



IAAI Newsletter



15-17 February 2017
Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

January 2017 — Ist Fortnight Issue

Index

Content	Page No.
IAAI News	2 to 4
Iitt 2017 event	5
Aviation News	6 to 10
Hospitality News	11 to 13
Visa News	13
Photo Feature (The La Trobe Institute Building, Melbourne)	14
Open Space	15
IAAI Director Board	16

IAAI News

BSP Link Charges

The last quarter of 2016 was overshadowed by the IATA Circular of 05Oct2016 announcing the new "BSPlink charges" that were to come into effect from 1st January 2017.

However, thanks to IAAI's efforts in registering their opposition with the IATA Regional Director well in time, the dawn of the New Year brought vast relief to the IATA Accredited Travel Agents as they were not issued the dreaded invoices for the 'Enhanced User Account' charges through the IATA BSP Link.

Though extensive briefing sessions were organized by IATA in various cities in India during the 2nd fortnight of September 2016 regarding the migration of BSP billing software to IATA's single global software - IBSP, the new 'Enhanced User Account' charges could not be implemented.

IAAI had assertively challenged and protested against the BSPlink charges categorically on the following main points :-

- That the BSPlink enhancement was neither discussed nor approved by APJC-India and, hence, the additional BSP charges are illegal and not acceptable.
- That the Basic BSPlink facilities offered under Rule 5.2 of BSP Agents Manual in 2011 are the fundamental rights of the accredited Travel Agents.
- That the BSPlink enhanced charges must have reciprocal benefits - accredited Travel Agents should be benefited with legal remuneration as stipulated under IATA Res 824 (9) of the PSA Agreement and also mandated as per the two Orders from DGCA and the Ministry of Civil Aviation, dated 5.3.2010 and 16.9.2013, respectively.

The Government of India authorities and the Ministry have also been alerted and notified by IAAI on this matter.

The Travel Agents Fraternity is still anxious since there has been no further official communication from IATA about the levying or withdrawal of the BSP link charges. Also, as APJC-India, which has remained a silent spectator during these happenings, can accept these charges to be implemented in the same way that they have been imposing restrictive orders and practices like TAP and WPS on the Travel Industry in the past. Sadly, this has been the fate of the accredited Travel Agents in India during the past decade.

IAAI has assured its Members that it will oppose and negate all attempts that are made to levy any illegal or unauthorized charges on the Fraternity.

IAAI News

Launch of Mobile App by Indian Customs

Please find herewith a letter received by IAAI National President, Mr. Biji Eapen, from the Joint Commissioner, O/o the Principal Commissioner of Customs, Airport & Air cargo Complex Commissionerate, Bengaluru, regarding a Mobile App developed by Indian Customs which will serve as a 'ready reckoner' of Customs Baggage Rules and Passenger Entitlements for travellers to India.

The App is said to have multi-lingual capability and is available in English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam on the Android Play Store, Windows and Apple Store platforms and the respective links have been given in the aforesaid letter.

Please find herewith the letter.



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue
OFFICE OF THE
PRINCIPAL COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS
Airport & Air Cargo Complex Commissionerate
Devenahalli, Bangalore 560 300
Ph. : 080 2200 1401, 1446, Email :

HARSH VARDHAN UMRE I.R.S.
harsh.vu@gov.in
Joint Commissioner of Customs

C No. VIII/48/93/2016-17 AP

112/17

Date: 14.12.2016

Dear Shri Eapen,

Sub: Launch of Mobile App – Indian Customs - Guide to Travellers with multi lingual capacity – reg

Bengaluru Customs at Kempegowda International Airport has been in the forefront in initiating and innovating new measures and methods for increased facilitation of International Passengers. In this context, Bengaluru Customs had developed a Mobile App – 'Indian Customs – Guide to International Passengers' which was launched by the Chairman, Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC), New Delhi on the occasion of Customs Day on 27.02.2016.

Letter Continue on Page 4..

IAAI News

The app serves as a ready reckoner of Customs Baggage Rules and Passenger Entitlements and is available on all 3 platforms – Android Play Store, Windows and Apple Store. The app has been gaining in popularity as it is user friendly and has received excellent ratings ever since its launch. Encouraged by the response received, Bengaluru Customs has now added the Multi lingual capability to the said app. The contents of the app previously available only in English is **now extended to 4 Indian languages viz. Hindi, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam**. This facility was launched by the Chairman, CBEC on 12th November 2016 through a video conferencing of all Chief Commissioners of Customs across the country.

