



TAFI Kuching Convention 2022-Message by Dy. Chairman, Convention Committee, Jigar Dudakiya

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is a progressive and vibrant Association representing the Travel Trade in India. We have a membership base of over 1400 members. The majority of our members are outbound tour operators and IATA accredited agents and account for close to 70 percent of the outbound business from India. As you all are aware that, the 2022 Convention is scheduled for **20th to 23rd September** at the spectacular **Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching in Sarawak, Malaysia**. We expect the participation of 500 – 550 Indian travel professionals plus approximately 150 – 200 Malaysian trade partners at the B2B event. Let me share my experience on Kuching, Borneo Convention Centre, Pullman Hotel & Waterfront Hotel at Kuching in Sarawak, Malaysia. **Kuching, the capital of Sarawak**, is simply unique. No other city in Malaysia has such a romantic and unlikely history, nor displays its charms with such an easy grace. The residents of Kuching enjoy living here, and take great pride in their fascinating city, which is reflected in their attitude to visitors. Kuching welcomes visitors warmly, but it does not put on an act for them. Kuching's city centre is well preserved and very compact, virtually everything that is worth seeing can be reached on foot or by sampan.

Borneo Convention Centre:

Situated on the Kuching Isthmus and ringed by the Sarawak River, the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching is approximately fifteen minutes' drive from the city centre and twenty minutes' drive from the Kuching, International Airport. BCCK is strategically located equidistant from the two main hubs of Kuching City, Kuching North, Kuching South. As the first purpose-built Convention Centre in Sarawak, its award-winning architecture was crafted with Sarawak's lush rainforest in mind. The Great Hall has the capacity for more than 4,500 delegates and can be subdivided into 4 self-contained meeting areas. The Raintree Restaurant at BCCK is one of the top dining restaurants in Kuching. You will fall in love with the restaurant's culinary prowess as well as the unbeatable ambiance. The convention centre can host up to 5000 People with an uninterrupted WIFI internet service for up to 8000 simultaneous users.

Pullman Hotel: Centrally located in the Kuching Golden Triangle, enjoying pride of place on Jalan Mathies hill, with panoramic city and river views. Pullman Kuching features 389 spacious, contemporary rooms and offers easy access to renowned Borneo national parks. The hotel is adjacent to a two-storey city life-style shopping centre & Hills Shopping Mall and within walking distance to commercial centre and city attractions.

Waterfront Hotel:

Kuching's only independent 5 Star Boutique Hotel with 208 Modern Guest Rooms including 31 Suites and 2 Loft Suites with unparalleled view. Guests may select between 2 breath-taking views – the Padang Merdeka and city centre view or the river view, overlooking the Kuching Waterfront. Located next door is the State-of-the Art Shopping mall – Plaza Merdeka, Chinatown, Temples, Sarawak Museum and many more. Let's meet at Kuching and have a great Convention 2022. **See you at KUCHING, SARAWAK, East Malaysia.**



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Edited & prepared by M. Ananda Veloo



Western India Chapter members meeting was held on 29 Jul at Global Junction:



Western India held their regular members meeting on 29 July 2022 at Global Junction, Mumbai. The meeting was Co -hosted by FIJI Tourism and was attended by more than 100 members & guests. Some photos taken during the event.

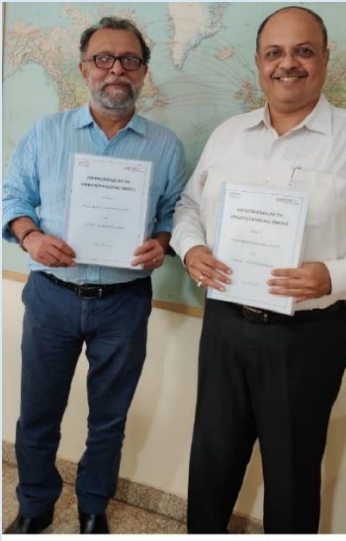


New Chapter J & K have been added to TAFI Family on 10 Aug '22 at Srinagar:

Quite literally a new Chapter in TAFI History. Resurgence happening after Mr. Ajay Prakash, took position as President. J & K Chapter have added to TAFI Family. The Launching Ceremony was held on 10th Aug at SKICC, Srinagar. Some moment of the event:



*TAFI Signs MOU with YGROO



Mr. Manoj Vijayan, VP Business Development Ygroo and Ajay Prakash, President TAFI

