



IAAI Newsletter

October 2016 — 1st Fortnight Issue

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IAAI News

BSPLink Subscription for enhanced version

IATA & our Travel Agents Representatives in APJC-India have let down the Accredited Travel Agents yet again.

The circular dated 5th October from IATA Singapore directs the implementation of the 2-tier BSP link Access effective from 1st Jan 2017, Agents can opt either “Enhanced User Account” or “Basic User Account”. The ‘Enhanced’ account will be chargeable @ USD 30 per location per month, whereas ‘Basic’ account is commonly free with very limited access. This “charge” is not yet notified in Gulf countries or anywhere else and in India the decision is NOT unilateral.

An Agent opting for the “Enhanced User Account” has to pay annually US\$238 for IATA accreditation and US\$360 for this BSP linkage per location (local taxes extra). Including tax, one has to pay Rs. 48139 per annum to IATA in exchange for “ZERO” Commission from the airlines! Logically an Agent has to spend Rs.4012 just for exhibiting the “IATA Logo”.

RA- Refund Application is one of the fundamental requirements in an Agent’s day-to-day activities and this facility is being enjoyed by the ordinary Travel Agents. Under the new scenario, IATA has shifted this RA facility to the “Enhanced User Account”, thereby making it chargeable.

Now, the ordinary agent is between the devil and the deep sea. The Logic is simple - it is hard to make both ends meet and leaves only two options - either surrender or become franchisee to a big player.

As per IATA Regulatory system, IATA or BSP cannot unilaterally introduce any commercial charges in any country without the approval and authority of the respective APJC of that country. Hence, it is obviously clear that the average and ordinary Travel Agents are being sold out by their own Agent Representatives in APJC- either knowingly or unknowingly.

One should read IATA-BSP circular of 31st August 2016 together with that of 5th Oct 2016. The IATA circular on 31stAug, very specifically declared that BSP billing software (IATA’s single global software - IBSPs) training is being offered jointly with TAAI & TAFI - a well planned gimmick to “amplify” the drama. The Training session turned to be a total eye-wash as NO mention was made on charges or shifting of RA facilities to the “Enhanced User Account”. Very tactfully, IATA had issued their circular on 5th October, making RA facilities chargeable. None of the participants could sense or foresee this catastrophe!

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IATA-accredited Travel Agents in India vide BSP Manual 2011 has guaranteed and mandated the Refund Application for the survival of an agent to handle refunds or cancellations.

The term, “Enhanced User-link”, should mean significantly improved, value added and superior quality. On the contrary, here, facilities like Refund Applications, ADM/ACM Requests which are being commonly used as the basic functions, have been shifted from ‘Basic User Account’ to new ‘Enhanced User Account’ and made chargeable, which is illegal and arbitrary.

Since the last 8 years, IATA-accredited Travel Agents are being targeted systematically by these vested interests- either directly by Associations or hand-in-glove with IATA, APJC and certain airlines.

- Minimum Bank Guarantee of Rs 20 Lakhs in 2002 through APJC-India
- ‘Zero’ Commission & Transaction Fee model in 2008 (TAAI & TAFI)
- APJC allowed big players to negotiate with insurance providers directly on premiums (APJC)
- TAP (Ticketing Authority Process) illegally implemented on 08.03.2010 to circumvent DGCA Order 05.03.2010 mandating commission (APJC)
- Reduction of 3% to 1% commission in July 2012 (TAAI & TAFI)
- Weekly Payment System (WPS) illegally implemented in 2012 (APJC)
- Termination of BSP Cheque collection- APJC illogically enforced in Jan 2016
- Sidelined insurance guarantee with higher premium and other regulatory control - to promote associations Joint Bank Guarantee (APJC)
- Now, betrayed agents by allowing IATA to charge US\$30 monthly for BSPlink basic services

A simple question now emerges which no Indian Travel Agent seems to be asking: Are our Travel Agents Representatives in APJC-India not feeling guilty about being party to such devious maneuvers against the whole Travel Agents Fraternity in India?

