



An E-Bulletin

Volume 13 | October 2010

TAAI

Newsline

For Private Circulation Only



Travel Agents Association of India

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues,

It is a month since the 59th TAAI Convention in Phuket, and after all the thank-you notes in appreciation of the efforts of my colleagues of the MC, our Hosts, sponsors, speakers, assistants, staff and one & all who made this magnificent event a reality, it is time now to put everything down in prose and pictures which can be seen in the centre pages of this issue.

We at TAAI were immediately involved with the APJC meeting after the Phuket Convention held on October 12th at the IATA office in Mumbai, to discuss some important issues dogging our industry.

You will agree with me that we have gone through a great many changes in the past two years and have experienced a kind of phenomenal growth. After the recession we have bounced back and the industry is maturing. Our business is leveling off and is becoming more like the steady, sustainable growth common to other industries. In an industry where the market changes every now and then, due to external forces such as national security, floods, avalanches, dengue amongst others, you have to be quick on your feet to survive. And that, my dear friends, we have done time and again in the last 2 years. So far we've managed to keep pace with the changes, remained flexible and have succeeded in pulling ourselves together in spite of the zero commission regime being imposed on us. Let us remain committed thus and move forward as the year is soon coming to an end.

From 2nd to 14th October, we have seen the face of India changing globally. The Common Wealth Games 2010 has ensured that! And the world has seen that India can overwhelm. The sudden growth in Delhi due to hosting of the CWG and the shock waves of a spectacular

opening and closing ceremonies seen by the whole world on TV will now reverberate in every corner of the globe.

101 medals and a 2nd position in CWG rankings! What more can we ask for? Maybe a No1 ranking is elusive to India (except in Cricket) but certainly we can look forward to more medals at the forthcoming Asian games and Olympics!! Dream Big is now the mantra we ride on in the world of sports and that, dear members, should be our mantra as well & we should also ensure that our trade can also flourish in different directions.

On an invite to TAAI from the International Travel Mart, our Hon Treasurer Mr. Iqbal Mulla and myself visited Goa to be part of this fair in Panaji. Curtains came down on the maiden edition of International Travel Mart (ITM) Panaji on Sunday 17th October with buyers and sellers suggesting that the event should precede or follow Kerala Tourism Mart (KTM). ITM, a brain child of Goa Tourism, began with 200 participants from the industry from various countries and was successful in its maiden venture.

My friends, you must have received the Ready Reckoner on Service Tax booklet sent for your quick & ready reference. Read it carefully as it has a mine of information, all of which is relevant to our day-to-day business of travel and in case you have not received a copy, you may request our secretariat in Mumbai to send you the same. It is a great source of knowledge.

All in all, October has been a busy month of discussions and meetings and of course there is an all-round air of festivity of Ram Leela, Durga Puja, Navratri, and Dassehra and soon Diwali will be upon us.

Till then happy reading and here's wishing you and your family a very prosperous Deepawali.

Rajji Rai, President

Editor's Note

Dear Friends,

Wishing you all a very happy & Prosperous festive season

Having enjoyed the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies of the 19th Common Wealth Games (CWG) in Delhi that has made India proud! Many of you who love sports must have seen all the exciting tournaments and games.

At TAAI, we have just concluded our successful Indian Travel Congress, 59th Convention in Phuket and come back with great memories. Some of our Regions and Chapters have had workshops for the benefit of members and celebrated their annual Days too. You can read all about it in the inside pages including appreciative lines from members about the Convention as well as for TAAI's System One along with other news items apart from the World Tourism Day being celebrated in many

FLASH NEWS !!

During the UFTAA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held in Rimini, Italy, on 22nd October, 2010, Mr. Rajinder Rai, was elected as a Director of the Federation. For the first time since its foundation, 40 years ago, UFTAA - the United Federation of Travel Agents Associations representing over 70,000 travel agents all over the world, held its AGM in Italy.