RECEIVED
9/1/17

This multi lingual capability of the mobile app will be of immense help to International Passengers particularly for Indian Passport Holders/ PIOs as all Customs related information is now available to them in vernacular too.

The links for the updated version of the mobile app across the three platforms are provided here:

Android-

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.cbec.indiancustoms_guide_totravellers&hl=en

Apple-

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/indian-customs-guide-to-travellers/id1078552180?ls=1&my=8>

Windows –

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/apps/Indian-customs-traveller-guide/9nblggh4rjxl>.

It is hereby requested that wide publicity about this user friendly mobile app may be given through your organization for maximum utilisation of the same by the international passengers traveling to India.

Regards,


24.12.2016

(HARSH VARDHAN UMRE)

JOINT COMMISSIONER

Bengaluru International Airport

To,

✓ Shri. Biji Eapen,
President,
IATA Agents Association of India
IAAI Bhavan
39/4012 – K & L, Karimpatta Road
Pallimukku, Kochi – 682 016

Copy submitted to:

The Principal Commissioner

Of Customs, Airport & ACC, Bengaluru – for kind information

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Vistara introduces New Flights & Sectors

- Vistara, a full service airline, increased its frequency between Delhi and Pune, from 9th January, to twice a day. The airline now offers a daily morning and evening departure from Delhi, except on Saturdays. New flight timings are as follows :-

Pune - Delhi : UK 998 : 1.10 pm - 3.25 pm

Delhi - Pune : UK 997 : 10.20 am - 12.30 pm



- Vistara also announced the addition of Amritsar and Leh to its steadily expanding network, starting March 1, 2017 and March 25, 2017, respectively. Vistara will fly direct flights from Delhi to the holy city of Amritsar from March 1, 2017, and from Mumbai, starting March 8, 2017. The airline will operate direct flights between Delhi and Leh on weekends from March 25, 2017 and thereafter, increase the frequency to daily flights starting May 10, 2017 onwards. Flights to Amritsar will initially operate six days a week from both Delhi and Mumbai (daily except Mondays), and will increase to daily flights in the summer. Leh flights will also increase from weekends only to daily flights in the summer.
- As part of continual network optimisation and due to the planned runway maintenance of the Varanasi Airport in the summer which impacts the times at which Vistara operates, the airline will suspend its daily service between Delhi and Varanasi effective March 1, 2017. With the addition of Amritsar and Leh and suspension of Varanasi, Vistara will now serve 19 destinations across the length and breadth of the country, further connecting India with multiple international destinations via its growing number of interline partners.

Nearing its second year anniversary, Vistara has flown more than 3.5 million happy customers. With a rapidly growing network that connects 20 destinations across India and a fleet of 13 A320s, serving more than 500 flights a week at present, Vistara boasts of having grown significantly in the last two years in its commitment to redefine the air travel experience in India. Over the last one year, Vistara has grown by more than 50% in terms of its weekly frequencies by adding four aircraft and eight new destinations to its network.

Air India to connect Pune to Chandigarh from January 16



Air India will now commence a direct flight to Chandigarh from Pune to for the first time from January 16, 2017. This new flight is a move to promote regional connectivity by the national carrier. The flight, AI 813 will take off from Chandigarh at 10.50 am and arrive in Pune at 1.20 pm. The return flight AI 814 from Pune will depart at 2 am and land in Chandigarh at 4.30 pm on all days except Saturday and Sunday. The non-stop flight will operate with an Airbus A-320 aircraft on the Pune-Chandigarh-Pune route.

Emirates introduces new range of comforts in First & Business Class



Emirates has enhanced comfort in the air with a host of exclusive, new products introduced to its First and Business Class cabins. Customers will travel in luxury with new additions including First Class lounge wear, luxury blankets, skincare from VOYA and a new range of amenity kits from Bulgari. Its ongoing investment in product reinforces its emphasis on comfort, enhancing the travel experience. The airline has partnered with experts in their respective fields and no attention to detail has been spared in the luxury product overhaul.

For a comfortable night's sleep on board the aircraft, Emirates has introduced the world's first moisturising lounge wear designed for an airline. It will be available in the First Class cabin on overnight long haul flights. In partnership with Matrix, the suits use Hydra Active Microcapsule Technology designed to keep skin hydrated during the flight. The patented technology uses billions of capsules applied to the fabric which gently releases naturally-moisturising Sea Kelp during movement.

