

## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

**Dear Colleagues,**

TAAI's 17th MC meet was held in Mumbai on 24th July and inspite of the heavy rains was well attended. We discussed several high priority concerns such as problems being currently faced by travel agents all across the country including legal matters.

The challenges facing our industry were also taken up by me at the FAITH meeting on 18th July in Delhi, where an all State Tourism Ministers Meet had been arranged with the Tourism Minister, Shri Chiranjeevi presiding. I had a talk with the Minister himself and appraised him about the immediate concerns of our fraternity and he has promised to look into it ASAP. I also spoke in my time slot to everyone gathered there, about various issues dogging our industry. Read all about it, in the inside pages.

Only last month, TAAI and TAFI arranged a very important Think Tank meet in Mumbai with office bearers, MC and Chapter Chairmen from both the Associations attending in large numbers. It was a very intense meet on 'the way forward' for the fraternity.

With the Indian Rupee slide, Inbound Tourism is going to get a boost whilst outbound is gearing up to deal with the situation and likely to dip for the first time in a decade. The good news is that domestic tourism is holding on well and continues to reap good benefits.

The state of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have signed an MOU which will help mutual tourism promotion in both the states. This is a good sign of things to come.



As you are aware, June and July have been months where our Regions and Chapters have been busy with their individual elections and then it will be time to announce the TAAI AGM and national elections. This will be done soon.

Our Admin Manager, Mr. Satish Vaghela has moved on after 6 and a half years and we wish him all the very best in his future endeavors.

Before I end, let me inform you, dear members, that my MC and myself are aware that members have been calling up the Secretariat about the dates of our annual convention. Rest assured that this too, will be declared and information of the dates and venue will be circulated soon.

**M Iqbal Mulla**  
President

## Editor's Note

**Dear Members,**

The months are racing by and it is already going to be August 2013. Most of us are waiting for the monsoon to get over and the heavy travel season to start off once again. In this issue, you get to read about a wide variety of TAAI news and happenings all over India. Our President was very prominent at the FAITH meeting with his views of our current industry scenario. Those of you who wish to place their company advertisement in any of the forthcoming issues of Newslines, please write to [taai@taai.in](mailto:taai@taai.in) to get all the details. We welcome your queries.

**Manoj Sogani**  
Editor

## TAAI's 17TH MC MEET IN MUMBAI



TAAI had its 17th Managing Committee Meet in Mumbai on 24th July 2013 which had intense discussions over important issues the Association is dealing with. The OBs also discussed the

various destination options of having the Annual Convention 2013 as well as the confirmation of TAAI entering the Educational & Skill development area in association with TRS Academy. TRS Academy will focus on creating new talents to the industry with modules matching to the industry and suggested also by TAAI. TAAI member agents will provide On The Job training to successfully trained candidates and will have the chance of absorbing them to their team if found suitable. Members will soon receive more details on this after signing of the MOU.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF FAITH

The EC Meeting of FAITH was held at Hotel Maurya, New Delhi on 18 July and representatives from all FAITH member Associations except IHHA attended the meeting. Matters regarding baggage problems with domestic airlines, meetings with Delhi Government and also the upcoming FAITH meeting at Mumbai on 30/31st August were discussed.

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS

FAITH members also attended the National Conference of Tourism Ministers at Kamal Mahal, Hotel ITC Maurya, New Delhi, on 18th July, where Tourism Ministers from several states along with Tourism Secretaries were present. Stake holders from the tourism industry were also present, where issues such as Safety and security of the tourists, campaign clean India, rationalization of taxes, interstate road taxes and seamless travel, infrastructure, Hunar Se Rozgar Tak etc. were discussed.

In his opening remarks Mr. Parvez Dewan said that it is easy to travel throughout 27 countries in Europe whereas it is very difficult to travel from one state to another within India. He emphasized the need of rationalization of taxes and free movement of tourist vehicles. President Mr. Nakul Anand made a presentation on behalf of FAITH covering all areas of tourism



and how to change from Impossible India to Incredible India giving all statistics and the same was appreciated by everybody. Each association was given 5 minute slot for presentation and the main covered was regarding high taxation in all the states.