"I am happy and honored with this development and look forward to a fruitful & interactive year in UFTAA" said Mr. Rai.

nations. Friends, do write to us with your feedback if any. We are always welcome to suggestions! Meanwhile enjoy reading and celebrating with Family & friends

TEAM TAAI NEWSLINE

The Indian Travel Congress in Phuket

TAAI's annual Indian Travel Congress, 59th Convention & Exhibition of TAAI got off to a lightning start at the Marquee, Laguna Latitude in Phuket with over 800 delegates gracing the occasion.

Inaugurating the convention, TAAI president Rajji Rai, called upon the agents to transform themselves to consultants and expand their horizon by being a GAME CHANGER (theme of the Convention) in the globally challenging scenario. He said there was an urgent need to develop business strategies, to weave in the consultant-clientele relationship to boost our economy. Lucrative Avenues have been identified in the trade by creating jobs not only considering the potential increase in the tourism industry but also by creating competent youth.

Mr. Rai said that whilst harnessing technology, our consultants can now access and offer a better packaging of our services, closer interaction and wider channels of communication. But with online transactions coming in vogue, one way to handle the anxiety of the travel consultants is to understand the fact that no computer has the personal touch that a travel consultant has in his dealings and the extra mile that the consultant can walk for his clients. Neither can a computer application be as sagacious in its judgment as a travel consultant can be.

The President also touched upon the salient features of TAAI's new technology SYSTEM ONE. He informed delegates that the discussions on various tax issues will continue to hold the fort till it is resolved.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Rai said "more than being informative, it is necessary to first be aware of ourselves and have clear set goal as game changers. We must be competent to analyze and introspect rather than looking for an external mentor. With the opportunities we have here today, we can work at keeping abreast of what is to be done next. By bartering ideas, we are sure things will fall in their places. And by joining hands together, we are bound to see ourselves surpassing our own set standards."

The President praised all the M C Members, Regional and Chapters Chairmen /Chairpersons & his office bearers for the stupendous job being carried out to achieve the goals of TAAI for the 2020 era. Speaking on the event HE Pinak Ranjan Chakravarthy, India Ambassador to Thailand, appreciated the efforts of TAAI in bringing the convention to Phuket and lauded the bilateral ties between the two nations.

Mr. Peeraon Thongsirisate, Chief of Phuket Governor's office offered the delegates all help in promoting Thai tourism and vice versa.

In his Vote of Thanks the Vice President Mr. Jagdeep S Rikhy thanked HE Mr. Pinak Ranjan Chakravarthy the Indian Ambassador to

Thailand for his participation and inspiring speech and said that the relations between India and Thailand would only improve because of his presence in Bangkok. Whilst thanking the Phuket Governor's office through his representative Mr. Peeraon Thongsirisate Mr. Rikhy said that the Phuket Government had gone out of their way to make TAAI feel welcome in Phuket and assured them that the Indian Travel Congress would go a long way in promoting Phuket to the Indian travel trade and thus visitors from India. Next he thanked the Governor of Tourism Authority of Thailand Mr. Suraphon Svetasreni and his entire team including Mr. Pasakorn, Mr. Chattan and Ms. Pinky for their stupendous support and generous hospitality for the Convention. Whilst thanking the Convention Committee he acknowledged the tremendous guidance and efforts of the President Mr. Rajji Rai and support of Co Chairman Mr. Iqbal Mullah and Secretary General Mr. Sunil Kumar and the entire Convention Committee. The entire Managing Committee and Chairpersons were also acknowledged for their constant support and inputs to make this a memorable Convention. The Vice President then thanked all the sponsors without which an event of this magnitude would not be possible. He acknowledged the support of each and every person in the TAAI Mumbai Secretariat and Delhi office who worked extremely hard to ensure the delegates have a comfortable Convention. In the end he thanked the overwhelming number of delegates who had come from all parts of India and some from overseas who he said vindicated the Convention Committee's choice of Phuket as a venue for the 59th Indian Travel Congress.

