



# IAAI Newsletter



15-17 February 2017  
Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

**December 2016 — IInd Fortnight Issue**

Happy New Year  
**2017**

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## IAAI Maharashtra AGM





## Maharashtra State AGM

**Date** : 19 December 30, 2016  
**Time** : 1800 hrs.  
**Venue** : Hotel West End, Marine Lines, Mumbai

**Present:**

- |                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| • Mr.Biji Eapen            | : | IAAI National President                 |
| • Mr. Naresh Rajkotia      | : | IAAI National SSecretary                |
| • Mr. T.U. Shamsuddin Umar | : | IAAI NMC member                         |
| • Mrs Aruna D Shetty       | : | IAAI –MH , President                    |
| • Mr. Devendra Ghule       | : | IAAI Maharashtra State Vice president   |
| • Mr. Chetan Gandhi        | : | IAAI Maharashtra State Secretary        |
| • Mr. Siddtharth Shah      | : | IAAI Maharashtra State Treasurer        |
| • Ms Neelu Bhatt           | : | IAAI Maharashtra state Committee member |

**National President , Mr Biji Eapen addressed the gathering to update on the latest developments in the industry and the efforts that IAAI is making to ensure that the rights of small and medium Travel Agents are protected.**

- IAAI's recent biggest achievement of giving temporary relief to all the IATA travel agents from the newly introduced BSP's enhanced user charge applicable from 01 Jan 2017 wherein the BSPLink "Enhanced User Account" was to be chargeable @ USD 30 per user ID per agent location per month (excluding applicable taxes) . This was stalled only due to the efforts of IAAI !! This could be a temporary relief as APJC can reverse the same any day ..... fate of the agents each time !!
- **Termination of BSP Cheque collection-** APJC illogically enforced in Jan 2016. Why banking is done through Duetsche Bank in India when State Bank of India is India's largest bank with a network of over 13000 branches and 5 associate banks located even in the remotest parts of India ?
- Though IAAI had offered to IATA, proposals from 2 International Guarantors for Default Insurance Programme (DIP). APJC sidelined insurance guarantee with higher premium and other regulatory control - to promote associations Joint Bank Guarantee. APJC allowed big players to negotiate with insurance providers directly on premiums. It is only because of IAAI intervention that the insurance providers are IFFCO TOKYO now.

**Continue on Page 3...**

## Minutes of AGM Maharashtra State

- **Fuel Surcharges** are introduced to temporarily accommodate the fluctuations in Aviation Turbine Fuel costs resulting from variations in international crude oil prices. This “surcharge” under YQ tax code was initiated as War risk premium and was later continued as Fuel Surcharge. Today, the ATF cost is considerably reduced to US\$ 48 per barrel. Though the actual required fuel cost is already been accounted in the base fare, airlines are still collecting an exorbitant amount as “Fuel Surcharge” under the YQ tax code, which is neither reportable to IATA nor to the Government, thereby depriving the Indian Government of its rightful tax revenue and the Travel agents of our legitimate agency commission.

- **IAAI gearing up to launch I-TOP**

To safeguard the interests of its Members from all the challenging Market conditions and present them with a new revenue model “ITOP” will be launched shortly. It will be the first Portal of its kind in the history of the Aviation World created solely for the Agents, by the Agents.

I-Top(Indian Travel-Agents Own Portal) is being developed with sophisticated technology and enhanced innovative processing module.I-Top has been enriched with facilities for the User to work as an individual or a consolidator and operate through GDS platforms and also the internet to meet the present challenges and competitions in the Industry with B2B, B2C and B2D facilities including the new NDC process.

Each member agent will be a Consolidator...

Airline representatives were present from airlines like Oman Air, Air Arabia and GoAir .In fact Mr Sunil V.A ,Regional Vice president.ISC and Mr Bhanu Kaila, Country Manager,India of Oman Air sponsored two return Mumbai – Muscat- Mumbai tickets by way of a lucky draw to our members.

Sponsorers provided very informative presentations and was followed by networking over Cocktails & Dinner.



## Letter to the Editor

### **An open letter received from Mr R T Iyer from M/s. Far-shak Travels, Mumbai**

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The AGM was very well organized, please accept our congratulations to all those who have worked hard for this event to be so good. It is always nice to hear Mr. Biji talking as he always talks from his heart and he thinks of all the travel agents. Unless we support him with our ideas and our presence at the meetings it will be a long fight. But we always stand by him and IAAI. We have resigned from TAAI & TAFI as we think they are working against the travel agents and only looking out for the big players.

**Please do let us know if you need our support for any issues that are being taken up in support of the travel agents.**

We would like to put forward an idea of approaching the PM's office and putting it across him as to how the agents and also the nation is being taken for a ride by the cartel of foreign airlines and ably supported by the Indian airline industry and some of our leading travel agents. How the nation is losing crores of Rupees towards service tax and income tax. How the airlines are charging convenience fee on all its bookings and also that some airlines are even charging for seats when the check-in is open 24 hours before flight thereby causing people to stand at counters for check-in and losing out on their flights due to long queues at the airport and then the same airlines is charging extra to put them on to another flight even though the delay is caused by the airlines with insufficient staff at counters and this malpractice of charging for seats even when check-in open 24 hours prior to flight.