The Minister said that in order to give a momentum and continuity, this type of meetings should be held in every six months which was appreciated and approved by the industry. Our President Mr. Iqbal Mulla took the opportunity to speak about taxation and its effects on travel and tourism, the present scenario of no commission that is killing the industry, the weekly payment imposed by IATA and its impact on agents and the need to strengthen infrastructure in India to woo more tourists in the coming future. Members appreciated the fact that Mr. Mulla had come well prepared for the meet.



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## TAAI AND TAFI HOLD URGENT THINK - TANK MEETING IN MUMBAI



A full day meeting between the Members of TAAI & TAFI as well as industry leaders was held on 21st June, 2013 in Mumbai to brainstorm and work together on the way forward regarding our right to commission/remuneration. web parity for Travel Agents at all levels, weekly billing / fortnightly settlement effective 01st July, 2013, credit card pass through and Service Tax impact. The meeting had President Mr. Iqbal Mulla and office bearers from TAAI and Mr Zakkir Ahmed and his team



from TAFI along with TAAI and TAFI M C Members Regional & Chapter Chairmen and Chairpersons. The members addressed the above points of discussion and focused on the what was the present situation, the means of survival in this scenario and how to seek a justified solution. The teams expressed their views frankly and freely and different strategies were looked at. Deliberations with various options were explored keeping the interest of the fraternity in mind.

## TAAI NORTHERN REGION MEETING



The TAAI Northern Region meeting held in Delhi after the 16th MC Meet was graced by President Mr Iqbal Mulla, Hon Sec General Mr. Sunil Kumar and Hon Treasurer, Mr N G Shankar. Picture shows Chairperson Jyoti Mayal and region Treasurer Neeraj Malhotra along with the office bearers. The members had good interaction with the OBs and discussed several important issues of the industry.





MEETING WITH HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA (DR. MANMOHAN SINGHJI)

J&K Chapter Meets the PM



A delegation of the office bearers of TAAI - J&K Chapter led by Chairman Mr Shamim Ahmed Shah, alongwith Mr Zahoor Qari Honorary Secretary and Mr Sheikh Abdul Ahad Honorary Treasurer, met the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singhji recently in Srinagar. Mr. Shah gave a white paper to the Prime Minister featuring the promotion of new tourist places in Jammu & Kashmir besides the following below given points that requested his immediate attention.

- To kindly ask all the political parties to spare tourism from their agenda as the number of tourist arrivals should not be related with them. Further, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and lately Sonamarg have been politicised by local MLAs for their vote bank and few people simply resort to unfair means and loot the tourists. The tourists go back with bad memories which is not healthy sign for sustainable tourism.
- Airfares to Srinagar, Leh sector touch the sky during summers. Mr. Shah requested for a fixed mid - fare throughout the year (Rs.4,000.00 to Rs.6,000.00) which is affordable for all intending tourists & locals.
- To extend LTC to Jammu & Kashmir State which is expiring on 17th June 2014.
- Houseboats being the Heritage of Kashmir should be allowed for renovation, up-gradation & reconstruction specially old dilapidated houseboats.
- The all weather tunnels of Sonamarg and Kargil and Udhampur to Banihal railway track should be time bound, so that tourism in all these regions can prosper for self economic development.
- Airlines going to Zero commission and with the further verdict of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India that agents cannot charge any service charges or any handling charges. He requested the

PM to kindly look into this serious matter and instruct the Ministry of Civil Aviation & Director General Civil Aviation for reinstating of remuneration / commission to the authorised IATA agents.

- Request was made to make Srinagar International airport meaningful and resume flights to few international destinations.
- Leh is connected only once a week with Srinagar and request for enhancement in air connectivity between 2 regions should be done.
- New Tourist destinations should develop respecting the environment & ecology of the place (Bangus, Doodh Pathri, Gurez etc).
- Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra helicopter tickets sale has become a grave issue and needs serious attention as local travel industry does not get benefitted from it. The online sale of helicopter tickets should be stopped and more GSA's should be appointed by Helicopter companies (Local State Subjects) and Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board should be made State centric rather than non-state.
- Germany and United Kingdom has lifted the travel advisory against the travel to Kashmir valley, Hon'ble Prime Minister was requested, if the Ministry of External Affairs could take up the matter for other European countries and USA & Canada for removal / lowering of travel advisories for travel to Kashmir.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister accepted the white paper from Mr Shah and assured that he will look into all the points raised. It is indeed a good sign of things to come!