The next 2 days (25th and 26th September) saw very, informative, interactive and serious Business sessions being attended by a large gathering eager to hear experts speak on various changes for better avenue models to further their business interests, or on how to earn more by offering various services to customers without losing the basic base or on the role of Travel Agents and Tourism Business in India assuming greater significance amongst many other topics.

Spouses were in for a special treat of different types of spas, visits to various islands and shores and lovable scenic beauties. The evening entertainment highlights included live show by Indian idols Naushad, Shashi and Manisha. The youngsters stole the hearts and made everyone dance to their tunes. A visit to Fantasea which was booked exclusively for TAAI by TAT, followed by Iyara show was simply fantastic. On the final day, the Aryan band enthralled the guests which saw the dance floor packed most of the evening.

Last but not the least a round of applause to the Government of Thailand, Governor of Phuket, Tourism authority of Thailand, Laguna resorts for being a superb host in all aspects for making everyone's stay comfortable and to our sponsors for their excellent co operation and support throughout the convention.

A READY RECKONER ON SERVICE TAX

Ranjit Vig, Chairman - Service Tax Council, had put together a ready reckoner specially compiled in form of a Handbook covering a spectrum of issues related to Service Tax. This initiative has been made after receiving numerous issues from Association members in respect of interpretation and queries. Members, Your council has over a period of a few months appointed a highly respected and a prominent consultant (Ashok Batra & Associates) who specializes on the subject matter. " We have with deep consultation with them created the Handbook for easy reference for our members. " said Mr. Vig. The council is equally glad to observe that since the distribution of the same to the MC and Regional and Chapter Chairpersons as well as members, there has been a negligible comeback on issues, as many of the responses are self explanatory in the Handbook . However, we will welcome any feedback or clarity that may still be necessary on a subject matter which could be ambiguous in the Service Tax rules, as such. Please bring these issues to the notice of the Council so that they can provide you with a clear perspective on the matter on an ongoing basis. The council is grateful to all those who have taken the effort and initiative to provide their inputs in helping to put together this documents for use of our members. Members, be sure to write in if you need any clarifications !

TAAI's System One

A press meet was held in New Delhi on 7th September, to launch "System One" the e - distribution platform of TAAI exclusively for its member agents. The meet saw a full house of press officials, TAAI Members along with National Office Bearers, M C Members, Regional and Chapter Chairmen across the country to grace the important occasion. Mr. N G Shankar, Managing Committee Member & Chairman Technology Council gave a presentation and a brief on the advantages of this product.

"System One" was also topic of discussion at the technology business session held at the 59th TAAI Congress held in Phuket, Thailand on 24th - 26th September 2010. Members and airlines present at session were exited and welcomed the initiative taken by TAAI. The feed back from the members were good and few of them are as below.

" System one is a good platform for all single locations companies like ours to look at an extra earning without any hard and fast rules of targets. It is easy to operate, as even a layman to the field, with just english knowledge would be able to access system one and complete bookings without any technical knowledge of ticketing, etc. We would love to see system one with most of the airlines under the fold, which could be excellent."

M.S.Raghavan - MD

Passion And Pleasure Travels & Tours Pvt Ltd, Bangalore



N G Shankar Chairman, Technology Council addressing the Press Meet

" System One is time saver and user friendly . It saves the headache of surfing all the airlines' website for the lowest fare. One can answer the customer in an efficient manner"

Ms Bhumika

Kaleidoscope Travel Consultant Pvt Ltd, Pune

"The Travel Counselor servicing a client had to view different sites in addition to the GDS to provide options to the customer. System One is the only solution which gives information on ONE Screen of LCC and GDS from your OWN STOCKS.

In my view there is an opportunity for TAAI Agents to work on a single platform and this could also open avenues for negotiating special deals for Big and Small Agents Collectively."