Air Canada To Launch Flights Between Toronto And Mumbai



Air Canada is all set to launch thrice weekly flights between Toronto and Mumbai, India. The non-stop, year-round service will be operated from July 1, 2017 using a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. This is Air Canada's third route to India after Toronto-Delhi service that began last fall and a new seasonal Vancouver-Delhi service commencing next month. This will be the only non-stop service between Canada and Mumbai and with it Air Canada now offers the best coverage of any carrier operating in the Canada-India market.

Toronto-Mumbai will operate year-round with Air Canada's state-of-the-art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner. The aircraft features 30 International Business Class lie-flat seat suites, 21 Premium Economy and 247 Economy Class seats, with upgraded in-flight entertainment at every seat throughout the aircraft.

New terminal at Vadodara airport to be inaugurated on October 22



A new terminal built for international flights at Vadodara airport will be on October 22. The terminal at the airport in Harni, on the city outskirts, is spread over 18,120 sq mt and can handle 700 passengers (domestic plus international) per hour. It will have 18 check-in counters. The building, a steel structure, has been designed as per the Advance Building Management System. It has hi-tech security systems, energy-saving cooling mechanism, rainwater harvesting set up and super sensitive fire safety alarm. Currently, 10 flights operate everyday from the Harni airport which is not equipped to handle more than the existing number of passengers. However, the new terminal will help in accommodating additional flights and passengers. International flights for neighbouring countries will be available from the terminal, but there will be no direct service for the US or the UK as the runway length is not enough to accommodate big aircraft. No international flight has been announced yet.

GoAir to add six Airbus to its fleet by March 2017



Low-cost carrier GoAir has outlined plans to consolidate its domestic market presence with the addition of six Airbus aircraft to its fleet of 20 by March next year, while connecting to select overseas destinations by next summer.

Announcing Hyderabad as its 23rd destination in the domestic network, the airline would introduce daily flights connecting Hyderabad to Chennai, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata. Hyderabad will also be connected to Port Blair via Bengaluru, which is seen to provide leisure travellers additional options. The airliner, which operates with 20 aircrafts now, expects to add one aircraft per month and take its strength to 26 by March 2017. This will enable the airliner to expand its services from the present 144 to 180-190 per day by March 2017. Having ordered over 144 Airbus aircraft to be delivered by 2025, GoAir is keen to rapidly expand its presence and market share.

Chandigarh Airport set to go solar with Re-New Power



ReNew Power Ventures Private Limited, India's leading renewable energy company, recently signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Chandigarh International Airport (CHIAL) for solar installation. Once completed, the project will help CHIAL generate 8.4 million units of power annually and offset over 8,000 tonnes of carbon emissions annually. The power generated by the installation will be utilized for captive consumption of the airport and will reduce the cost of energy by 20%.



Jet Airways, is set to launch a daily service from Kozhikode to Sharjah. The new service will be introduced starting October 30, 2016. The outbound flight, 9W 208, will depart Kozhikode at 21.25 hrs and arrive in Sharjah at 23.55 hrs (local time). The inbound flight 9W 207 will depart Sharjah at 1620 hrs (local time) and arrive in Kozhikode at 21.45 hrs. The new service will make Kozhikode the third Indian city to be connected by Jet Airways to Sharjah, adding to the daily flights that the airline already operates to the Emirate from Kochi and Mangaluru.

Five-star hotels now offer digital check-ins



India's hospitality industry is moving towards e-check-ins, offering speedy and simplified processes to guests. For instance, if you have a reservation at the Accor, Marriott or Hilton in India, you could check in via their apps en route from the airport to the hotel. You just need to pick your room keycard from the front desk.

In some Marriott and Hilton properties in select countries, guests do not even have to collect the plastic keycard. They can unlock their rooms using their smartphones either by touching the handset on the door's pad or typing in the code received on their smartphone. Hilton and Marriott's digital key uses a Bluetooth connection to open doors.