To complete the relaxing travel experience, a new range of luxury spa products are now available both on board and on the ground from award-winning Irish brand VOYA. Created exclusively for Emirates, this skincare line includes shampoo, conditioner, body wash, cleanser, body moisturiser, hand wash, soap and hand cream. It will be available in the signature A380 shower spa on board and selected products in Emirates' airport lounges. The hand and body cream can also be found in the First and Business Class washrooms.

Boeing, SpiceJet partner for up to 205 airplanes; largest order in LCC's history



Boeing and SpiceJet just announced a commitment for up to 205 airplanes during an event in New Delhi. The announcement includes 100 new 737 MAX 8s, SpiceJet's current order for 42 MAXs, 13 additional 737 MAXs which were previously attributed to an unidentified customer on Boeing's Orders & Deliveries website, as well as purchase rights for 50 additional airplanes.

The Boeing 737 class of aircraft has been the backbone of its fleet since SpiceJet began, with its high reliability, low operation economies and comfort. The 737 MAX incorporates the latest technology CFM International LEAP-1B engines, Advanced Technology winglets and other improvements to deliver the highest efficiency, reliability and passenger comfort in the single-aisle market. The new airplane will deliver 20% lower fuel use than the first Next-Generation 737s and the lowest operating costs in its class – 8% per seat less than its nearest competitor. SpiceJet, an all-Boeing jet operator, placed its first order with Boeing in 2005 for Next-Generation (NG) 737s and currently operates 32 737 NGs in its fleet.

Increasing trend of International Carriers using smaller Airports



For as long as airlines have been crossing the oceans, airline passengers have had to go to big city airports to catch their overseas flights. So users of the nation's 53rd-busiest airport, in this small town in the suburbs of Hartford, were surprised this fall when Aer Lingus, the flag carrier of Ireland, began flights to Europe. Warwick R.I., with an even smaller airport, may soon have the same bragging rights. T. F. Green Airport, just outside Providence and about 90 miles from Bradley, is negotiating for European flights with the low-cost carrier Norwegian. Smaller airports are the next coming thing.

The new interest in smaller airports has several roots, among them a boom in the number of air travellers, new low-cost carriers offering long-haul flights and congestion at the biggest airports. Many markets are already saturated in terms of frequency. New technology also plays a role as huge airliners, with 400 or more seats, are eclipsed in popularity by aircraft of a more moderate size. Apart from a few large markets, large aircraft could only be flown when they had a feed of passengers from other markets that would then travel onwards to intercontinental destinations.

In the last five years, the companies manufacturing the two biggest airliners, the Boeing 747 and the Airbus A380, have introduced smaller, more fuel-efficient long- and medium-range airplanes that are just right for connecting smaller cities. The 20 percent increase in fuel efficiency on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner was critical to Norwegian's decision to begin low-cost flights between gateways in the United States and Norway in 2013. The airline has configured the aircraft to carry 291 to 344 passengers.

Airlines find more savings on the ground as well. Layover hotel rates for flight crews, landing fees and fuel prices are usually lower at smaller airports. For passengers, the costs of parking, car rentals and other travel services are usually less than at major airports. There is also a reduction in the hassle factor. Security lines are more manageable, and immigration lines on arrival at major airports can sometimes take more than an hour to clear. Avoiding that is a benefit nearly on par with eliminating the long drive to New York or Boston. Smaller airports frequently offer these kinds of economic incentives to attract airlines.

Jet Airways launches direct Mangaluru – Delhi Service



Jet Airways will introduce a new daily service between Mangaluru and New Delhi, offering business travellers from the South Indian port city and commercial hub, seamless connectivity with the national capital. The new daily flight, being introduced with effect from January 16, 2017, will also connect Mangaluru to a whole host of destinations across North, Northeast India and even internationally, via New Delhi, further bolstering the airline's already extensive service network. In fact, guests from Mangaluru will be able to enjoy one-stop connectivity to cities such as Chandigarh, Amritsar, Dehradun, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Patna and Guwahati. The new flight also links Mangaluru to key international business centres such as London, Amsterdam, Singapore and Hong Kong and popular tourist destinations such as Bangkok, Kathmandu and Dhaka through New Delhi.