Vijay Mohan Raj - Director

UNIGLOBE Sameera Travel & Tours Pvt Ltd. Hyderabad

"We are using SYSTEM ONE ticket selling platform provided by TAAI since more than six months. It is very useful for all the members of TAAI and it is hassle free and safe cash transaction. Please note that SYSTEM ONE is providing many domestic airlines in a one screen. Previously we have to check each airlines site separately, but now by using System One, we are getting all the information and fares of all airlines at a time on my own screen. Small and Medium agents are unable to take the deal from Airlines as they are unable to achieve the target given by the airlines. Now all agents can use this "System One platform "and get same commission like big travel agents gets and this also without any sales target. We have never faced any difficulty during the use of System One, as we are getting very good response from the helpline team. I must mention that as per my opinion, entire credit of this project goes to Mr.N.G. Shankar and his team. This is TAAI's own system and it is our duty to use the System One. I recommend all the members of TAAI to use this system and get healthy commission as well as to make our association stronger.

Bharat Shah - MD

Parag Travels Pvt. Ltd. Bhavnagar, Gujarat

Its All Happened.....

KUDOS, KUDOS!



Lighting of the Lamp



HE Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, Ambassador to Thailand



Distinguished Guests



In Discussion



Looking at Exhibits

Folks,

You did a great job. Congratulations! keep up the good work. the convention was a great success..the TAAI team provided seamless service. in all my years with TAAI never have I experienced such hospitality with grace the location was great and choice of Phuket was perfect keep up the good work. we are with you. Wish your team a successful innings .

with best wishes
regards,

P.Siddhartha
India Travel Bureau Pvt. Ltd.

Dear Mr. Rajji Rai,

This is to complement and congratulate you and your team for the resounding success of the 59th Convention of TAAI held at Phuket, Thailand. The entire programme was very meticulously planned . Our hotel stay was very pleasant and enjoyable . Even the transport shuttling between hotel – convention--sight seeing was extremely comfortable. I would even like to congratulate Mr. Jagdeep S Rikhy, the Co-Chairman Convention Committee TAAI for the tireless efforts put in by him. Keep up the good work!

With Warm regards,
Yours Sincerely,
Rajnish Malhotra
Travel Junction

Dear Rajji,

Please accept my heartiest compliments to you as the Chairman of the 59th Indian Travel Congress. It was a very good event with a good participation. There was a lot of hard work that went into the planning, sessions, hotels arrangements, events management and the overall impact created. My compliments to you for your leadership and for inspiring the membership to work for the event. Hearty congratulations Jagdeep, Iqbal, Sanjay Datta, Ranjit Vig, members of Convention Committee - MC & Chairpersons and of course our secretariat leaders for their outstanding role.

With warm regards and compliments again..

Sunil Kumar
Travel World
Hon. Secretary General - TAAI



Dancing Crowd

.....In PHUKET!

Dear Sirs

Congratulations again on TAAI Convention in Phuket. It was another sucess of TAAI this year. You made it the magnificent work by your great efforts.

Warm regards!
Tae Shik Kim of Korea Tourism Organization

Dear Rajji,

It was overall a very successful and educative convention at Phuket. Thanks to you and the convention committee team for pulling of an event of such a grandeur.

Regards,
Harmandeep Singh Anand
Jagsons Travels Pvt. Ltd.

Dear Mr. President,

The successful event of our Indian Travel Congress, 59th Convention and Exhibition from the 24th -27th Sept.2010, Phuke's Credit goes to you Mr.President in particular and to convention committee in general .

All Delegates and spouses were felt as their useful convention ever they have attended with an Educative, informative and realistic presentation and enjoyment of their holidays as well.

CONGRATULATIONS !!!

Regards,
P.MURUGESAN
Managing Director,
Pioneer Aero Travels (Madras) Pvt. Ltd.

Dear Sirs,

TAAI convention was a good oppotunity to explore Thailand & have also developed relationship with fellow members. Looking forward for more such events

Regards
Shaishav Parekh, Panam Travels



Foreign Delegates



The President Speaks



Bonding Together



Time to Eat



Happy TAAI Team



Lit Up Marquee

News from Regions / Chapters

TAAI BIDS ADIEU TO Mr. HARKRIPAL SINGH

On 7th September, 2010, The President, Rajji Rai, along with his Office Bearers, Managing Committee Members, Regional and Chapter Chairmen, including many TAAI members from Northern Region met in Delhi to felicitate Mr. Harkripal Singh, Former Chief Representative of TAAI Delhi Office, to pay him a fitting honor for his 10 years of dedicated service to the Association.