At Accor and Hilton, guests can also check out through their smartphones. The hotel app allows guests to view their bills on a real-time basis, and they can make the payment electronically, say, through a mobile wallet, before checking out using their smartphone.

The Tatas-run Taj too is ushering in digital check-ins and check-outs, but in a different way. They will eliminate the front desk counters at their lobbies as they want to make lobbies like a cosy living room. Soon guests at the Taj will not have to queue up at the traditional front desk, the centrepiece of a hotel's lobby, to check in or check out. Hosts at the high-end chain will first escort guests to their rooms and do the check-in process over there using an iPad which will be equipped with a debit/credit card swiper. Likewise, Taj executives will check the guests out in their rooms instead of them thronging the front desk.

American chain Carlson Rezidor is considering to introduce e-check-ins at its Radisson Blu properties in the country. Some hotels plan to deploy kiosks in its lobbies on the lines of the ones at airports for flight check-ins.

Even though hospitality players are offering enhanced facilities in the form of digital check-ins, the hotel staff will be around in the lobby or at the front desk to assist guests in case of any requirements. The chain will not eliminate the front desk completely as guests should have the options either to connect in person with the front desk or go digital. Technology can reduce manual interventions and streamline processes but the role of front desk staff cannot be disregarded.

At the Oberoi, guests are checked in by hotel's executives in the privacy of their rooms using tablets and a credit card machine. In some cases, based on requests, guests are checked out by the staff in their rooms.

Goa Tourism introduces Duck Boat Tours



Goa Tourism successfully launched Amphibious Vessels (that operate both on land as well as water). These are also popularly known as Duck Boats. 7 are the first of its kind being used for civilian purpose (joy rides) in India. The amphibian joy ride service flagged off in River Mandovi. Full-fledged operations of the Duck Boat joy rides will begin in November and online bookings can be done on www.goa-tourism.com.

The amphibian vehicles have been manufactured by Goa based Amphibious Design (India) Pvt. Ltd. and will be used for operations in Goa by Amphibian Tours Pvt. Ltd. The amphibious rides will be carried out with 2 vehicles to begin with and 4 more will be added to the fleet in a phased manner. One designated pick-up point at Panjim will cater to the tours along 2 different routes. Each tour will be for an hour and 6 time slots will be scheduled for each vehicle in a day. The maximum capacity for each vehicle is 32 seats that will be charged at INR 500 per head to begin with and will later be increased to INR 750.

Circuit tours will operate from Panjim to Old Goa and Dr. Salim Ali bird sanctuary to showcase the natural and cultural treasures Goa has. These tours aim at entertaining and educating tourists about Goa's hinterland and its heritage. The vessels have been assembled in collaboration with Advanced Amphibious Design Inc Honolulu USA.

'Model' tag for five famous Maharashtra forts



The forts in Raigad, Rajgad, Sindhudurg, Panhala and Vijaydurg will be the first five in Maharashtra to be developed as "Model Forts" in the first phase of state Government's conservation plan. As part of the policy, the government has sanctioned Rs 500 crore for Raigad fort and its conservation work will start from next month. Govt is also trying to get a world heritage status for the Raigad fort. The forts in Maharashtra manifest the valour of the Maratha Empire. Of the over 350 forts in the state, most are located in the Sahyadri ranges of western Maharashtra. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had built the forts to defend his empire from enemies. It has also proposed the inclusion of Panhala in the model fort category and work on it will start soon. Maharashtra Government wants to replicate the Rajasthan model to preserve the forts in Maharashtra. The forts in Rajasthan are well preserved and restored.

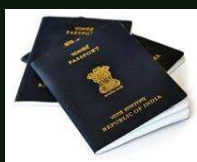
JW Marriott to open its first hotel in Kolkata by month end



USA-based JW Marriott will open its first hotel in Kolkata by the end of October 2016. The 281-room property, covering 3.6 acres of land on the eastern fringes of the city, has been built at a cost of INR 1,300 crore- INR1,500 crore. In India and Asia Pacific, Marriott operates mostly through the asset-light 'managed property' model. With 14,000-sq feet of (single room) banqueting space — double the average of 7,000 sq ft in the city — and with 11,000 sq ft of pre-banqueting space, the hotel will mostly target the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) and wedding segments. Speciality restaurants have been planned on the 24th and 25th floors, apart from a roof-top restaurant.

