



# IAAI Newsletter

March 2016, IInd Fortnight Issue

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## IAAI News

### **WHY TRAVEL AGENTS ARE BEING MADE **APRIL** **FOOLS** EVERY DAY??!**

Every day, the traditional Travel Agents are being fooled and harassed. Make a reservation for any airline, the auto-set time limits will pre-determine the time span and the Travel Agent may be forced to rebook again and made to pay an enhanced penalty for GDS abuse. You issue a ticket - a penalty clause will be hidden somewhere to trap you.

**Unethical practices have become a part of the Travel Agent's daily harrowing routine these days.**

It all started with our National Carrier initiating 'zero' commission on behalf of the Star Alliance airlines. While we were getting 5% commission, the pioneers and 'leaders' of the Indian Travel Trade short changed us by accepting 'zero' commission. The Agents Fraternity was deceived by the vested interests by accepting 3% commission from Jet and Kingfisher and was totally deprived by consenting to 1% by Jet and Air India. If IAAI had not taken the matter of this further reduction of commission from 3 to 1% to the High Court of Kerala and not got an interim stay, Air India & Jet Airways would have also implemented 'zero' commission. Whereas, the same Jet and Air India are lavishly parting with commission to Travel Agents in many other countries.

**Our Regulatory systems are also 'auto-adjusted' to all type of violations.**

The failure by the Government Regulatory Authorities to enforce the aircraft rules and their own Orders that mandated commission as the Travel Agent's remuneration and which declared transaction fee as illegal have made a mockery of the Indian Aviation Laws. The Civil Aviation Ministry also let us down very badly by not intervening in the matter of "Zero" commission as it had done in the case of the Cargo Agents insisting that the airlines pay them 5% commission.

Historically, our Honorable Parliamentarians were also misled on these matters concerned with commission. At three different Question Hour sessions, the respective Civil Aviation Ministers confirmed to them that compliances of the National Laws were being regulated. The MoCA Secretary's Order was very specific - the nomenclature of "commission" may be interpreted as transaction fee, service fee or remuneration. But, it must be a part of the fare which forms the tariff. Airlines can sell ticket directly or through Travel Agents. But tickets being sold through Travel Agents or intermediaries must be remunerated as a part of the fare and tariff.

Today, most of the full service and low cost carriers are selling tickets through their appointed Travel Agents without paying any remuneration and forcing them to charge transaction fees for their survival, thereby indirectly flouting the law.

**There is more in the airline 'bag of tricks'!**

The amount of 5% of Agency commission that was a part of the ticket fare before the 'zero' commission was not reduced from the air Tariff on implementation of the zero commission and neither discounted to the traveling public nor paid to the agents. and, to add further injury, the 'zero' airlines continued parting with PLBs to the Consolidators and OTAs, forcing the ordinary Travel Agents to become slaves to those Consolidators and OTAs and accept their baksheesh.

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## IAAI News

### UDF CHARGES -

UDF charges are being collected by Travel Agents from customers and paid to the airlines along with the ticket costs. When the airlines remit these amounts to the Government, the airlines gets a commission at the rate of Rs.5 and Rs.2.50 respectively for international and domestic tickets.

### INTERLINE TICKETING -

Travel agents are denied commission even on interline ticketing though the issuing carrier gets 9% commission from the receiving carriers as per IATA resolutions. Many such interline passengers are being booked & ticketed through traditional Travel Agents.

### CONVENIENCE FEE / CHARGES -

The low cost carriers are collecting Rs.150 under a new taxonomy "convenience fee/charges". Whose pocket is it going to?

### FUEL SURCHARGE -

Airline Fuel surcharges that started at US\$140 per barrel, crossed the standardized price of \$60, dropped to \$30 and have fallen even further now. In spite of the drastic fall in ATF prices, the airlines are not proportionately reducing Fuel surcharge from the fare, but continue to apply the same rates at the higher ATF costs prevalent earlier. Fuel surcharge under 'YQ' tax code is neither reportable to IATA nor to any government. Today, airlines are making more than 30% profit from reduction in fuel prices. It is not, therefore, surprising that even our National Carrier, too, has reported marginal profits!