Mr. Singh who has retired from TAAI in April 2010 was instrumental in many meetings and interactions being arranged and executed for TAAI Presidents over the past decade particularly with the Ministry of Tourism Officials besides Heads of Airlines, Tourism Boards and other organizations in general. He was a well known face in the corridors of the Government in Delhi.

Mr. Singh headed the Delhi office of TAAI efficiently & diligently. Both amiable and approachable in nature to one and all, his humble demeanor was a laudable feature about his quiet but strong character.

The President presented Mr. Singh with a memento from TAAI for all his efforts in managing his work force in Delhi and got a standing ovation from members who were present.

WE WISH Mr. SINGH ALL GOOD HEALTH AND PROSPERITY IN HIS COMING YEARS.



Mr. Harkripal Singh being welcomed by President Mr. Rajji Rai



A standing ovation for Mr. Singh

NEWS FROM J&K CHAPTER



Prime Minister with J&K Chapter Office Bearers

Recently the Chapter under the leadership of Chairman Haji K M Dar took up the issues of tourism promotion and its revival with the Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh during his recent visit to Kashmir and the PM kindly granted LTC to the air services for boosting tourism in the state. TAAI J&K Chapter urged for more international flights from Srinagar Airport which has already been renovated on modern lines recently.

The Chapter also has made tremendous efforts to make Amarnath Ji Yatra safe and smooth for people and has been very thankful for the kind support and appraisal from His Excellency the Governor and chief Executive of the Shrine Board of the state.

The issue of decline in tourists during the current year because of the recent strikes in the valley have also been taken up with the authorities for compensating the loss to the tourism industry. The state Tourism Directorate has been also very kind to facilitate various stalls in and out side the state and country for promotion of tourism in the state.

NEWS FROM GUJARAT CHAPTER - T2 Terminal visit

TAAI Gujarat chapter office bearers were actively involved in TAAI agents making a visit of the newly opened T2 terminal in Ahmedabad on 2nd October 2010 courtesy Air India and Airport Authority. There were approx. 30 agents who were present in this visit. Mr. Melvin of Air India and his entire team were present to ensure all agents were taken care of and made arrangements to serve snacks to all the agents. Airport Director, Mr. Anuj Agrawal and Mr. Girish Tirkhia, G.M. Ahmedabad Airport were present alongwith their team and took all the agents around the new terminal explaining all the facilities the new terminal has to offer.



T2 Terminal Visit

Mr. Anuj Agrawal and Mr. Girish Tirkhia briefed all agents in detail about the capacity of the new terminal and the underground tunnel through which it is interlinked with the Domestic terminal. Mr. Melvin briefed all agents about the expansion plans of Air India and how this new terminal shall give seamless connectivity via T3 terminal in Delhi for most of Air India's international flights. "All agents were very pleased with this visit and the excellent arrangements done by Air India, Airport Authority and Chapter office bearers." said Mr. Shreeram, Chapter Chairman.

Quote of the Month

"An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind." - *Mahatma Gandhi*

News from Regions / Chapters

News from A P Chapter

WORLD TOURISM DAY IN HYDERABAD

Mr. Imtiaz Qureshi, Chairman, A P Chapter informs us that his Chapter in association with the State Tourism dept. and the Hotel Association of Andhra Pradesh organised a walk on 26th September in Hyderabad as a tribute to World Tourism Day on 27th Sept. The theme of the day was bio diversity and TAAI members along with officials of the hotel association and the state govt undertook this walk preceded by a vintage car rally.

Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organization has celebrated World Tourism Day on September 27. This date was chosen as on that day in 1970, the Statutes of the UNWTO were adopted. The adoption of these Statutes is considered a milestone in global tourism. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness on the role of tourism within the international community and to demonstrate how it affects social, cultural, political and economic values worldwide.

