Royal Caribbean offers Starbucks, Carnival offers Guy Fieri Burgers & Norwegian lures with entertaining Broadway shows like Legally Blonde. But size isn't everything. There also is a whole lot of action on the boutique & luxury side, most notably with the arrival of Viking Ocean Cruises last year. The industry is also capitalizing on the solo cruiser market. Cunard, Norwegian, Royal Caribbean & Holland America are building (or adapting existing) ships with a few smaller cabins built for single occupancy.

- **For Seasickness are cruises a bad idea ?**

Most modern ships are well stabilized, but if you are concerned, over-the-counter medicines are available for mild cases. Book a cabin closer to the middle of the ship, where the rolling will be less pronounced. Also consider cruising the calmer waters of Alaska's Inside Passage or fjords of Norway. The Caribbean is more placid outside of hurricane season; during those months, captains can steer clear of major weather systems.

- **Is a Balcony worth springing for ?**

Almost everyone prefers a private veranda. But note that veranda sizes are shrinking. The newer ships from Princess & Norwegian have balconies that are less than four feet deep. "Inside" cabins are also evolving. A new option on several Royal Caribbean ships is "virtual balconies" - a floor to ceiling, high-definition screen (instead of window) that displays real-time views of the sea. Inside cabins aboard Disney's Dream & Fantasy feature faux portholes offering virtual sightings of animated Disney characters.

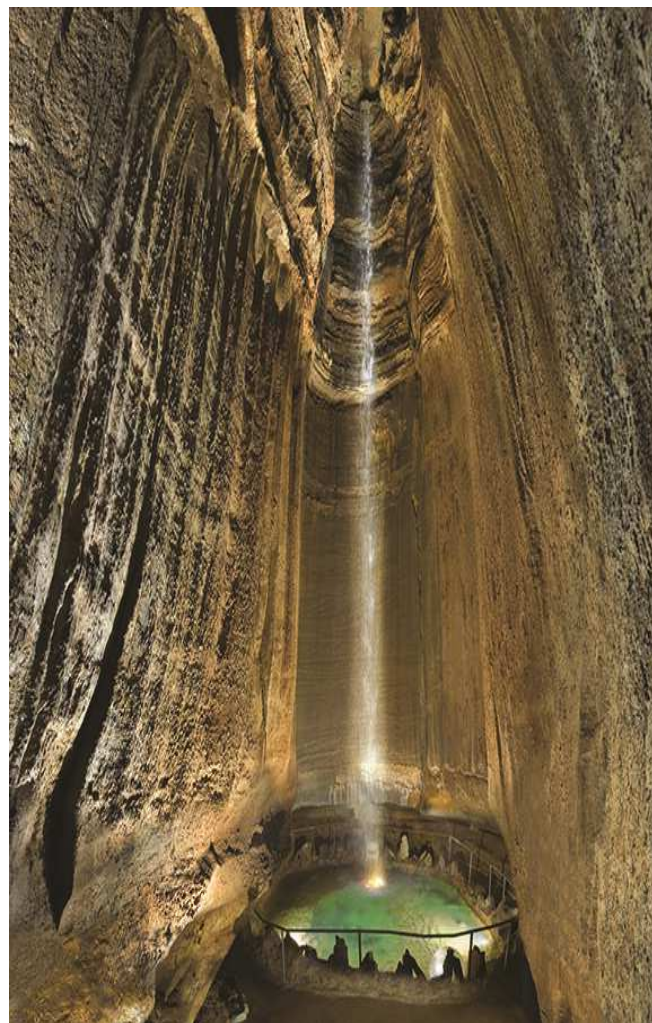
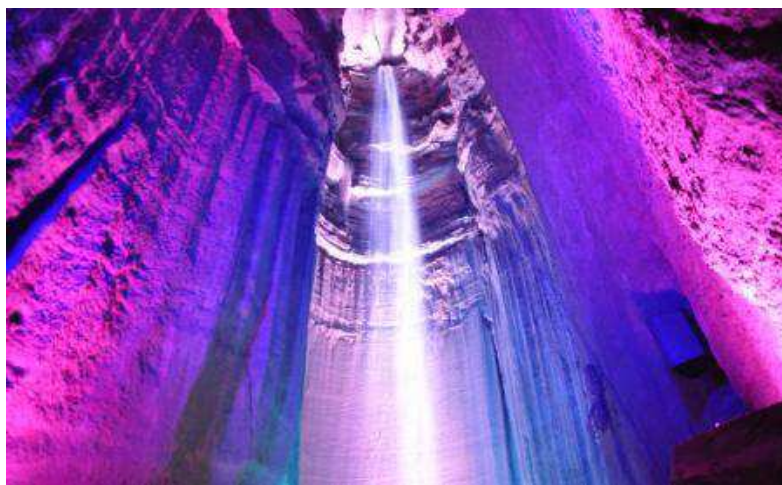
- **What new Geographical areas are cruise lines exploring ?**

Cruises to Australia, Asia & New Zealand are on the rise. Ships also are venturing north of the Arctic Circle; the National Geographic Explorer offers the cruise to Baffin & Ellesmere Islands, and Greenland. Multi-continent cruises also have become popular, often selling out many months in advance. For sheer value, though, such tried-and-true regions such as the Caribbean, Europe & Alaska may prove the best bet for the best deals. More exotic cruise itineraries tend to draw experienced passengers who are willing to pay a premium to enjoy new vistas & experiences.

**Source : National Geographic India**

## PHOTO FEATURE

### Ruby Falls, Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA



Ruby Falls is a 145-foot high underground waterfall located within Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, Tennessee in the United States. The cave which houses Ruby Falls was formed with the formation of Lookout Mountain. About 200 to 240 million years ago (in the Carboniferous period, at the end of the Paleozoic ERA) the eastern Tennessee area was covered with a shallow sea, the sediments of which eventually formed limestone rock. Ruby Falls Cave features many of the more well-known types of cave formations (or speleothems) including stalactites and stalagmites, columns, drapery, and flowstone.

The Falls are located at the end of the main passage of Ruby Falls Cave, in a large vertical shaft. The stream, 1120 feet underground, is fed both by rainwater and natural springs. It collects in a pool in the cave floor and then continues through the mountain until finally joining the Tennessee River at the base of Lookout Mountain. While Ruby Falls Cave combines with Lookout Mountain Cave to form the Lookout Mountain Caverns, the two caves were not actually connected by any passage. Ruby Falls Cave is the upper of the two and contains a variety of geological formations and curiosities which Lookout Mountain Cave does not have.

## Open Space

### Lighter Moments

Johnny had long heard stories of an amazing family tradition. It seems that his father, grandfather & great-grandfather had all been able to walk on water on their 21st birthday. On that special day, they'd each walk across the lake to the bar on the far side for their first legal drink.

So when Johnny's 21st birthday came around, he & his friend took a boat out to the middle of the lake & Johnny stepped out of the boat & nearly drowned. His friend just barely managed to pull him to safety.

Furious & confused, Johnny went to see his grandmother. "Grandma", he asked, "it's my 21st birthday, so why can't I walk across the lake like my father, his father before him?"

Granny looked deeply into Johnny's dull & troubled little eyes & said, "Because your father, your grandfather & your great-grandfather were born in December-January when the lake is frozen, & you were born in July."

### *Thought for the Fortnight*

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge & controversy.

— Martin Luther King Jr.

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