### FARE DISPARITY -

The travelling public as well as agents are being misled daily on the disparity of fares. On many occasions, the traveling public, who depend on agents for ticketing, find themselves stuck with the difference in prices offered by agents and airlines websites. It appears that airlines do not have any trust in the Agents' Fraternity though they are the real promoters for their own business. Often, the principal itself becomes a competitor here. Even airlines now publish advertisements showing that their favored Consolidators and OTAs are the only sales outlets for them.

### A TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT? -

IATA and the Travel Agent Representatives in APJC-India, during the last one and half decades, have claimed to have held marathon discussions claiming that the dialogues were for the Travel Agents to have "win-win" situation. The Travel Agent Representatives in this Regulatory body of IATA have, unfortunately, become "yes men" for certain airlines and IATA and, ultimately, the Travel Agent are taking the brunt of such actions.

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## IAAI News

### **A look at the damages and destructions done to the Travel Trade Industry.**

#### **TAP -**

TAP was introduced by IATA thru APJC on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to immediately circumvent the DGCA Order of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010 mandating commission to Travel Agents. TAP may be is permitted only through a General Concurrence by airlines that has still not been implied or complied with in India.

#### **ADM -**

Agents were misguided on matters related to these debit notes. IATA resolution 818g mandates that the APJC in a country is responsible to formulate and streamline the ADM policies and system abuses. Instead, our Travel Trade leaders are still abusing IATA policies and pass off the blame on airlines and GDS companies.

#### **WPS -**

The same misguidance has been done with the weekly payment system. Our own Travel Trade leaders have deliberately misguided agents by misinterpretation of the Rules. India is economically and financial very strong and does not have any rescission problem and our currency is still very strong. Even a debt-ridden country like Greece is still enjoying monthly payments and almost 62 countries do still have the fortnightly payment system.

#### **FINANCIAL GUARANTEES -**

Financial guarantees are made rigid and complicated in India and there is no transparency. IATA, through BSP, along with APJC-India, regulates and controls the financial guarantees. Premiums are negotiated by the Agent Representatives and IATA processes the invoices and collects premiums through BSP. Initially, premium was only 0.7% when started by the Associations and was later increased to 1 and finally 1.3%. The fraud that is taking place was exposed through an RTI record from United India Insurance Company that had parted with Rs.5.83 crore as commission to an agent in Mumbai on account of the agents insurance guarantee. They had changed insurance company - UIIC to IFFKO Tokyo, as Private Companies do not fall under RTI regulations. The thief is on the ship itself.

The Agents have been again misguided about the joint bank guarantee system. Many countries do have DIP (Default Insurance program) which does not require any cash deposits, advance premiums or any mortgages. In India, Associations have become mini-bankers and collect 15% fixed deposit for agents participation in JBG facilities. The vested interests are using tactful pressure tactics in financial guarantees and forcing the agents to opt for JNB.

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## IAAI News

### NDC and role of UFTAA -

The NDC and the UFTAA role is a farce as NDC does not have any clarity or transparency yet. UFTAA claiming to be the Representative Body of Travel Agents Associations around the world, has become the spokesperson propagating and promoting NDC on behalf of IATA and airlines.

NDC has yet to clarify on PSA agreements, terms and conditions on remuneration and dependability on client profiles. Today, agents are being misguided by UFTAA and their associates.

### Need for Agents education: -

Agents are still kept in the dark. Many of the Travel Agents still do not know their rights or on the governance of IATA Resolutions. The vested interests are very cautious not to educate the Members on IATA resolutions and implications or manipulations. The leaders often blame it on the airlines and/ or IATA. The agents are always attracted with 5-star parties or some overseas FAM trips without actually knowing who the sponsors are and what their intentions are.