TAAI was the only travel Association invited by the Government to participate which was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Dr. Rosaiah. The event attracted wide publicity and members felt proud to be associated with such a good social cause. After all, Bio-Diversity is topic of discussion the world over and the walk did have an effect on the people as everyone hailed the efforts of all involved in arranging it.



World Tourism Day



Participants



Agents in Parade

AP CHAPTER ANNUAL DINNER

The AP Chapter held its annual dinner on the 18th of September. The event was a fun filled gala evening with almost all the heads of airlines, CRS companies, GMR Airport, the representatives of the hotel associations and all other trade partners along with TAAI members and their families attending.



Greeting Each Other



Agents Discuss



Round Table Conference

TAAI WESTERN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members attended the Western Region's reconvened Annual Meeting on 11 October in Mumbai. Vice President Mr. Jagdeep Rikhy and Hon Treasurer Mr. Iqbal Mulla were invited by the Chairman Mr. Rajesh Rateria to join him and his office bearers on the dais. They went through the agenda of the meeting and the Chairman in his report shared the actions taken by the WR team in solving problems of members and for working towards betterment of TAAI during the last year. The Chairman's Report and Accounts were passed by the house. Those present were unanimous in their concern towards ADMs for churning of bookings etc from domestic airlines.



W. Region Meet

CHAPTER DAY 2010 IN KERALA

Kerala Chapter had its Chapter Day 2010 celebrated on the 15 September 2010. The chief guest and keynote speaker of the evening was Mr. M. Sivasankar IAS, Director, Kerala Tourism. In his speech he emphasized the use and need of modern technology and internet. "The time has gone when passengers and tourists would come to the office of Travel Agents and Tour Operators requesting for services, but we must reach the passengers and tourists using the computer, internet and telephone and expand our business. The tourists are always looking to the internet web sites for the best location, best prices, best facilities and services and compare them before deciding to select a destination or an agent."



Chapter Day in Progress



Austin Varghese with Members

Interactive Seminar on Maharashtra Tourism

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) and the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra organised a one-day interactive seminar on Maharashtra Tourism- Opportunities and Challenges at the Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai on 5th October. The aim was to further develop tourism in the state. It was decided to draft a master plan for developing tourism in the state before December 31, 2010. MTDC has selected a core group, consisting of members from the tourism and hospitality industry, who will collect and compile all suggestions and ideas for a month and then assimilate and draft the master plan by this year-end. TAAI Hon Treasurer and Chairman, Marts and Special Events has been inducted into this committee.

At the program Mr. Ashok Chavan, Chief Minister, Maharashtra said, "The master plan will be a roadmap to identify current issues and further facilitate state tourism. The government will help promote tourism and play the role of a facilitator for the industry. Places such as the coastlines, religious attractions and Bollywood should be brought into focus and worked upon. The year 2011 is the year of tourism for Maharashtra. These measures will be towards pushing Maharashtra as the top state for tourism in India."

The inauguration programme was attended by Dr Vijay Kumar Gavit, Minister of Tourism, Government of Maharashtra; Ashok Chavan, Chief Minister, Maharashtra; Chaggaan Bhujbal, Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra; Prof Varsha Gaikwad, Minister of State for Tourism, Government of Maharashtra; Anand Kulkarni, Principal Secretary, Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra; Kiran Kurundkar, MD, MTDC; Vithal Kamat, President, Maharashtra Economic Development Council (MEDC); Pradip Madhavji, Chairman Tourism Committee, Indian Merchants Chamber.

The seminar involved a three panel discussion, with the first panel discussing on Tourism Infrastructure – role of

government and private participation. The panel comprised of Anand Kulkarni, along with Arup Sen, Executive Director, Cox & Kings Ltd; Sunit Kothari, Chairman, Diamond Jubilee Committee, Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) (HRAWI); Mukund Rathi, Vice President – Special Initiatives, Lavasa Corporation Ltd; Dhanajay Dhawad, Secretary, Public Works Department, Maharashtra; Kamlesh Barot, Vice President, Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI). The first panel discussion was

by Vithal Kamat, Chairman, MEDC..