Source : Travel Trends Today India

Air Costa to expand its presence pan India in 3 months



Andhra Pradesh-based Air Costa, which is currently in its fourth year of operations, is looking at expanding its wings across the country by the beginning of the next quarter. The airline received the license to operate pan-India flights from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in October 2016. So the airline's plan of action is to expand route network across India in three months depending on the slot availability at prospective airports. While Delhi looks like a possible choice, the airline will consider the sectors that are viable. Currently, the airline operates scheduled daily flights to eight cities—Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Tirupati, Ahmedabad, Vizag, Vijaywada and Jaipur. The airline has a fleet of three Embraer E-190 aircraft, offering all Economy 112 seats in a 2x2 configuration.

Source : Travel Trends Today India

Oman Air removes weight-based excess luggage charges



Oman Air has introduced a new policy on baggage, moving away from the traditional weight based allowance and excess baggage charge to a more simple policy based on number of bags being checked-in, that will save money for traveling guests. The new policy has come into effect on January 9th. Under the new policy, Oman Air guests will continue to receive a free baggage allowance to all destinations as follows :

- Economy class guests: one piece of baggage of up to 30kg.
- Business and first class: one piece of baggage of up to 30kg, plus 1 additional piece of baggage of up to 20kg.

Oman Air's Silver and Gold Sinbad members will get even more free allowance giving a total free baggage allowance as follows :

- Economy class guests: one piece of baggage of up to 30kg, plus one additional piece of baggage of up to 20kg.
- Business and first class guests: one piece of baggage of up to 30kg, and one additional piece of baggage of up to 30kg.

In addition to the free allowances, a new low cost, flat-rate fee will be introduced for guests wishing to carry more baggage on board. The old, traditional excess baggage charge of up to OMR11.6 per kg has been abolished and guests can now purchase extra baggage starting at only OMR16 for a 20kg bag.



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Japan Tourism to open its Delhi office by March 2017



Japan Tourism Agency will roll out an office in Delhi by the end of the fiscal year 2016. The office will be a regional centre to promote the attractions of Japan, so that more Indians are interested in travelling to the country. We are here to plan and discuss current undertakings and measures to improve and expand tourism exchanges. The office will be a regional centre to promote the attractions of Japan, so that more Indians are interested in travelling to the country. We are here to plan and discuss current undertakings and measures to improve and expand tourism exchanges.

Japan is the 10th largest source market for India in terms of inbound tourist arrivals and there were about 2.07 Lakh tourists from Japan who visited India in 2015. Both the countries hold immense potential and the conference will enable the delegates to understand the respective markets.

Source : Express Travelworld

AccorHotels expands presence in budget segment in India market



AccorHotels is expanding its presence in the budget segment with its Formule1 brand. The hotel operator has recently launched its ninth Formule1 property in the India market with Hotel Formule1 Nashik. The 101-room property is the brand's latest addition in India, with the existing presence in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Gurugram, Pune Hinjewadi and Pimpri, Noida, Hyderabad, and Chennai. The launch of the Nashik property is followed by the recent opening of Hotel Formule1 Chennai OMR. Formule1 Nashik, being situated on the Mumbai-Agra Highway, is leveraging its location to cater to short-stay guests. They are targeting corporate, pilgrimage and fast-moving tourists, due to the region's significance in pilgrimage tourism, the hotel's location and the proximity to Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) sites.

Nashik and the surrounding regions are the largest producers of Indian wine. With the presence of various Indian wineries, Nashik has gained recognition for wine tourism in the country. Hotel Formule1 Nashik aims to leverage upon this and draw guests from this segment of tourism, as the city witnesses year-round visitation of both, domestic and foreign tourists, for its wine offerings. Alongside its self-service design, an USP of the Formule1 brand is sound-proof rooms. The hotel features one multi-cuisine restaurant, Denim Bistro, which is operated by a Bengaluru-based restaurant chain.

Source : Express Travelworld

Virtual Tour app launched for Royal Caribbean



Royal Caribbean
INTERNATIONAL

Royal Caribbean Cruises in India, has launched a mobile application which allows users to take a virtual tour of the cruise. The app offers virtual tours of the Royal Caribbean ships, including walkthroughs of staterooms, line decks and other prominent places. The app enables a viewer to take a virtual tour of the cruise and have a better understanding of the experience. It is open for travel agents as well as customers who could use the information before booking a cruise. The app is expected to enable agents to understand the industry better and approach the customer in the right manner.