### Need for APJC-India reconstitution under Res 818g

Misleading is the curse of our industry. India was under Res 810i (India specific) and migrated to 818g (global) in June 2011, but IATA continued same APJC of 14 members with AI Chairman. PAConf new guidelines of Jan 2014, Appendix "F" recommends to have members up to 18 and mandates equal representation of all Travel Trade Associations and Chairman to be elected from the 18. Also, PAConf has directed IATA Country/Regional head to be responsible for reconstitution of APJC in that country.

Accordingly, IAAI had approached IATA for induction into APJC-India at par with the other 2 Associations. When all democratic efforts & methods failed, we had approached Gurgaon District Court. Surprisingly IATA submitted an affidavit stating that IATA does not have any offices in Northern India (jurisdiction) and claimed that TAAI and TAFI are the truly represented stakeholders. IATA even produced a fraudulent letter to the Court which led IAAI to file a Criminal case against IATA. When IAAI succeeded in establishing the IATA jurisdiction and while proceeding in the Case further, IATA, shockingly, was able to get a stay over the proceedings from the Haryana & Punjab Court. Now, the matter is with the Supreme Court.

**From all the above facts, is it not evident that the Travel Agents in India are being misguided and misled every day??!!**

But, many questions still remain unanswered. Why IATA is refusing IAAI participation in APJC-India? Why IATA is standing only for TAAI & TAFI? Why TAAI and TAFI are silent on this matter? What is their interest in keeping IAAI out of APJC and participating in APJC meetings as silently spectators? Is there a mutual understanding - a quid pro quo, perhaps? You do a favor for me and I'll do a favor for you? You scratch my back and I'll scratch your back?

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## IAAI News

( Note :- APJC-India was formed in 2000 under Res 810i India Specific, with 14 members and an additional member from Air India as the Chairman. IATA regularized and globalized APJC's under 818g with 18 members and mandated that Chairman to be elected from the 18. India migrated to 818g in June 2011. APJC in India , when formed, there was only around 40 airlines operating in India and today we have crossed double in India with many major carriers like Emirates and Etihad. On agents' part, associations increased to 3 from 2 and interestingly Res 818g specifies 9 representations to agents, which can be equally shared by the 3 national associations)

The Travel Agents Fraternity does not appear to be aware of the magnitude of the dangers they are going to face with the ordinary medium-size Agents facing an insurmountable existential crisis. This is the time that all the Travel Agents have to unite and stand together against the APJC-India policies. However unfavorable the situation or APJC-India policies may be now, they must not allow it to weaken the fighting spirit of the traditional Travel Agents.

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.

The need of the hour is reconstitution of a new APJC under Appendix F with all 3 Associations having equal representation with knowledgeable and dedicated members. Such an APJC only can revert weekly payment to fortnightly payment, introduce DIP (Default Insurance program) to enable agents to have freedom and flexibility in doing business or make necessary changes that affect their day to day work.

**OUR PRIORITY IS OUR SURVIVAL - regaining travel agents remuneration as stipulated in our Aircraft Rules 1937!**

True to the 'Vision & Mission' from its very inception in 2001, IAAI has continued to fight a lone Crusade against these injustices and for the greater good of the Fraternity and for the survival of the ordinary IATA Travel Agents. Has any of you ever wondered why all the Leaders in the Travel Industry, who always talk about agents commission, are not coming forward to support IAAI's fight for survival.....??!!

And now, going on in the High Court of Kerala, is the final hearing of the IAAI Case requesting the implementation, enforcement and execution by DGCA of its own Order of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010 and to get at least 5% commission for our survival.

Friends, please do not be fooled anymore. Come - let us together make a difference!

Regards,  
for IAAI

**Biji Eapen**  
**National President**

## Aviation News

### Air India announces its Summer Schedule for 2016



Air India's Summer Schedule for 2016 comes with increased frequencies and new routes for its passengers. Effective March 27th, this schedule will offer a daily return flight from Bengaluru to Trivandrum which has been planned by A321. The

flight from Bengaluru will depart at 0700 hrs, while the return flight will depart from Trivandrum at 0855 hrs.