Marriott will add three more properties in the East. These will be smaller offerings under the "Courtyard" brand targeting budget travellers and mid-level corporate. Properties under the "Courtyard" brand are expected to come up in Siliguri, Guwahati (Assam) and Shillong (Meghalaya).

Chip embedded e-passports by 2017



The centre plans to issue chip embedded e-passports, which can be incorporated with passports so as to verify information electronically, by next year. Fully digital passports that could be even carried in mobile phones would be introduced in the second phase. Facilities for e-passports are being installed and it is expected that all fresh passports to be issued from next year would have the chips incorporated in it. Once the delay in police verification process is sorted out through electronic passing of information, the time required for issuing passports could be minimised.

Indian Railways to soon have glass-roof coaches on selected routes



With a view to modernise the old get-up of the passenger and express trains, the Indian Railways is set to introduce rail coaches with glass ceiling and infotainment systems. The new train coaches with glass top ceiling will be introduced in selected trains from December this year. Three such coaches will roll out from ICF in December this year. The first coach will be tagged in a regular train in the Kashmir Valley while the other two will be part of some train careening through the picturesque Araku Valley (KK Line, Waltair station) on the South-Eastern Railway.

The other trains to have such luxurious coaches giving an aerial view would be decided later. The basic objective behind such a project is to promote tourism and woo upscale tourists from both India and abroad. There are some trains with glass ceiling in countries like Switzerland, which enjoy the patronage of tourists. It is believed that such coaches would also give a fillip to rail tourism in India. The coaches will be ultra luxurious with rotatable chairs to provide the passengers an aerial view through partly glass ceiling. The coaches will have ample leg space and will also be equipped with modern infotainment system for the benefit of tourists.



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Kauai Island, Hawaii, USA

PHOTO FEATURE



Kauaʻi or Kauai is geologically the oldest of the main Hawaiian Islands. Known also as the "Garden Isle", Kauaʻi lies 105 miles (169 km) across the Kauaʻi Channel, northwest of Oʻahu. This island is the site of Waimea Canyon State Park. One of the wettest spots on earth, with an annual average rainfall of 460 inches or 1170 cm, is located on the east side of Mount Waialeale. The high annual rainfall has eroded deep valleys in the central mountains, carving out canyons with many scenic waterfalls. On the west side of the island, Waimea town is located at the mouth of the Waimea River, whose flow formed Waimea Canyon, one of the world's most scenic canyons, which is part of Waimea Canyon State Park. At 3,000 feet (914 m) deep, Waimea Canyon is often referred to as "The Grand Canyon of the Pacific". Kokeo Point lies on the south side of the island. The Na Pali Coast is a center for recreation in a wild setting, including kayaking past the beaches, or hiking on the trail along the coastal cliffs.^[6] The headland, Kuahonu Point, is on the south-east of the island.

Lighter Moments

A guy was driving when a policeman pulled him over.

He rolled down his window & said to the officer, "Is there a problem Officer?"

"No problem at all. I just observed your safe driving & am pleased to award you a \$5000 Safe Driver Award. Congratulations. What do you think you're going to do with the money?"

He thought for a minute & said, "Well, I guess I'll go get that drivers' license."

The lady sitting in the passenger seat said to the policeman, "Oh, don't pay attention to him. He's smarter when he's drunk & stoned."

The guy from the back seat said, "I TOLD you guys we wouldn't get far in a stolen car!"

At that moment, there was a knock from the trunk & a muffled voice said, "Are we over the border yet?"

Thought for the Fortnight

You can complain because a rose has thorns, or rejoice because thorns have a rose.

— Abraham Lincoln

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Half Page	Rs. 9,000/-	Rs. 25,000/-	Rs. 45,000/-	Rs. 80,000/-
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