TAFI (**Travel Agents Federation of India**) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **YGROO**, a Social Enterprise focused on growing human capital to launch TAFI'S **Online Skilling Portal** which would help TAFI members and their employees to build world-class skills to work better and lead a better life. The **MoU** was signed by **Ajay Prakash**, President TAFI and **Dr Kanika Singh**, Co-Founder YGROO. The Skilling Portal would offer TAFI members 100+ free skilling courses and 500+ Global Micro Credentials to build world-class skills. **The Artificial Intelligence Driven Course Match Tool** would offer members personalized course recommendations based on personality, interests and work importance. "The COVID-19 pandemic triggered accelerated digitization has transformed all Industries including the global Travel Trade, its jobs and skills landscape. I believe more than 50% of all current Travel Trade jobs will need Re-skilling by 2025 and 40% of core skills in our Industry will change within 5 years. The TAFI Online Skilling Portal would offer great value to our members helping them build world-class skills. Going forward it would help

us convert our expertise to e-courses and offer Tourism Boards a platform to build and offer TAFI members destination awareness programs." said Ajay Prakash, President TAFI (Travel Agents Federation of India) "How Industry Associations manage Digitization, Skilling and social media for sector advocacy will play a key role in their future being, member engagement and relevance. We are very encouraged to see the proactive approach and commitment of TAFI towards skilling its members." said Dr Kanika Singh, Co-Founder YGROO. Members will be receiving your registration links shortly. You can register as many colleagues as you like from the agency and start using the portal. YGROO is a Social Enterprise. Using YGROO'S Free To Use, Custom Branded Skilling Platform and Subscription based Digitization & Marketing solutions Associations around the world can become future ready quickly at no upfront costs. <https://associations.ygroo.org>.

Advisory about IATA – Certificate of Appointment. By Mr. Sampath Kumar, TAFI Consultant

Members, you are aware there is a change in IATA -BSP system on neutral ticket stock. Find Below the Advisory about Certificate of Appointment.

1) Appended below is a list of airlines who have appointed you as Accredited Agent via IATA by General Concurrence - "GC". For the **LIST OF IATA MEMBER AIRLINES APPOINTMENTS FOR ASIA- PACIFIC** – click the following-link: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:5b685488-1599-3a36-b955-deb6d273ed77>

2) BSP -India platform serves both IATA member airlines, as well as, non-IATA members.

3) Given the above, for those airlines whose name does not figure in the GC list, but are participating in BSP kindly write and seek a "Certificate of Appointment" as Agent, as stated in the relevant IATA resolution, if you wish to have dealings with them and legally protect your interests.

4) Now that Individual Airline Ticket capping by numbers has been replaced by value capping and IATA-BSP India allows you to ticket on any participating airline without limitation by numbers to the extent of your financial security given.

5) If you find unable to ticket on a particular airline who has appointed you as Agent, write to the concerned airline for ticketing authority. Note it's the airline prerogative to grant same as stated in the relevant IATA resolution, however, it cannot limit same by numbers.



Kindly provide feedback via email to the undersigned on how your business is affected positively or negatively with respect to withdrawal of Ticket capping by airlines individually and limitation of ticketing value to the extent of financial security sum given by your agency? - consultant-TAFI@outlook.com & info@tafi.org.in

P. Sampath Kumar - TAFI Consultant -legal & Industry affairs

***Etihad cancels bookings of US-bound passengers. Students Stranded:**

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways offloaded or cancelled the bookings of scores of passengers, largely students, who were booked to fly to the US from cities such as Mumbai, Bengaluru recently. The students alleged that the airline refused to rebook them on other flights, scheduled to depart in the coming days. With semesters set to commence soon, the students were left with no option but to spend over two lakh rupees for a last-minute, one-way ticket on other carriers. "I'll have to wait for 20 days to be rebooked, a waiting time I can ill afford," said a student, requesting anonymity. The sudden cancellations have sparked panic among parents and students booked to fly to US on Etihad in the coming days. On Thursday 4 Aug, the cheapest one-way ticket to the US for travel this week from Mumbai began at INR 1.40 lakh, but were offered on flights over 27 hours long. Most tickets are priced over INR 2 lakh. An Etihad spokesperson said, "As a result of operational payload restrictions, Etihad Airways has been forced to reduce the number of passengers on flight EY101 from Abu Dhabi to New York (JFK) on Thursday 4 August.". A 'payload restriction' is a cut imposed on the volume of passengers (or cargo), in order to reduce the weight of the aircraft and compensate for increased fuel uptake, decreased engine performance etc. A flight taking a longer than normal route, which demands higher fuel uptake or a restriction'. On Thursday, Etihad operated its Abu Dhabi-New York flight tracking the usual route, flying the same aircraft type, the A350, with roughly the same flying time. Etihad said its teams are reaching out to notify affected passengers in order to minimize the disruption to them. "We regret any inconvenience caused by this last-minute change, and we will be providing compensation to those affected," it said adding that affected passengers could call their contact center (+971 600 555 666 – UAE number) or visit their website, mobile app for more information.