The second panel held discussions on Package Tours and Promotion-A Way Ahead. The panel comprised of Colvyn Harris, CEO, JWT India; SP Jain, Chairman, Pride Group of Hotels; Ajay Prakash, President, TAFI; Sanjit Shastri, Chief Executive, Beehive Communications; Frederick Divecha, Senior Vice President, Business Development and Marketing, Kuoni Travel India Pvt. Ltd; Avinash Dhakne, Joint MD, MTDC and Iqbal Mulla, Honorary Treasurer, TAAI. The second panel discussion was moderated by Sheldon Santwan, Editor, TravelBiz Monitor.

The third panel held discussions on New Tourism Products – Eco/Agro/Rural/Adventure/Medical/Bollywood Tourism. The panel comprised of Ajay Ambekar, Deputy Secretary Tourism, Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, Government of Maharashtra; Pandurang Taware, Director Marketing, Agri-Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC); Rajeev Jalnapurkar, CEO, Adlabs Entertainment; Nitin Kakodkar, Joint Secretary, Forest Department, Government of Maharashtra; Ravi Goel, Co-Founder, EcoMantra Nature. The panel discussion was moderated by Abhijeet Patil, Chairman, CEO, Raja Rani Travels.

The seminar was indeed a step towards improving the state of tourism in Maharashtra.



Ashok Chavan, Chief Minister, Maharashtra & Chhagan Bhujbal, Deputy C.M. with other VIPs at Meet

S N I P P E T S

In case you missed have out reading.....

Govt to ban noisy and old planes at IGI from Oct 31

After night curfew on aircraft movement at IGI's newest runway, the capital is all set to boast of another first for an Indian airport to allow citizens to sleep in peace. The government has proposed to ban noisy old aircraft from operating in and out of IGI at night from October 31. While a standard practice in western airports where they are completely shut at night and noisy planes banished at all times, this is the first time India is moving towards that direction by proposing it for Delhi.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) proposes to ban old planes that fall in chapter-II aircraft category from 10pm to 6am when winter schedule kicks in on October 31. This category includes aircraft like Boeing 737-200 classic and the Russian IL-76. In India, Alliance Air and Blue Dart use the B 737-200 as cargo aircraft. The night curfew at the new runway is also between 10pm and 6am.

"The West has already taken strong steps on noise pollution at airports and we also will have to make a start at some point. We propose to do so in Delhi as residents moved court and the CM also intervened. Airlines will initially be required to just keep off Delhi at night. A number of Indian and foreign airlines fly in old noisy planes and this can't go on unchecked," said sources, while adding it's just a matter of time before these actions are replicated in other Indian metros too.

Monday, October 18, 2010
Times of India

Domestic operations at new IGIA Terminal from Nov 14 Deferred for the third time.

Shifting of domestic flight operations by three carriers to new terminal 3 (T3), along with their no-frill subsidiaries, has been deferred for the third consecutive time due to delay in completion of various related projects.

Domestic operations by Air India, Jet Airways and Kingfisher airlines along with their low cost arms will now start on November 14. This was announced by the Civil Aviation Ministry after a meeting with all stakeholders. The domestic operations which were initially to start on July 31 were postponed to August 27 due to Commonwealth Games and erratic power supply. The operations were again shifted to October 30.

"To ensure the least inconvenience to the passengers, it was decided at the review meeting that the domestic operations of the three airlines -- Air India, Jet Airways and Kingfisher airlines -- from T3 would begin from November 14," a ministry spokesperson said.

The Economic Times
26th October, 2010

The First Hotel In Space - Bookings Taken

The lead Russian contractor for the International Space Station says it plans to build the first hotel in space to cash in on a growing market for private tourism, a senior executive said. Energia, part owned by the Russian state, wants investors for a private space station that would house up to seven people and serve as a hotel, said Alexander Derechin, the company's deputy chief designer. "Commercial space ships are being built around the world, they will need to fly somewhere," Derechin said. Enthusiasm by the super-rich for space tourism has rocketed in recent years. Virgin Galactic, an offshoot of billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airways, said earlier this year it is aiming to test space launch flights in 2011.