On its international routes, Air India will start operations on the Delhi-Vienna sector with flights operating thrice a week on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday by B787 commencing April 06, 2016. The Delhi-Vienna-Delhi flight will have a convenient departure at 1400hrs from Delhi arriving Vienna at 1845hrs. The return flight will have a night departure from Vienna at 2245hrs arriving Delhi at 0925hrs (+1).

Air India is increasing its frequency on the domestic sectors by adding a daily return flight on the Mumbai - Bhopal sector. The flight will offer day-return facility to its passengers with a flight from Mumbai departing at 1930 hrs. The return flight from Bhopal will take off at 2130 hrs. Frequency on the Delhi- Pune sector is also being enhanced with another flight added to and from Pune. The flight from Delhi will depart at 1830 hrs whereas, the flight from Pune will depart at 2120 hrs.

Passengers looking for more options to Punjab will also be able to enjoy the fourth frequency with return flights on Delhi (Del)-Amritsar (ATQ) sector. The flight from Delhi will depart at 0500 hrs while the return flight from ATQ will depart at 0650 hrs. The existing thrice a week flight from Delhi to Milan has been increased to four flights per week. Customers flying to Russia will now have a facility of a third frequency on the Delhi-Moscow sector. Passengers travelling on the Mumbai-Delhi-Hong Kong-Seoul/ Osaka route and back will now have the comfort of the state-of-the-art B787 aircraft. The same aircraft will operate on the Mumbai-Delhi and Delhi-Mumbai leg of AI 310/ 314 and AI 315/317.

To continue expanding its 'Connect India' program, Air India will now offer new routes to Vijaywada from Bengaluru with five return flights a week on its ATR 42. Kolkata will also be connected to Agartala by an ATR 42 with five return flights per week. Tourists to Himachal have a daily frequency from Delhi to Kullu in lieu of the existing six days a week. The Delhi-Kullu route will be operated by ATR 72 aircraft.

## Aviation News

### Jet Airways New Delhi—Muscat flight

#### Schedule of the new daily flight to Muscat till March 26, 2016

#### DELHI- MUSCAT- DELHI

Flt No.	Dept Arp	Dept Time	Arvl Arp	Arrv Time
9W 598	DELHI	23:15	MUSCAT	01:30
9W 597	MUSCAT	02:30	DELHI	07:00

#### After March 27, 2016

#### DELHI - MUSCAT - DELHI

Flt No.	Dept Arp	Dept Time	Arvl Arp	Arrv Time
9W 598	DELHI	23:25	MUSCAT	01:45 (+1)
9W 597	MUSCAT	02:45	DELHI	07:10

## Ethiopian Airlines commences second daily flight from Delhi on March 27



Ethiopian Airlines has commenced its second daily frequency from Delhi starting from March 27. With this addition, the national carrier of Ethiopia, a Star Alliance airline, has increased its frequency to 28 flights from both Delhi and Mumbai to Addis Ababa. Ethiopian Airlines has announced some attractive introductory offers for Indian travelers. For travel trade, Ethiopian will be offering an additional 3% commission on IATA fare. The revived aviation bilateral between India and Ethiopia has helped in increasing the capacity from Delhi to double daily.

As per the bilateral, the airline would also be entitled to open new routes into two cities in South India, and the airline would soon open operations either Chennai or Bengaluru, after proper market study. Ethiopian has doubled their capacities between India and Addis Ababa in the last one year. Being the Star Alliance member, Ethiopian has strong synergies with Air India, and passengers can travel to any African destination from any city in India with a single ticket.



## Aviation News

# Thai AirAsia launches 1st ever daily direct flight from Kochi to Bangkok



Thai AirAsia announced the first ever daily direct flights from Kochi to Bangkok Don Mueang starting from May 17, 2016. To celebrate the announcement of new flights, promotional fares to Bangkok are available starting from INR 2999 per way.