This was the 3rd time that the chapter had the opportunity to meet the PM, after their meet in 2009 & 2011.

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## TIMES TRAVEL TRADE FAIR 2013 (MUMBAI)



Times Travel Trade Fair 2013, Times of India's exclusive B2B expo on travel and tourism industry was organized by Asiatic Expositions in association with The Times of India Group on 13th & 14th July, 2013 at the BECG Centre, Mumbai. The 2 day exhibition attracted many travel professionals enabling them to do trade networking. TTT Fair was inaugurated by Shri. Uddhavji Thackeray – (Pramukh – Chief of Shiv Sena) in the presence of Shri. Sunil Prabhu (Mayor of Mumbai), Shri. Subhash Desai (Shiv Sena Leader). Our President Mr Iqbal Mulla was a special invitee on the dais along with the Chief Guest and interacted with the Sena Chief on various travel and tourism related topics. There were good pre-registered attendees as well as a large number of on-site registrations from travel agents, travel portals, media, corporate companies and individual travelers etc. As a Supporting Association for the Fair, TAAI was there in the midst of it all and our TAAI stall saw a lot of footfalls. The enquiries about new memberships and about TAAI activities were all taken care of aptly by our staff Mr Anand Paleja and assistant Mr. Prakash.



### SOUTH TAMILNADU CHAPTER MEETING

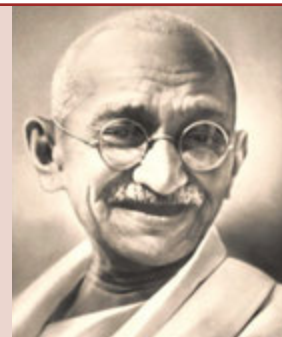
South Tamilnadu Chapter 2011-2013, 11th meeting was held at The Carlton Hotel, Kodaikanal on 08th June 2013. Chairman Mr.M.S.Paramasivam, Secretary Mr. J. Jahir Hussain, Treasurer Mr. B. G. Musthafa and Managing Committee Member R.Venkatachalam along with 18 members were present. They discussed various topical industry matters.



### Quote Of The Month

**"You can't undo anything you've already done, but you can face up to it. You can tell the truth. You can seek forgiveness. And then let God do the rest."**

**- Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)**





## "LEARN SOUTH AFRICA" TRAINING PROGRAM



Classroom Training Session

South African Tourism commenced its fourth module of its popular classroom training session 'Learn South Africa' for frontline staff of travel agencies from 8th July, 2013. The module kick started in Mumbai on 8 Jul, and travelled to many cities such as, Ahmedabad, 9-Jul & 10 Jul. Jaipur 11-Jul, Delhi 12-Jul, Gurgaon 13-Jul, Ludhiana 15-Jul, Delhi 16-Jul, Kolkata 17-Jul & 18-Jul Mumbai 19-Jul Trivandrum 22-Jul Cochin 23-Jul Chennai 24-Jul, Coimbatore 25-Jul, Bangalore 26-Jul, Hyderabad 27-Jul Pune 29 & 30-Jul and lastly in Nagpur 31-Jul.



South African suppliers with Participants

The interactive programs aimed at intensifying the destination awareness and understanding among the travel trade in India. Differently structured in comparison to the past modules. South African Tourism has invited some key South African suppliers to take part in the training program to facilitate a more collaborative and mutually beneficial learning environment as there are several markets that the tourism board is unable to take its roadshows to. Registration for this program was free and TAAI members attended in large numbers.

## ANNUAL MEMBERS MEET 2013 OF GUJARAT CHAPTER

TAAI Gujarat Chapter's Annual Members' Meet was held at The Sports Club of Gujarat in Ahmedabad on 13th July 2013. wherein the Chairman, Mr. Shreeram Patel greeted the Members and thanked them for putting their faith in the present committee and selecting them for their same posts for another term. ( 2013 - 2015 ) The Chairman reiterated that Gujarat Chapter members have always shown their unity and this was another example of it. Chapter Secretary, Mr. Paras Lakhia later briefed the Members about the activities that took place in the Chapter during the last term of 2011-2013. and how the Chapter intends to conduct future meetings with more value added features such as workshops with Airlines/ other vendors, inviting a motivational speaker / expert to speak on knowledgeable subjects, etc... All in all, it was a very fruitful meeting followed by a sumptuous lunch.