***SpiceJet in active discussion with Middle Eastern carrier for possible stake sale**

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet is said to be in active discussion with a Middle Eastern carrier for a possible stake sale. SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh holds a stake of around 60 per cent in the budget carrier. Sources said that a big Middle Eastern airline has expressed interest to pick a 24 per cent stake and a board seat in SpiceJet. A big Indian business conglomerate has also approached Singh for a stake in the airline. Reacting to the development, a SpiceJet Spokesperson said, "The company continues to be in discussions with various investors to secure sustainable financing and will make appropriate disclosures in accordance with applicable regulations." Earlier, on Tuesday, SpiceJet said that it entered into a full and final settlement with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and has cleared all outstanding principal dues of the airport operator. With this, SpiceJet will no longer remain on 'cash and carry' at AAI run airports across the country and will revert to advance payment mechanism for daily flight operations. SpiceJet's ability to clear the pending dues reflects the airline's improved cash flow in recent times. SpiceJet's domestic network covers the length and breadth of the country with the airline operating to 51 domestic destinations. Pioneer of the regional connectivity scheme, SpiceJet is the country's largest regional player helping connect the remotest parts of the country by air. The airline's focus on providing direct flight connectivity to regional hubs not only ensures better connectivity, it also has a cascading effect on tourism and economic activity in the region. SpiceJet has added multiple UDAN destinations to the country's aviation map including Pakyong, Jharsuguda, Kandla, Darbhanga, Kanpur, Ajmer (Kishangarh), among others

***1.06 crore tourists visited Jammu & Kashmir from January to July 3 this year**

An estimated 1.06 crore tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir from January to July 3 this year, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in the Rajya Sabha recently. Responding to questions in the House, the Minister also said nearly 30,000 people have been recruited in the public sector in Jammu and Kashmir since 2019. "During the current calendar year, i.e., from January 2022 till July 3, 2022, the tourist footfall in UT of Jammu and Kashmir increased significantly and estimated to be around 1,06,24,000," he said replying to a written question. Rai did not specify whether the number of tourists includes pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi temple and Amarnath Cave. He said that 75 offbeat destinations have been identified for tourism across Jammu and Kashmir. In order to attract private investors from across the country to invest in tourism infrastructure, the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Policy, 2020, has been notified and tourism given the status of industry to encourage investment, he said. Replying to another question, the Minister said special recruitment rules were made and various departmental rules amended to accelerate the recruitment process in a transparent and time bound manner. "Recruitments in the public sector have been carried out from the year 2019 onwards totaling 29,806," he said. On August 5, 2019, the central government abrogated Article 370, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated the erstwhile state into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

***Vistara launches 'Dawat-e-Awadh' inflight food festival till 31, Aug '22**

Vistara recently announced 'Dawat-e-Awadh' – a special meal festival, on board all its long-haul flights that will be served till August 31, 2022. Customers flying Vistara from India to Frankfurt, London and Paris will be offered flavorful Awadhi delicacies, in response to popular demand for regional favorites on these flights. Commenting on the newly launched inflight menu, Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara, said, "At Vistara, we are on a constant quest to find ways to delight our customers, and completing two years of our long-haul operations gives us the perfect reason to celebrate with them. We have often received very positive feedback on Indian regional favorite meals from our customers on flights to and from the UK and Europe, regardless of their demographics. 'Dawat-e-Awadh' is designed to create a memorable gastronomic experience for our customers onboard India's finest full-service carrier." The special menu offers several vegetarian and non-vegetarian Awadhi dishes such as Zafrani Pulao, Dum ka Paneer, Murg Handi Korma, Aloo Bukhara Kofta, Achari Murg Khurchan with Khamiri Roti etc. along with desserts like Shahi Tukda and Matka Kulfi. Vistara had started its long-haul operations, with direct connectivity between Delhi and London Heathrow, in August 2020.

***1400, US flights cancelled due to thunderstorms**

Tens of thousands of flyers had their travel plans upended on **August 5** after airlines cancelled about 1,400 US flights as thunderstorms hit the East Coast. Another 6,300 flights had been delayed by early evening, according to tracking service FlightAware. It was the second straight day of major disruptions and the worst day for cancellations since mid-June. The three major airports in the New York City area and Reagan National Airport outside Washington, DC, recorded the most cancellations. American Airlines scrubbed about 250 flights, or 7 per cent of its schedule. Republic Airways, which operates smaller planes for American Eagle, Delta Connection and United Express, cancelled a similar number, about 25 per cent of its flights. Airlines flying in the US had a bad June, cancelling more than 21,000 flights or 2.7 per cent, up from 1.8 per cent in June 2019, before airlines pushed workers to quit during the pandemic. The airlines did better in July, however, cancelling about 14,000 flights, or 1.8 per cent. Delays have been more persistent - above 23 per cent in both June and July.