As the first airline to launch a direct flight between Kochi and Bangkok, airline will offer more convenience with a short 4 hour flight. Beyond Bangkok, Thai AirAsia's amazing connectivity allows for travellers to connect to over 20 destinations in Thailand including world famous beaches in Phuket and Krabi, and lush green mountains in northern Thailand's Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, among many other amazing cities. Beyond Thailand, passengers can also easily hop to other international destinations including Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Siem Reap, Myanmar, Mandalay and Luang Prabang among many other cities. From Bangkok, AirAsia passengers can conveniently connect to Phuket, Krabi, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai via Bangkok Don Mueang Airport with the airline's Fly-Thru service which allows travellers to check-through their bags to their final destination. From Kochi, this Fly-Thru service will be available in the near future and is targeted to be available for booking starting from mid-April 2016 onwards.

## Advertisement Section

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South: Chennai, Bangalore, Coimbatore

## Aviation News

# Hyderabad Airport User Development Fees (UDF) to increase



Hyderabad International Airport Ltd plans to seek an increase of more than 60% on user development fees(UDF) levied on passengers flying out of the airport.

Hyderabad airport already levies the highest user development fees or UDF in the country, at INR 430 per domestic ticket and INR 1,700 for international travel. UDF is levied by Indian airports to fill the gap between the investment made to develop the infrastructure and the revenue earned from the project. The levy is calculated on a "cost plus" basis. This means that the passenger has to compensate the airport operator for its operating costs, depreciation and taxes plus a reasonable profit margin that covers its cost of debt and equity. The charges are up for revision every five years, known as control period. In the case of Hyderabad airport, the control period ends on March 31.

## Visa News

### Turkey launches Visa Application Centres in 16 Indian cities



The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey has launched Turkey Visa Application Centres across 16 cities in India (effective from April 1, 2016). Travelers from India can now apply for Turkish visas at centres, operated by VFS Global, located in New Delhi, Mumbai, Gurgaon, Jalandhar, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Goa, Puducherry, Kochi, Trivandrum, Chennai & Hyderabad. Earlier the Turkey visa was facilitated at three centres pan India and with new partnership the same has gone up to 16 locations pan India.

### New US visa rule extends stay for international students



The United States has changed rules for student visas by which international students will now be eligible to stay for three years after finishing their degrees for training potentially leading to employment.

Students earning degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) from accredited higher education institutes and employed by employers participating in E-Verify will only be eligible for the optional practical training (OPT) program. The new rule comes into effect from May 10, 2016, and seven months longer than the previous 17-month rule. The extension has been made to widen the window of time to match fresh graduates with employers looking for skilled talented workers.

The students previously had to apply for an H-1B, given by lottery and capped at 65,000 with 20,000 reserved for those with advanced degrees. As per the new rule, a STEM OPT student would not replace a full-or part-time, temporary or permanent US worker and that the salary offered would be commensurate to the American workers.

## Hospitality News

### 'Flying Aces' launched at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi



The ultimate record-breaking roller coaster 'Flying Aces' launched recently at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, delivering a unique, adrenaline-fueled experience for roller coaster lovers and thrill seekers alike. This coaster will surprise guests with never-before experienced thrills and it further cements Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's reputation as a pioneer in the region's leisure and entertainment industry.

### Marriott International reaffirms commitment to merge with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide

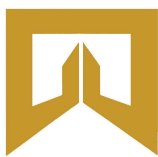


Marriott International, Inc. reaffirmed its commitment to acquire Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. to create the world's largest hotel company. The combined company will offer stockholders significant equity upside and greater long term value driven by a larger global footprint, wider

choice of brands for consumers, improved economics to owners and franchisees leading to accelerated global growth and continued strong returns. Marriott is confident that the previously announced merger agreement is the best course for both companies.