Paras Lakhia, Shreeram Patel & Virendra Shah at the meet



Members in Wrapt Attention

## ADIOS MR VAGHELA !



MC Member Marzban Antia & President Iqbal Mulla at the farewell.

Satish Vaghela

Members, our till - now Admin Manager at TAAI Secretariat, Mr. Satish Vaghela has moved on to new pastures since 11th July 2013. His contribution to the Association has been invaluable and is highly appreciated by TAAI Office Bearers, Managing Committee, Regional and Chapter Chairmen & Chairpersons and TAAI staff as well as the members. Mr. Vaghela took on the mantle of Manager with great vigour, intense dedication and total commitment. He sometimes



The TAAI Staff (Present & Past) Bidding Good Bye!

used to burn the midnight oil willingly to finish work given to him. President, Mr. Iqbal Mulla (on behalf of TAAI MC & Regional/Chapter Chairmen) along with MC Member, Mr. Marzban Antia, Western Region Chairman, Mr Jay Bhatia and Chapter Treasurer, Ms. Anaita Punjabi and TAAI staff, arranged a small but sweet farewell lunch for the soft spoken Mr. Vaghela. We take this opportunity to thank him for his contribution to TAAI and wish him all success in his future endeavors.

## OBEROI HOTELS & RESORTS TRAINING PROGRAM



On 12th June TAAI WR along with Oberoi Hotels & Resorts organised a product presentation as well as a training program for members. The workshop was hosted at the Trident, Nariman Point, Mumbai and was well attended by members of TAAI. Regional Head of Sales, Mr. Vikas Sharma along with his sales team showcased all the 28 luxury properties, their 2 Nile Cruises and a backwater vessel in Kerala. Showing their prime luxury brands and properties Mr. Sharma, gave an in-depth view of the room categories, dining, services, other facilities and spas.

Special packages and offers were also unveiled and explained to the members. From Wildlife packages to children offers to romantic escapades, cultural themes and wellness spa programs were explained. WR Chairman Mr. Jay Bhatia announced that with the efforts of TAAI, Tourism Council Chairman Mr. Harmandeep Singh Anand, the Oberoi Hotels had worked out a special tariff exclusively for TAAI members who would like to travel to the hotels for a recce or a holiday. These



FAAMTastic rates would be sent across to the members. Thanking the Oberoi group for partnering with TAAI in conducting this unique workshop in Mumbai for TAAI members, he also proposed to have more such workshops across other regions and chapters of TAAI. Mr. Devendra Bharna, Executive Vice President, Oberoi Hotels, also present welcomed the initiative of TAAI and assured that they would certainly have similar workshops exclusively for TAAI members across the country. Members were very interactive and gained a lot from the presentation. Thanking the Oberoi Group, Retd. Col. P. Shashidharan, VSM – Hon Secretary of WR said that such presentations gave first-hand knowledge and insight of the products to frontline staff which makes it easier for them to sell the product to the clients. Ms. Anaita Punjabi, Hon Treasurer of WR said that Oberoi Hotels & Resorts not only encourage agents in promoting sales but also enhance their marketing skills vide such workshops She added that, TAAI Members don't just believe in selling their products but they create experiences and memories for the traveller.

### SPECIALLY FOR TAAI MEMBERS

Members, you must have received a communication from TAAI about the special rates being offered to you from HYATT Amritsar which is valid upto 31st August 2013 and from PULLMAN GURGAON CENTRAL PARK valid till 30th September

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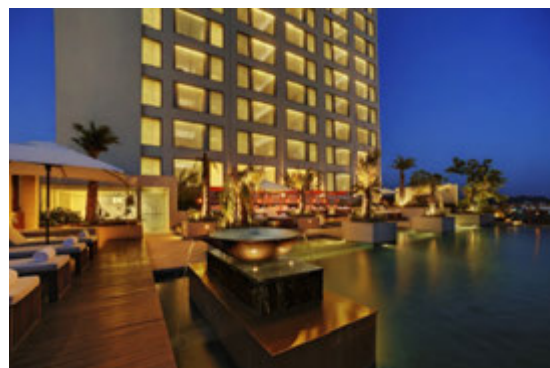
*Rates valid for stay upto 31st August 2013*