***AirAsia India launches daily direct flights from Lucknow**

AirAsia India recently commenced daily direct flights from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. With this launch, Lucknow has become the 18th airport in the AirAsia India network. Commenting on the launch, Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer, AirAsia India, said, “We are delighted to add Lucknow to our network and commence operations in Uttar Pradesh. The pent-up demand shown by the city in the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) segment along with the future prospects of travel were a contributing factor in zeroing in on Lucknow as our next destination. By operating 112 weekly direct flights at convenient timing, connecting Lucknow to Bengaluru, Delhi, Goa, Kolkata and Mumbai, we look forward to driving value for our consumer base and enabling a pleasant flying experience the AirAsia India way.” The daily direct flights have been started from Lucknow to Bangalore, Goa and New Delhi. Besides, the airline plans to operate flights from Lucknow to its other two hubs, Mumbai and Kolkata from September 1, 2022, with a total of 112 weekly direct flights connecting Lucknow to these cities. The flights will also connect Lucknow through convenient one-stop itineraries to other airports on its network, such as Srinagar, Kochi, Hyderabad, and Guwahati.

***Lufthansa forecasts a return to profit for the full year amid surging travel demand**

Germany’s Lufthansa said recently that it expected demand for short-haul flights in Europe to drive growth at its passenger airlines this year, forecasting a return to group operating profit for the full year. Travelers have returned to the skies following Covid-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions in 2020 and 2021, helping airlines like Lufthansa, Air France-KLM and British Airways-owner IAG to return to profit this summer. Lufthansa said that bookings for August to December were currently at an average of 83 per cent of the pre-crisis level. Shares in the carrier jumped 4.5 per cent after-market open. The travel chaos has led airlines to cut back capacity, with Lufthansa cancelling more than 2,000 flights this summer. It said it expected to offer about 80 per cent of pre-crisis capacity in the third quarter, less than previously planned. That should, however, help it record a significant increase in quarterly adjusted earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) compared with the second quarter, it said. Industrial action Lufthansa posted adjusted EBIT of EUR 393 million for the three months through June thanks to booming demand for air cargo flights, up from a year earlier loss of EUR 827 million. Its passenger airline business reported an adjusted loss before interest and tax of 86 million euros for the second quarter, hit by costs related to flight disruptions. Lufthansa may face further disruption from industrial action by its workers, with a walkout by ground staff forcing it last week to cancel more than 1,000 flights. Talks with labor union Verdi, which demands 9.5 per cent more pay for ground staff, are continuing on Thursday. Lufthansa’s pilots last weekend also voted in favor of walking out, though no strike has been announced so far. Lufthansa forecast a full-year adjusted group EBIT of more than 500 million euros, up from a year-earlier loss of 2.3 billion euros.

***FAITH proposes DBT for hospitality and tourism sector**

The Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (**FAITH**) has asked the government to consider a **Direct Benefit Transfer** (DBT) to support the livelihood of the people who are jobless ever since the pandemic struck the sector. The federation has urged for DBT of an amount equivalent to their pre-pandemic basic salaries to support the livelihood of crores of people and their families till the duration of the pandemic. Raising the demand for DBT, the FAITH said, “Pre- pandemic, it was roughly estimated that between 10% - 12% of India’s direct and indirect employment came from tourism, travel & hospitality services. This included both skilled and unskilled jobs across the length and breadth of our country. With no tourism business, a lot of these employees are temporarily out of jobs or on minimum wages. Their service skills have been cultivated with a lot of diligence and passion over years which makes Incredible India a reality that it is.” The federation also demanded waiver or compensation of Fixed Statutory liabilities of the businesses in the sector by both the states and the Central

departments. Despite no revenues, there are statutory liabilities and compliance liabilities at both state and central Government level and other regulatory bodies which still need to be met. With no revenues and businesses continuing under shutdown for measures beyond their control, it is principally unfair for these businesses to continue paying fixed costs of statutory liabilities and compliances for them, FAITH said. Therefore, the federation has asked all these statutory fees and levies to be waived off till the period of the pandemic. As a solution, till the time the waiver happens, FAITH has suggested setting up of a corpus fund at the aegis of the Tourism Ministry to meet these monthly liabilities of the stakeholder.

***No proposal for consideration to set up regulator for ecommerce platforms: Govt of India**

In a written statement to the Parliament, the ministry of commerce & industry has made it clear that there is no proposal before the government currently to set up an independent regulator for governing and regulating the working of the e-commerce platforms in the country. Answering a question related to the reasons for the delay in finalization of the pending e-commerce regulation, and whether the government is proposing to constitute an independent regulator for e-commerce platforms, the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, **Som Parkash**, has replied that there is no such proposal under consideration for constituting an independent regulator for e-commerce platforms at present. Moreover, under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019; the Department of Consumer Affairs on July 23, 2020 notified the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. These rules specify the duties and liabilities of sellers on market place-based e-commerce entities and inventory-based e-commerce entities, including consumer grievance redressal related thereto, the minister said. The stand of the government on the issue gains importance in the light of recent demand by the hotel and restaurant industry associations to the Union Consumer Affairs Minister, Piyush Goyal, who happens to be the Minister for Commerce & Industry as well, proposing a “watchdog” to govern the working of the Online Travel Companies (OTAs) and Food Service Aggregators (FSAs).