**On March 11, 2016 Starwood notified Marriott that it had received an unsolicited indication of interest in purchasing Starwood from a consortium of potential investors, led by Anbang Insurance Group. Marriott notes that this unsolicited indication of interest is highly conditional and non-binding. Marriott granted Starwood a waiver to expedite its evaluation of the letter from the interested consortium.**

### ITC opens WelcomHeritage Haveli Dharampura in Delhi



Continuing the trend of restoring heritage buildings and converting them into hotels, ITC has launched its latest offering in the WelcomHeritage series in old Delhi's Chandni Chowk. Called the WelcomHeritage Haveli Dharampura, the hotel takes its name from the 130-yearold haveli. In addition to its historical roots, what makes 'Haveli Dharampura' an integral addition to the WelcomHeritage portfolio is the fact that this is the only heritage hotel of its kind in New Delhi and the first to be established under a professional hospitality brand. Studies indicate that that leisure travellers are seeking experiences that enable them to partake in the culture and history of destination.

## Hospitality News

### No Luxury Tax on hotel rooms below INR 1,500 in Delhi



Delhi government has proposed to increase the threshold limit for Luxury Tax on hotel accommodation from the current INR 750 to INR 1,500. Luxury Tax will not be applicable for hotel rooms charging below INR 1,500 in the city. The proposal has come in Delhi Government's second budget for 2016-17 presented in the Delhi Assembly.

### Shangri-La's Hambantota Resort & Spa to open on June 1 in Sri Lanka



Opening on Sri Lanka's stunning southern coastline on June 1, 2016, Shangri-La's Hambantota Resort & Spa, Ambalantota, Sri Lanka will offer unrivalled amenities and experiential activities and set a new standard for hospitality in the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean.' Spanning 145 acres, the 300-room beachfront resort will boast lush tropical gardens, an 18-hole golf course, an artisan village and a wide array of innovative dining, event and entertainment options. Shangri-La's Hambantota Resort & Spa's guestrooms include 26 suites with private butler service and range from 48 to 240 square metres. The spacious rooms enjoy expansive views of lushly landscaped gardens; calming neutral tones and carved-wood fixtures are accented by sophisticated, cool turquoise hues, fusing together a contemporary yet original Sri-Lankan style.

### Two 5-star Novotel resorts open in North Goa



Grand Mercure Goa Shrem Resort and Novotel Goa Shrem have been rebranded as Novotel Goa Resorts & Spa to firmly position a consolidated premium Novotel presence for travellers & explorers of Goa. The two 5-star Novotel properties are located just off the bustling street of Candolim in North Goa.

The two Novotel properties include 7 bars and restaurants, unique five star experiences, a massive kids club with fun activities, 20,000 sq. ft. of meeting & banquet spaces, the La Brise seaside restaurant on Candolim beach, all as part of a 271 room experience under the Novotel brand. Rest & relaxation reigns at these two properties in Goa as they offer a comforting spa, says the release. The resort's lobby is now equipped with Novotel signature Play Table (a 360-degree digital experience), an easy work corner, a new Deli shop, a gaming zone, and Apple I Mac computers in the lobby. The resort is also upgrading its suites, and adding an additional Italian-Mediterranean restaurant – Vera Cibo to their Food and Beverage services.

Appreciating the needs of today's business travellers, the Novotel Goa Resorts & Spa has a business centre, three board rooms and four meeting rooms which are equipped with the latest audio-visual and communication technology according to the release. The expansive 8000 sq. ft. outdoor convention space is an ideal venue for MICE and weddings.

## Hospitality News

### A trip to Goa will now cost more



Tourists visiting the sunny beaches of Goa this year will have to shell out more for their vacation as the State Government has proposed to increase taxes on hotels, travel and alcohol in the budget. The new taxes will come into effect in August.

The Government has imposed a luxury tax of 6% on hotels that quote prices as low as Rs. 751 for a night's stay, in a bid to rein in establishments renting out rooms for less than Rs. 1,000 through online portals, thereby causing a loss to the exchequer. The Government has also fixed luxury tax on rooms exceeding Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 5,000 at 9% and 12%, respectively.