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## TAJ MAHAL RANKED THIRD AMONG TOP LANDMARKS IN THE WORLD



NEW YORK: Travellers from across the globe have ranked India's Taj Mahal among the top three landmarks in the world, a leading travel website has announced. According to TripAdvisor's 2013 Travellers Choice Attractions Awards, Taj Mahal was ranked third in the list of Top 25 landmarks. The top two places were taken by Machu Picchu in Peru and Angkor Wat in

Cambodia respectively. "The winners of Travelers' Choice Attractions awards were determined based on the quality and quantity of traveler reviews of attractions," said a company statement. Taj Mahal, listed among the new seven wonders of the world, is renowned the world over for its architecture and aesthetic beauty. Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his late wife Mumtaz Mahal, the white marble mausoleum in the northern Indian city of Agra is also a symbol of enduring love. In 1983, it became a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Taj Mahal attracts 2-4 million visitors annually, with more than 200,000 from overseas. It shares the latest honour alongside Petra World Heritage Site in Jordan and Bayon Temple in Cambodia, which are ranked fourth and fifth respectively in the list of 25 top landmarks in the world

## INDIAN OUTBOUND NUMBERS LIKELY TO DIP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A DECADE

### Rupee devaluation likely to hit Outbound Travel by 8-10%: Industry experts

The burgeoning Indian outbound segment which has recorded an average growth rate of ten per cent for the past five to six years, and is predicted to touch 50 million outbound travellers (UNWTO) by 2020 is likely to witness a dip in numbers for the first time in a decade. The devaluation of the rupee against the dollar, touching an all time low in last week of June 2013 (exchange rate of Rs 60.72 per dollar) has not only affected the Indian economy but is likely to have a big impact on the Outbound Tourism segment.

According to reports, the Indian currency has fallen 10.8 per cent in 2013, and is the worst performing currency amongst major Asian countries. The slide of the Indian rupee has resulted, according to some industry experts, in escalation of travel expenditure of overseas trips by five-seven per cent and the outbound segment could witness a dip of about eight to ten per cent. While the traditional summer holiday season is over, industry anticipate a negative impact of the depreciating rupee on the forthcoming holiday season. Some industry experts expect outbound travel to decline by eight-ten per cent, others

feel that Indians will not cancel their travel plans but reconsider the choice of destination. Indian travellers will tighten their purse strings and opt for four-star hotels instead of five-star, will prefer short-haul destinations, and cut down the duration of the trip. All-inclusive packages, innovative and cost-effective packages, discounts and add-ons are getting popular among travellers, and the trend is being capitalised by tour operators who are introducing lucrative packages by smartly playing around with the itinerary and providing clients with greater value for money. Overall, while there is some worry among the travel trade, the attitude is to wait and watch how things pan out.

Despite the current market scenario, some leading travel research companies are bullish about the growth in the Indian travel market. India will still remain among the fastest growing travel markets in the Asia Pacific region and is expected to witness double digit growth thr

28th June, 2013  
TravelBiz Monitor

## TOURISM GROWTH DOUBLE WORLD AVG

Source : Times of India

Foreign tourist arrivals to India grew by about 4.5% from 6.30 million in 2011 to 6.57 million in 2012. While this is a sharp drop from the about 9% growth that was seen in 2011 as compared to 2010, it is still twice the world average according to latest data from the Bureau of Immigration. Incidentally, the US continued as the top source country, reaching 1 million tourists in 2012. In comparison, tourists from the UK, Sri Lanka and Malaysia came down in 2012. The top 10 source markets remained the same. The US and the UK were followed by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka,

Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Australia and Malaysia. The number of tourists from the US in 2012 was 1.03 million, up from 0.98 million in 2011 while visitors from Bangladesh increased from 0.46 million to 0.48 million. Travellers from the UK decreased marginally from 0.79 million to 0.78 million. According to tourism ministry sources, recent changes in tourist visa rules, including lifting the mandatory two-month gap between consecutive visits to the country and allowing visa-on-arrival for group visas, are likely to boost growth that will only be reflected a year later.