***Palace on Wheels to run from September in Rajasthan**



Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) Chairman, Dharmendra Rathore, said that Rajasthan’s well-known luxury train - Palace on Wheels (POW) - is likely to run from September. “The corporation and the state government are keen to run the train on a public-private partnership for which meetings with the company are going on at an advanced stage. Palace on Wheels is one of the most prestigious tourism products of the state, and Rajasthan must capitalize on its popularity,” said Rathore. The RTDC Chairman made these announcements

while meeting a delegation of the Federation of Hospitality and Tourism of Rajasthan (FHTR) at the Paryatan Bhawan in Jaipur recently. The delegation was led by FHTR President Apurv Kumar. Due to Covid pandemic, service of the luxury train remained halted for past two years. However, the RTDC has been planning to get it back on track after improvement in the situation. RTDC in association with Indian Railways has been operating the Palace on Wheels since 1982. This luxury train has been inspired by the personal coaches of erstwhile rulers and offers modern facilities amid a heritage backdrop. Every coach comes with several chambers and each chamber is decorated with furniture and details in accordance with local heritage.

***IndiGo Leads India’s Air Travel Recovery as Competition**

That strong demand propelled IndiGo to some financial records in the June quarter. The airline achieved its highest ever revenue, yields, and unit revenue — 130 billion rupees (\$1.6 billion), 5.24 rupees, and 4.69 rupees, respectively — Dutta said. And the addition of new competitors, including Akasa Air that launches on August 7, and a reboot of Jet Airways, is not expected to dent this financial performance. “Whether it’s older airlines or newer airlines, they are all run by very professional veterans of the industry. So far we see no irrational behavior by anyone, everyone’s behaving sensibly,” Dutta said. IndiGo is also benefitting from schedule cuts at competitor SpiceJet, he added. But IndiGo missed its sought-after return to the black from pandemic losses due to fuel and foreign exchange pressures. These external forces pushed the airline to a 10.6-billion-rupee (\$134 million) net loss in the June quarter. Airline Weekly estimates that IndiGo would have posted a 6 percent operating margin without the added pressures. Fuel and foreign exchange are forecast to drive another loss in the September quarter, historically the weakest seasonally on IndiGo’s calendar, Dutta said. This has the airline looking towards the December quarter, the third in its fiscal year, for a return

to profitability given no signs of the travel bug abating. With fuel costs and foreign exchange rates are largely outside of its control, IndiGo is focused on what it does hold sway over, primarily growth. The airline flew 21 percent more passenger capacity in the June quarter than it did in 2019. Much of that was in the booming Indian domestic market, but also included the full recovery of its international network except few destinations.

*El Al Could Expand to India, Southeast Asia With Saudi Airspace Opening



Saudi Arabia, in conjunction with a visit by U.S. President Joe Biden, said on July 14 that it would open its airspace to all airlines. That effectively means an end to restrictions on aircraft flying to and from Israel, which currently must fly around Saudi airspace. Citing a U.S. official, reported that the Saudi government would soon grant Israeli airlines overflight access, as well allow direct charter flights from Israel for Muslims participating in the annual hajj pilgrimage in Mecca. Today, Emirates, Etihad Airways, FlyDubai, and Wizz Air's Abu Dhabi division all take advantage of that exception with nonstop flights to Tel Aviv. Gulf Air also flies between Bahrain and Israel. And, Saudi Arabia made an exception in 2018 for Air India to overfly the country on its flights to Tel Aviv. The three main Israeli airlines — El Al, Arkia, and Israir — offer scheduled service to the United Arab Emirates. However, the latest move by Saudi Arabia stops short of allowing the airlines to offer scheduled flights to its territory. El Al is best positioned to benefit from the reopening of Saudi airspace. Even absent the opportunity to serve the country, the carrier's routes to countries like India and Thailand will benefit from shorter routings that saves time and fuel. Flying through Saudi airspace also makes potential service to Australia a more realistic possibility. Israeli airlines, however, still must avoid much of the Middle East's airspace, including the skies over Iran, Iraq and Syria. Economic motivations for Saudi's airspace reopening aside, Gulf countries and Israel are becoming closer diplomatically because of geopolitical considerations, particularly the common security threat they see in Iran. The U.S., a provider of financial and military assistance to both Israel and the Gulf states, likewise views Iran as a threat to its interests. The easing of Saudi's restrictions, even in a limited state, is certainly a welcome development for airlines.