Source : Express Travelworld

IRCTC to organise special tours to Tirupati Balaji and Kolhapur Mahalaxmi temples



Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) will be running special tour with confirmed berths to have a hassle-free visit to Tirupati Balaji and Kolhapur Mahalaxmi. The package with rates are Rs. 5,618/- per person for Standard category and Rs. 8,907/- per person for Comfort category for the tourists travelling to pay homage at Tirupati Balaji and Kolhapur Mahalaxmi.

The 4 Nights / 5 Days tour shall commence its first trip on 15th Feb' 17 from Dadar. This comprehensive tour package with Boarding Points DADAR, KALYAN, LONAVALA & PUNE includes to and fro confirm Train Tickets in Sleeper/3-tier AC, Hotel accommodation in Tirupati, Freshen-up in Kolhapur, Meals (1 Breakfast and 3 Dinners) and Tirupati Balaji darshan tickets.

Package tours to be costly as taxes on tour operators hiked



The government has changed service tax applicable on tour operators. As a result, Package Tour cost may go up by 10%-15%. With effect from January 22, 2017, tour operators would be required to pay service tax on 60% of the total invoice value. Whereas, currently the tour operators pay service tax in two slabs - only for booking hotel accommodation the tax is payable on 10% value and for other tours the tax is payable on 30% .

Thus this amendment would be prejudicial to tour operators and may significantly impact the financial models of their business engaged in tour and travel booking. In the recent past, the tour and travel industry has been plagued with intense inquiries and investigations from service tax authorities with respect to services related to booking hotel accommodation. The recent amendment, instead of clarifying the issue, creates more doubts for the industry, specially related to taxability of the stand-alone hotel booking transaction in the hands of tour operators.

India's first 4D museum to be launched in Bhuj, Gujarat



As a part of its CSR activity, Ashapura Group will launch India's first 4D museum in Bhuj, Gujarat built exclusively on Indian Freedom Struggle. The museum comprises of 400 lights, video mapping, state of art, integrated audio system to create real life experience providing an immersive environment, where one can actually feel the action.

There are 18 episodes featuring India's freedom struggle out of which some of the significant episodes would be the Jallian Wala Bagh massacre, Salt Satyagraha, The martyrdom of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Quit India Movement and so on.

Planned to be launch by January end this year, it will also also be promoted as a great destination for foreigners who will overview the freedom struggle and learn the insight of the Indian struggle freedom.

VFS Global launches Czech Republic Visa Application Centre in Ahmedabad



The Embassy of the Czech Republic and VFS Global have launched a Czech Republic Visa Application Centre in Ahmedabad, to make visa application facilities more accessible for residents of India's fastest emerging business hub in the western region. The centre was inaugurated by H.E. Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India on January 9, 2017. Ahmedabad is the seventh city in India where VFS Global has launched a Visa Application Centre for the Czech Republic, in the last one year. Earlier, applicants from Ahmedabad seeking a Schengen visa (if the main country of travel to Europe was the Czech Republic) were required to travel to Mumbai or New Delhi for the same.

Amazing Architecture

The La Trobe Institute Building, Melbourne



The La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science is a marvelous and eye-catching building. The design of this building was given by Lyons Architects. The building is constructed in a hexagonal shape, having six stories. Its windows are stretched across the front and backside facades. This Institute is a part of La Trobe University, Bundoora Campus. It is one of the best and high profile medical institutes of Melbourne, Australia.

Lighter Moments

All About Money

A Boy On Date In BMW Car.

Boy: "I Hid Something From You."

Girlfriend: "*What?*"

Boy: "I'm Already Married & Have Two Children."

Girlfriend: "Ohhh, You Scared Me! I Thought The BMW Is Not Yours."

Thought for the Fortnight

A lamp never speaks but is known through its light. Similarly, achievers never speak about themselves but their achievements speak for them.

IAAI Director Board

1. Mr Biji Eapen, National President

: **Speedwings Travel & Cargo Pvt. Ltd., Kochi**

2. Mr H S Chawla, National Treasurer & Director—Northern Region

: **Speed Air Travel Agents, New Delhi**

3. Mr Naresh Rajkotia, National General Secretary & Director—Western Region

: **Madhuras Travels & Tours, Mumbai**

4. Mr Faisal Sharhabeel, Director—Southern Region

: **Magellan Travel Services (P) Ltd., Chennai**

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Strips	Rs. 2,000/-	Rs. 5,000/-	Rs. 10,000/-	Rs. 18,000/-

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