## Vistara passengers to have seamless check-in facility



Vistara it has forged partnerships with global carriers Air France, KLM and Japan Airlines, which would allow its customers to avail a seamless check-in facility on their network across the world and vice versa. The Inter-Airline Through Check-In (IATCI) partnership enables customers to enjoy a seamless 'Through Check-in' facility when connecting to or from a domestic Vistara flight in India and more than 100 countries across the globe on these airlines. Under the tie-up, passengers can now get their boarding passes at the first point of departure for all the travel sectors, both domestic and international, that are on the booking with their baggage checked through to their final destination. Vistara currently operates 515 weekly flights from across 18 domestic destinations, connecting India with multiple international destinations via its interline partners.

In addition to hassle free check-in facility, passengers connecting from international flights to a domestic flight in India will also have their bags tagged all the way to the final destination. But they will be required to claim their baggage at the first port of entry in India and drop it off to Vistara at the luggage transfer counter after clearing customs.

## CISF to exempt baggage stamping at 7 airports



In order to facilitate hasslefree travel to air passengers, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) would not carry stamping of baggage at seven airports including Patna, Lucknow and Jaipur from Monday on trial basis. The decision follows the week-long pilot project at airports in metros like Delhi, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata besides mega cities like Hyderabad and Bengaluru that ended last week. The decision to do away with stamping of baggage from December 26 at seven airports i.e. Patna, Guwahati, Nagpur, Kochi, Jaipur, Lucknow and Thiruvananthapuram has been taken on a trial basis to study how much time is saved by doing this. Study highlighted that doing away with baggage stamping saved 20-25 second per passenger in Mumbai and 10-15 second every passenger in Kolkata. Established in 1969, CISF is providing security coverage to 59 airports across the country at present.

## Foreign tourists to get SIM cards at 12 airports



The home ministry's new year gift to its foreign tourists from 161 countries will be a pre-loaded sim card at 12 major airports of the country after home minister Rajnath Singh formally launched the scheme recently.

The ready-to-call sim cards will be available to foreign tourists arriving at airports in Panjim, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Lucknow, Delhi and Varanasi to start with. The move is aimed at projecting India as a global tourist destination among foreign travellers as well as addressing the security concerns by equipping the tourists with mobile phones to make calls in case of any distress. Home Ministry will launch the initiative planned in association with BSNL by distributing free pre-loaded Sim cards to tourists arriving in India on e-Visa.

## Passengers will now be charged extra to book even middle seats on domestic flights



Passengers flying domestic routes will now have to pay extra even to reserve middle seats in flights as airlines seek to increase their additional revenues. Passengers will be charged a fee for pre-reserving seats only at the time of online booking or during web check-in. If they select a seat at the check-in counter at airports, they will be assigned seats free of cost on a first-come, first-serve basis. This service may not go down well with families travelling together as they will have to pay a lot extra to sit beside each other. While Jet Airways, IndiGo, Go Air and Spice Jet are the four carriers that will charge a fee even for the middle seats, Air India and Vistara will charge only for middle seats in the front or exit rows where passengers get extra leg room. Levying these charges as part of ancillary revenues complies with guidelines of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. A spokesperson informed that only the middle seats in the first seven rows in the domestic economy cabin will come at an extra cost. The middle seats in the remaining 19 rows will be free of charge.

## India signs Open Skies agreement with 6 countries



India has signed agreements with Sri Lanka, Finland, Spain, Jamaica, Guyana, and Czech Republic whereby airlines from those nations can operate unlimited number of flights to six Indian metro airports. Terming the pact as "Open Skies agreement as per National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016", the Civil Aviation Ministry mentioned the new arrangement would encourage connectivity and passenger travel between India and these countries. . The pacts allow "unlimited number of flights to six metro airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai".

Besides, India has re-negotiated traffic rights with Oman increasing the entitlements with 6,258 seats. With Saudi Arabia, India has agreed to increase the capacity by 8,000 seats per week.

## SriLankan Airlines to expand its reach to 13 Indian cities with new flights to Ahmedabad & Vizag



Post its acquisition of Mihin Lanka in October this year, SriLankan Airlines increased its reach in India to 11 cities. This number is set to increase to 13 with firm plans to bring Ahmedabad and Vizag on its route network from April 2017. Additionally, having identified demand from Mumbai and Delhi, the carrier will increase frequencies to these gateway cities from June next year. Currently, the national carrier of Sri Lanka operates 107 flights-a-week to the Indian market from its Colombo hub, and offers connections to 101 destinations in 42 countries, including code-share flights.

SriLankan Airlines operated flights to 7 cities of Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Trichy, Trivandrum, Mumbai and Delhi. After the acquisition of Mihin Lanka, from October 31 we added Kolkata, Varanasi, Madhurai and Bodh Gaya to our network, elevating SriLankan's reach to 11 cities in India. With this development, SriLankan is now the fifth biggest carrier in India in terms of international operations. India being largest market for SriLankan, the airline will start operating flights to Ahmedabad and Visakhapatnam from April, and add four weekly flights each to Mumbai and Delhi from June 2017 onwards.