*Lufthansa CEO Sees Some Flight Disruptions Continuing Into Next Year



Lufthansa Group CEO Carsten Spohr was confident that the worst has passed, at least for his airlines with the situation having “stabilized” at the group's hubs, he said in opening remarks to the group's June quarter results call Thursday. This is good news for anyone who has misconnected in Frankfurt and had to wait days for an alternative flight in recent weeks, or had their entire itinerary thrown to the wind by the one-day strike that hit Lufthansa on July 27. But the stabilization has come at a cost for the airline: tens of thousands of flights have been thinned from schedules, staff temporarily rehired, shifts added at airports, and digital functionality enhanced for travelers. In total, the Lufthansa Group estimates €450-500 million (\$459-510 million) in one-time costs this year related to the operational issues. The situation, while improved, has not fully passed. Spohr described the industry as in the second phase of a three-phase recovery process where demand is ramping up faster than staffing and other services can handle. The third, and final, phase that includes “full normalization in terms of personnel, in terms of reliability, [and] punctuality,” and is not expected until 2023, he said. The group still faces key hurdles in achieving the normalization Spohr sees next year. Negotiations continue with both its pilots and ground staff unions on new contracts, the outcome of which is likely to result in higher costs. Pilots have threatened to strike in the coming weeks over a pay dispute. Asked by analysts if Lufthansa was willing to sacrifice its multiple-operating unit model for standardized pay rates across airlines, Steenbergen said no. “One overall pay scale system for all the airlines in Germany is, for us, a strategic no go. The group also awaits a decision from Rome on its proposed strategic investment in ITA Airways. “Our patience is not endless,” Spohr said to Italy's political leadership on the privatization process. He reiterated his belief that the Lufthansa Group is “the right partner” for ITA Airways.

*Air India's load factor improves to 80% under Tata group management

One of the most dramatic improvements has been noticed in Air India's passenger load factor (PLF) – a crucial metric of capacity utilization of an airline's fleet that shows how many seats it has been able to fill on every flight. From February to June, Air India has clocked an impressive 80 per cent load factor on its domestic services. During the same period last year, when it was under government control, its domestic PLF stood at 60 per cent. In the whole of 2021, it managed a PLF of 68 per cent. This in many ways is a return to its 2019 PLF levels. And it still has some way to go to catch up with its competitors like IndiGo, SpiceJet, and GoFirst, which utilize their capacity better than the Tata-owned airline. A similar turnaround in operational efficiency is discernable in its international. However, Air India hasn't been able to translate that into greater market share. In June, its domestic market share stood at 7.5 per cent, considerably lower than the 10 per cent it had inherited



in January. Air India, which had the highest number of passenger complaints, has also managed to resolve issues like delays, and denial of boarding, among others, that had left flyers fuming. In June, it halved its complaints per 10,000 passengers to just two, compared with the same month last year. Within a couple of months of taking over the national airline, the Tata group had effected management changes led by the appointment of Tata Sons Vice-president Nipun Aggarwal as the airline's chief commercial officer. A couple of other senior management personnel from Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Tata Steel were also brought into key roles. In June, **Campbell Wilson**, former CEO of Singapore International Airlines (SIA) low-cost carrier Scoot, was onboarded as Air India's chief executive officer after the requisite clearances were given by the Union home ministry for his appointment.



Campbell Wilson

*IATA: Air cargo is stable and resilient



The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data for global air cargo markets showing healthy and stable performance. Global demand, measured in cargo ton-kilometers (CTKs*), was 6.4% below June 2021 levels (-6.6% for international operations). This was an improvement on the year-on-year decline of 8.3% seen in May. Global demand for the first half year was 4.3% below 2021 levels (-4.2% for international operations). Compared to pre-COVID levels (2019) half-year demand was up 2.2%. Capacity was 6.7% above June 2021 (+9.4% for international operations). This was an increase on the 2.7% year-on-year growth recorded in May. Capacity for the first half-year was up 4.5% (+5.7% for international operations) compared to first half-year of 2021. Compared to pre-COVID levels demand was up 2.5%. Air cargo performance is being impacted by several factors. Trade activity ramped-up slightly in June as lockdowns in China due to Omicron were eased. New export orders, a leading indicator of cargo demand and world trade, decreased in all markets, except China. "Air cargo demand over the first half of 2022 was 2.2% above pre-COVID levels (first half 2019). That's a strong performance, particularly considering continuing supply chain constraints and the loss of capacity due to the war in Ukraine. But developments will need to be closely monitored in the second half," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General. Total cargo traffic market share by region of carriers in terms of CTK is: Asia-Pacific 32.4%, Europe 22.9%, North America 27.2%, Middle East 13.4%, Latin America 2.2%, and Africa 1.9%.

*Malaysia ditches all Covid Entry Restrictions.



Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah confirmed all Covid entry requirements have been scrapped allowing all vaccinated and unvaccinated tourists to enter. Unvaccinated travelers were previously required to follow strict testing requirements, while proof of vaccination in the MySejahtera app. "However, vaccination requirements are still subject to any airline's regulations," Dr Noor Hisham said. The Traveler's Pass no longer needs to be filled in, regardless of their vaccination status. "Upon arrival, if a traveler is detected with a fever through the thermal scanners or found to be unwell through self-referral by the traveler, they will be referred for re-examination by medical authorities," Noor Hisham added. Masks are still required indoors and on public transport

***First-Ever International Kite Festival To Be Held In Mamallapuram, Chennai**



A clear blue sky with a myriad of kites, followed by endless laughter and fun – is coming true in Chennai. **Mamallapuram in Chennai** is all set to host its first edition of the Tamil Nadu International Kite Festival. Thousands of pretty kites of different shapes



and sizes will be seen in the open air, unhindered by anything. It is a three-day event which will start on **August 13 and will end on August 15**. The event will take place in TTDC Ocean view in Mahabalipuram, which is spread across 14 acres. The event will have various food stalls, games, workshops on how to make kites, competitions for kids, and art and music performances in the evening. Eminent personalities from the music industry like Nithya Shree, Kumaran Drums, Karthick Devaraj and Diwakar will be performing. Competitors from all across the countries like the US, Thailand, Malaysia as well as India, will participate. According to media reports, a total of 10 teams will be participating with 100 plus kites. These kites are designed by using ripstop nylon. The prepping of the kite can either take two weeks or a whole month. Right from being as tall as 20 feet to as small as three feet, kites are made. Different countries have different ways of designing their kites based on their trick and technique for making those. The event is organized by **Benedict Savio**, the founder of Global Media box in association with **Tamil Nadu Tourism**. According to media reports, this festival helps in bringing friends and families together and lets them have a great time. Benedict also organizes the annual hot air balloon festival in Pollachi in Chennai every year. The entry is free for children and adults have to pay Rs 150. To know more about the event, click this link: <http://www.tnikf.com/>

***Rakesh Jhunjhunwala's Akasa Air operates its first flight**



Akasa Air, India's newest airline, on Sunday operated its first flight from Mumbai to Ahmedabad. The maiden flight took off from Mumbai at 10:05am with a scheduled arrival at Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport at 11:25 am. "Today marks a significant milestone in Akasa Air's journey as we successfully commence our commercial operations with our maiden flight from Mumbai to Ahmadabad. Akasa Air was flagged off by Civil Aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. During its launch, the minister reflected on the troubles being faced by the aviation sector. "The sector across the world has been through a very trying time through the last decade or two," Scindia was quoted as saying by news agency PTI. "Many black swan events have turned the fate of this industry globally. Therefore, I say this is a new dawn in many ways for our sector in India." Meanwhile, Rakesh Jhunjhunwala joined other passengers on board Akasa Air's maiden flight. Akasa Air will have 26 weekly flights from Mumbai to Ahmedabad. From August 13, it will operate 28 weekly flights from Bengaluru to Kochi.

***Akasa Air to start flights on Chennai-Mumbai route from Sept 15**

Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed Akasa Air on Tuesday said it will start operating flights on the Chennai-Mumbai route from September 15. The new carrier will launch commercial flight operations on August 7 by running its first service on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route. Bengaluru-Mumbai routes from August 19. Flying with the airline code QP, Akasa Air will begin commercial operations with two aircraft from August 07, it said. It will add an additional two aircraft each month and by the end of 2023, it will have inducted 18 aircraft, the airline mentioned.

***Chennai's Second Airport At Parandur To Be Built With Rs 20,000 Crore**



Parandur, the site for Chennai's second airport, is located around 15 km northeast of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu. The shortest road route from Parandur to the existing Chennai airport is 59 km and to Chennai City center is 70 km. While the existing Chennai airport is spread across 1,317 acres, the new airport at Parandur is planned to be built on 4,971 acres. The new airport would be built with an investment of Rs 20,000 crore with a capacity to handle 100 million passengers per annum, will have two runways, terminal buildings, taxiways, aprons and cargo terminals. Currently, the existing international airport at Meenambakkam of Chennai handles around 400 flights and almost 40,000 passengers per day (2.2 crore passengers per year). With no chances to expand its runway or facilities, the present airport is expected to reach saturation soon (3.5 crore passengers per year). Thus, the second airport is a necessity, according to infrastructure experts. The Chief Minister, M. K. Stalin said, it is imperative for Chennai to have a new airport to meet its demands, attain our goal of a USD 1 Trillion economy and make Chennai the best destination for investments in Asia. "The application to get the site clearance from the committee or Union Civil Aviation Ministry is expected to be submitted soon. Subsequently, the in-principle approval and permission to operate would be obtained from the civil aviation ministry," he added in the statement.