The state has proposed to increase VAT on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to 18% from 12.5%, which is likely to make air travel out of Goa expensive by as much as 10-15%. Another major blow for the hotel industry in Goa is the reduction in exemption of luxury tax on hotels during the off season -from June to September -to 25% from 60% earlier.

### Lords to launch Boutique Resort in Thrissur



Lords Hotel & Resorts has announced the signing up of luxury boutique resort Cheruthuruthy Eco Garden in Thrissur, Kerala. Situated on the banks of Bharathapuzha, second largest river in Kerala, the scenic resort offers guests a blissful experience while staying in abundant natural beauty.

Spread in 20 acres, this 57 room luxury resort offers a stunning view of the river. Underlying its luxury quotient, the property boasts of butterfly farms, two swimming pools and specially built Couple Spa.

The tree house and the honeymoon cottage by the pond is another USP of property. Besides, for larger families wishing to stay together the resort offers a separate Villa consisting of four bedrooms. Further, the resort is also a perfect destination for devotees visiting the famous Guruvayoor temple in Thrissur.

## Hospitality News

# Two 5-star Novotel resorts open in North Goa



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**PHOTO FEATURE****Wind Cathedral, Namibia**

The Wind Cathedral is a series of desert sand formations. These sand dunes are found mainly in the Sossusvlei region of the Namib Desert. It is in the southwestern portion of the country of Namibia. The high sand dune formations in this area are what makes this part of the Namib desert an attractive destination for tourists. The Namib Desert has more or less consistent weather in the daytime at around 45°C (113°F), so any time of the year is an equally good time to visit. However, at Windhoek, a visit to Namibia is best from September to October. This is when local animals gravitate towards their watering holes, and are thus more visible to tourists.

The Wind Cathedral area in southern Namib desert has the highest, and most formidable looking, sand dunes therein, and these range from pink to intense orange in color. Some of these colorful sand dunes have heights reaching more than 300 meters. The sand dunes also have varying forms and patterns, creating a look akin to cathedrals with their towering roofs in the sky. The Red Desert area also exhibits similar dune formations with the Yellow Desert, both of which are within the Namib Desert as well. The series of petrified sand dunes there make for another destination in the Sossusvlei region of the park.



## Open Space

### Lighter Moments

Once upon a time the Government had a vast scrap yard in the middle of a desert.

Govt. said, "Someone may steal from it at night." So they created a night watchman position and hired a person for the job.

Then Govt. said, "How does the watchman do his job without instructions?" So they created a planning department and hired two people, one person to write the instructions, and one person to do time studies.

Then Govt. said, "How will we know the night watchman is doing the tasks correctly?" So they created a Quality Control department and hired two people. One to do the studies and one to write the reports.

Then Govt. said, "How are these people going to get paid?" So they created the following positions, a time keeper, and a payroll officer, then hired two people.

Then Govt. said, "Who will be accountable for all of these people?" So they created an administrative section and hired three people, an Administrative Officer, Assistant Administrative Officer, and a Legal Secretary.

Then Govt. said, "We have had this command in operation for one year and we are \$18,000 over budget, we must cutback overall cost."

So they laid off the night watchman.

### *Thought for the Fortnight*

Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important.

— Janet Lane

## IAAI Director Board

1. Mr Biji Eapen, National President : Speedwings Travel & Cargo Pvt. Ltd., Kochi.
2. Mr V L Jekannathan, National Gen. Secretary (Madurai) Pvt. Ltd., Chennai : All India Travel Agency
3. Mr Salvadore Saldanha, National Treasurer : S V Airlinks Pvt Ltd., Mumbai.
4. Mr H. S. Chawla, Director—NR : Speed Air Travel Agents & Tour Operators, New Delhi.
5. Mr Rajendra Churiwala, Director—ER Kolkata. : Survottam Travels (P) Ltd.,
6. Mr Naresh Rajkotia, Director—WR : Madhuram Travels & Tours, Mumbai.
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