## Government launches “AirSewa” website and app for passenger grievance redressal



The Civil Aviation Ministry recently launched the AirSewa portal and mobile app that will include a mechanism for grievance redressal, back-office operations for grievance handling, flight status and airport information.

The Government was committed to provide a hassle-free and comfortable air travel experience; to do this it was necessary to recognize the pattern of problems that people face, and make suitable systemic improvements. AirSewa is an initiative of the Ministry to offer people a convenient and hassle-free air travel experience.

Flight delays, refunds, long queues and lack of proper facilities at airports and complaints of lost baggage were the most common problems that air travellers faced. AirSewa is an attempt to provide such a systematic approach to redressing passenger grievances.

With AirSewa, passengers will be able to register their grievances through the mobile app or a web portal. The users will have the facility to upload voice or video along with an elaborate description of their issues. They will be given a unique reference number for each of their reported grievances which would also be communicated through an email as well as an SMS. Users will be able to track the status and response to their grievances on the mobile and web app. With the help of the unique ref. no. Once the grievance is closed, the user has an option to provide feedback and rate the overall experience and satisfaction.

## Preferred Hotels & Resorts welcomes 24 new member hotels



Preferred Hotels & Resorts, an independent hotel brand, announced the addition of 24 member hotels over the past three months. The new hotel additions include - The Hari London - London, United Kingdom; Lancaster Bangkok - Bangkok, Thailand; Vivienda Granada & Vivienda Residences - Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Tarrytown House Estate & Conference Center - Tarrytown, New York.

Additional properties that joined the Preferred Hotels & Resorts brand portfolio from August through early November 2016 include - Rosen Centre (Orlando, Florida, United States); Rosen Plaza (Orlando, Florida, United States); Rosen Shingle Creek (Orlando, Florida, United States); AT Six (Stockholm, Sweden); Hotel Monville Montreal (Montreal, Canada); The Domain Hotel & Spa (Manama, Bahrain); Pendry San Diego (San Diego, California, United States); Hotel Royal Palm Tower Indaiatuba (Indaiatuba, Brazil); Mukul Residences (Rivas, Nicaragua); Dukes Dubai (Dubai, United Arab Emirates); Nordic Light Hotel (Stockholm, Sweden); AKA University City (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States); Edgewood Tahoe (South Lake Tahoe/Reno, Nevada, United States); Zota Beach Resort (Longboat Key, Florida, United States); Hyde Resort & Residences (Hollywood, Florida, United States); Hotel Sea Cliff (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania); Sea Cliff Resort & Spa Zanzibar (Zanzibar, Tanzania); Mountain Shadows (Paradise Valley, Arizona, United States) and Hotel SKT. PETRI (Copenhagen, Denmark).



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## Hong Kong scraps visa-on-arrival for Indians



Before the start of the holiday season, Hong Kong's decision of scrapping visa-free 14 day stay for Indians has come as a shocker for many. With free visa on arrival facility, Hong Kong had been a popular tourist destination for Indians. The new guidelines, however, now underline that from January 23, people traveling from India to Hong Kong will have to register online in advance to avail the visa-free 14 day stay.

From January 23, Indian nationals must apply for and complete online pre-arrival registration before enjoying their 14-day visa-free visit, or entering Hong Kong during transit. The pre-arrival registration for Indian nationals' platform launched on December 19. Registration is free. The computer system will display the result instantly once the registration is made.

Indian tourists have to register online in advance and complete all pre-arrival formalities before their visit. Any Indian national who holds a passport with minimum validity of six months can pre-register online. Each pre-arrival registration for an Indian national will be valid for six months or until the expiry date of the Indian passport linked to it, whichever is earlier.

Those who are exempted from online pre-registration are – those who hold a valid diplomatic or official passport, those who have enrolled in e-challan service for frequent visitors, among others. Any person planning to visit Hong Kong for a period exceeding 14 days or for purposes other than travel – like employment, education or taking up residence – have to apply for a visa in immigration department.



## Palawan Island, Philippines

# PHOTO FEATURE



Palawan officially the Province of Palawan, is an archipelagic province of the Philippines that is located in the Mimaropa region. Palawan is composed of the long and narrow Palawan Island, plus a number of other smaller islands surrounding the main island.

## Lighter Moments

An office technician got a call from a user. The user told the tech that her computer was not working. She described the problem and the tech concluded that the computer needed to be brought in and serviced.

He told her "Unplug the power cord and bring it up here and I will fix it."

About fifteen minutes later she shows up at his door with the power cord in her hand.

## Thought for the Fortnight

Yesterday is a memory, tomorrow is a mystery & today is a gift, which is why it is called the present. What the caterpillar perceives is the end; to the butterfly is just the beginning. Everything that has a beginning has an ending. Make your peace with that & all will be well.

— Buddhist saying



## IAAI Director Board

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