IndiGo introduces '3-Point Disembarkation System' to mark its 16th anniversary



The country's leading carrier IndiGo today introduced a new revolutionary '**Three Point Disembarkation**' process which is a Global First, will enable its customers to exit the aircraft faster than ever before. The new Three Point Disembarkation process will be carried out from two forward and one rear exit ramp, making IndiGo the first airline in the world to use this process. This novel Three Point Disembarkation process will help IndiGo set new standards in customer experience on its 16th anniversary.

Commemorating the 16th anniversary of the airline, Ronojoy Dutta, CEO and Whole-time Director, said, "It brings us immense pride to be the first airline in the world to use a three-point system. At IndiGo, we constantly and dynamically keep reinventing our internal standards to enable a hassle-free customer experience as well as contributing to operational efficiencies for all stakeholders including airport operators and ground handling Companies. IndiGo has conducted trials and has received encouraging feedback from customers. The cabin crew shall make the necessary announcements to inform customers at the time of deboarding. This new disembarkation procedure will be implemented on IndiGo's A320 and A321 fleet for flights arriving at remote stands at Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru airports to begin with, and will be progressively deployed across the network.

***China eases Covid suspension for international flights**

China on Sunday (7 Aug) shortened its suspension period for inbound international flights carrying Covid-positive passengers, signaling that Beijing could soon ease its strict border controls. Incoming flights carrying five positive Covid-19 cases, or four percent of the total passengers, will now face a reduced one-week suspension, the Civil Aviation Administration (CAAC) said in a statement. Previously, if a plane brought in five infected passengers, all flights operated by the responsible airline along the same route were suspended for 2 weeks. Flights logging an eight percent passenger's positivity rate will be barred for two weeks, CAAC said.

***South Korea scraps travel restrictions for Indians, announces special marketing campaigns**



In a big boost to push numbers from India, South Korea has removed all travel restrictions for tourists and announced a slew of initiatives in the luxury market, business leisure and learning experiences for the Indian market. All Indian travellers can enjoy quarantine-free travel to the destination, Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) India, the tourism arm of the Republic of Korea under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, shared on Wednesday while announcing the reopening of South Korea to

Indian travellers. However, arriving passengers will have to take a mandatory PCR test within one day of arrival. To provide hassle-free access to Covid-19 screening, test centres have been expanded to more airports across Korea. Currently, there are three test centres at Incheon International Airport and one at Gimhae International Airport, the organization shared. We are excited to share initiatives to facilitate travel for business, experience and learning. We have further elevated traveller experience with immersive experiential centres, re-imagined tourism offerings and look forward to hosting our Indian visitors,” said **Young-Geul Choi**, Director of Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) India while addressing a joint press briefing, along with representatives of VFS Global and key airlines – Korean Air and Asiana Airlines. The organization is also planning twin-city roadshows for luxury travellers in August with the participation of DMCs from Korea. The roadshows will offer a glimpse of the country's rich culture, unique venues and culinary offerings.

***Domestic & foreign tourists at all monuments, museums & archaeological sites- Entry free**



To commemorate the 75th Independence Day celebrations, no fees shall be charged from visitors (both domestic and foreign) at all ticketed centrally protected monuments, museums, archaeological sites and remains, from August 5- August 15, 2022. as part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’, informed **Union Tourism and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy** in a tweet. In an order, ASI notified that all archaeological site museums will also be expected from charging any entry fee for the next 10 days. Over 3,500 monuments are

protected by the ASI across India. ASI under the Ministry of Culture, Govt of India is the premier organization for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. The Ministry of Culture is overseeing the cultural events to celebrate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a series of events to which were organized by the Government of India to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of India’s Independence. The Mahotsav is being celebrated as a Jan-Utsav in the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari.

***Forgetful flyers left behind 32,000 items at Bengaluru International Airport**

Forgetful air passengers have ensured that the ‘Lost and Found’ section at Bengaluru’s Kempe Gowda International Airport (KIA) remains buzzing with activity. A whopping 32,169 articles have been deposited here in the first half of this year. A spokesperson of Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) told The New Indian Express that the rush to catch flights makes passengers often leave behind items in the security hold area (the space where passengers wait after security checks and before boarding their flight). “Electronic items like data cables, ear pods, ear phones, pen drives, mobile phones and watches are frequently received at the ‘Lost and Found’ section,” the spokesperson said. The handing over of items which have enormous sentimental value to a person evokes strong emotions. If you spot an item inside the airport unattended, just Security Force (CISF) personnel or an airport staffer. “The ‘Lost and Found’ section has a dedicated team that safely stores the articles reported to it. They also alert the item owner if contact details are available “, the spokesperson said. One needs to access this to section, which is updated regularly: <https://www.bengaluruairport.com/travellers/passenger-services/lost-found>.