The hotel will provide facilities for scientific research, media projects and entertainment. Private investors have pledged to commit between USD\$100 million and USD\$1 billion, said Derechin.. "I do not think we will be able to complete it before 2015 but I do not think we should wait much beyond that. The competition is growing and we need to hurry up," Derechin said. A Las Vegas-based firm headed by hotelier Robert Bigelow, also plans to build a space complex.

Source: (Reuters)
2nd October, 2010 

What is BABYMOON TRAVEL??

You've heard of a honeymoon travel. Well, now, make room for the "babymoon travel" It's a new trend, common among first-time-parents-to-be, who see it as one of the last vacations they'll take before "baby makes three." The term "babymoon," was coined by British author and childbirth educator Sheila Kitzinger, who defines it as the important time a family spends together alone during a baby's first few days of life. However, the travel industry has its own take on the "babymoon." They see it as a way to appeal to a specialized market. A huge market, in fact, considering approximately 6 million pregnancies occur every year in US alone, according to the American Pregnancy Association, Capitalizing on the trend, a growing number of hotels and resorts have begun offering packages for moms- and dads-to-be..

By Michele Cheplic
17th October, 2010 

S N I P P E T S

Phuket Gazette - Phuket's English-language newspaper...

Daily News

Tuesday, September 28, 2010

PHUKET: The Travel Agents' Association of India (TAAI) expects at least a 100% increase in the number of Indian tourists coming to Phuket next year, TAAI President Rajinder Rai told the Gazette. Some 1,000 Indian travel agents attended a three-day TAAI conference organized by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. The event, hosted by Phuket Fantasea in Kamala, ended yesterday.



noted the potential in the wedding market and now has marketing campaigns in India aimed at attracting 1 million Indian tourists annually to Thailand within a few years, TAT governor Suraphon Svetaasreni said. Last year 610,000 Indians visited Thailand, he said. India's growing population and rising purchasing power make it an inbound market many Asean countries hope to tap into.

"Last year, 40,000 to 50,000 Indians came to Phuket. After this convention our travel agents will make sure that more than double [this year's number] come next year." The number could rise even higher if there were direct flights from India to Phuket and proper banquet halls and convention facilities on the island, he added.

"What we lack here is direct flights. This is what we are trying to tell our own local carriers. We are trying to get Kingfisher Airlines and Air India along with Bangkok Air and AirAsia to come here directly [from India]. If they can do that, I guarantee you the number of Indians that come here will be three times [as high as now]" he said. He also pointed out the need for better banquet halls and convention centers. These would encourage more business groups and wedding parties from India.

"Weddings are very big events that can bring 2,000 to 3,500 people per wedding," he said. He noted that he is aware of plans for a world-class convention center to be completed on Phuket by 2014. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has

"We have been trying very hard to get the TAAI – with over 2,000 members – to bring their people to Thailand. We had to compete with offers from Egypt, Korea and the Philippines in our efforts to persuade them to come here," he said.

"The main purpose of this conference is to build confidence in the TAAI as we have had some political problems in Thailand which led to a slowdown. We would like them to see the quality products and services we can provide and strengthen the relationship between our two countries. The response seems to be good," Mr. Suraphon said.

Echoing Mr. Suraphon's sentiments, Mr. Rai said, **"I am going to clearly – as we have already done – go and publicize the issue of Phuket being a fantastic destination for all walks of life. Anyone can enjoy a holiday in Phuket."**

"I anticipate the relationship between Thailand and India will grow. India is in love with Thailand," he said



Nothing showcases the success of the XIX Commonwealth Games than a grand Closing Ceremony. There were dazzling laser shows musical extravaganzas and over 1000 dancers marking the finale of the Games, along with top singers of India at the biggest sporting event hosted by India.

Cartoon Time

